

OUR DIARY
OF
OUR STUDY OF
HEBREWS

THE
NEW ALBANY – LOUISVILLE ECCLESIA

— PREFACE —

Details of inspired writings always are important. In the Book of Hebrews there is no exception. However, Hebrews is more or less unique in that its detail takes second place to the larger picture. It seems, initially, more important to absorb this great book as one large lesson—one continual, flowing message about the part of Jesus and his Church in the Divine plan of salvation.

It is not an easy task to read such a large and detailed epistle as a single unit. The APPENDIX has for this reason been supplied. Perhaps reading the APPENDIX straight through, without interruption, without being critical, without stopping for comprehension of detail, is a good way to begin a consideration of Hebrews.

While our study notes are laid out as a verse-by-verse commentary, they will not work well as a quick reference for the thoughts of any single verse. Context is much too important in the Book of Hebrews to allow for a brief out-of-context explanation of any given verse. We, therefore, implore all students to consider any given verse only in relationship to its context—sometimes more than a chapter.

In any study of Hebrews, it must be remembered that Paul **BUILDS AN ARGUMENT**. Not seeing his **PROCESS** in building makes it nearly impossible to understand his conclusions.

The content of Hebrews (in all of its complexities) is in one sense ultimately simple. Paul summarizes the entire book in its first three verses. These verses summarize God's prophetic expressions before the first advent of Jesus, His current teachings via Jesus, and Jesus' great sacrifice (including his body) to result in the eventual extinction of sin for mankind. The remainder of the book expands upon these few basics.

Hebrews can, should, and is meant to change our lives. It is written to give us spiritual confidence and to destroy fleshly thinking. It is designed to help us be sober on one hand and extraordinarily positive and rejoicing on the other. May the Lord's intent be fulfilled in all of us.

HEBREWS AT FIRST GLANCE

- INTRODUCTION (1:1-3)
We are in a New Age in which Jesus replaces everything
- I. SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (1:4 – 2:18)
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- II. REPLACEMENT FOR MOSES (3:1 – 4:13)
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is founded)
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- IV. HE IS BASIS OF A NEW COVENANT (8:6 – 9:28)
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- VI. FAITH AS OUR ANCHOR (11:1 – 12:13)
- VII. THE SERIOUS NATURE OF OUR COMMITMENT (12:14 – 13:17)
- EPILOGUE (13:18 – END)

THE AUTHOR

It is not uncommon in the world of higher criticism to find arguments that Hebrews is not the work of the Apostle Paul. It is important to the Christian to be convinced that it is Paul's work. Only the Apostles had the authority to establish doctrine and to be the appointed interpreters of prophecy for the Church. Thus, for instance, in the Gospels we find Matthew and John making statements such as, "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..." Mark and Luke make no such claims because it was not their right to do so. Thus, also, even the great Apostle Paul is careful to distinguish his own opinions from "official" words from the Lord through him. The Apostle Paul makes statements such as, "But this I say by way of concession, not of command." Then he reverses himself: "I give instructions, not I, but the Lord." (I Corinthians 7:6, 10) If the book of Hebrews is not the work of an Apostle, it carries no doctrinal authority. What a loss that would be! There is probably no book in the New Testament more full of doctrinal import.

Paul was a "Pharisee of the Pharisees." His credentials as a Jewish doctor of the Law as well as his credentials as an Apostle are the finest. Perhaps no one in his day could be more capable of interpreting the meanings of Old Testament types and shadows than Paul. Doing so seemed to be a weight on his mind as his ministry was drawing to a close. His words to Timothy (II Timothy 4:13) seem very revealing in this regard. He asks Timothy for a cloak, books, "BUT ESPECIALLY THE PARCHMENTS." Paul had something he had to write. It was, almost certainly, the letter to the Hebrews.

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Chapter 1, Verses 1-3

The Premise:
There is now a new age
in which Jesus replaces everything.

— 1:1-3 —

THE OBJECTIVE of the first three verses of Hebrews is to impress upon the Jewish Christians that a new epoch has begun which, while it centers in Jesus, is based upon the prophetic accumulations of the past. Because the entire book of Hebrews will contrast Jesus to features and prominent ones of the past, showing him to be the one in whom these features are fulfilled, Paul wishes in these first verses to establish at the outset Jesus' superiority over all.

— 1:1 —

GOD: The first word is designed to catch the attention of the Jewish mind. Paul is starting from the top. Israel had been used to measuring all things by reference to their God. Paul will do this too. He will show that it is God Who establishes Jesus as the authority.

FATHERS: Paul acknowledges that God had been with Israel since the days of their fathers—and His presence with spiritual Israel would now continue, but not as in the past:

PROPHETS: In the past God used prophets. Paul does not dismiss the prophets as something old and obsolete, but encourages the reverence of them by showing that they were God's voice; but he does show that they were not so clear-spoken or complete as is Jesus:

TIMES & MANNERS: The prophets had spoken "in many portions and in many ways" (NAS), "at sundry times and in divers manners" (KJV), or in a "revelation...fragmentary and varied" (Barclay). Paul is showing the DISPENSATIONAL nature of prophecy and the fact that it must be sewn together—as Isaiah suggested, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little." Among other things, Paul is in this way setting up his point that as dispensations HAD come and gone, NOW a new and more focused dispensation was dawning.

When Paul refers to "divers manners," he wants it understood (as a basis for much of the book of Hebrews) that prophecy was not just the utterance of words, but it was also types, allegories, covenants, literalisms, and symbolisms.

— 1:2 —

LAST DAYS

TO US: It is possible that Paul means the last days of the closing dispensation (the Jewish Age), but since he is showing when Jesus' voice is to be God's voice, it is likely that Paul is thinking in terms of the seven thousand-year days of man's history. Jesus' advent was during day number five. He speaks to the "us" class in days five, six, and seven—the LAST three days of the week of God's rest.

BY HIS

SON: The superiority of a son over servants (or prophets) is inescapable. Jesus had given a parable (Matthew 21:33-46) to explain God's rejection of fleshly Israel in favor of spiritual Israel. In it, the "vine-growers" (the leaders of Israel) kill both dispensationally-sent prophets and the son of the landowner. Both Jesus and Paul are making the point that God could send no one more important as the final messenger. In the Gospel Age, God teaches us by His Son. To reject His authority is to be rejected of God as was fleshly Israel in the parable.

HEIR:

Of this Son, Paul makes two points:

(1) He is HEIR OF ALL THINGS.

This is only natural for a firstborn son.

But, lest there be any question, Paul says that, in addition to what might be natural, God "APPOINTED" him heir. Again, it is by God's decree that Jesus fills all of the offices Paul will list for him.

MADE
THE
WORLD:

(2) As early as Genesis, when it says, "Let US make man," we learn what the first chapter of John proclaims: nothing that God made was made without the Son's being the active creative agent.

Proverbs 8 summarizes this closeness of Father and Son from the earliest ages when Jesus is represented as Wisdom personified.

But Hebrews 1:2 is focusing not on all of this work, but on the fact that Jesus "prepared the ages."

Thus, when Paul showed that prophets spoke dispensationally, he is saying that Jesus had been DIRECTOR OF THE PROPHETS.

— 1:3 —

RADIANCE OF
HIS GLORY:

Paul builds on the credentials of verse 2. Not only was Jesus the heir of all things, not only did he frame and direct the ages through which God's plan would unfold, but

- (1) Jesus is a radiant (not a filtered) display of God's character

and

IMAGE OF
HIS PERSON:

- (2) Jesus is (now) an exact copy of God's immortal substance!

As John 5:26 explains, "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in himself."

After having drawn our attention to the incredible PERSONAL likeness which the Son has to the Father, he shows his station and work:

UPHOLDS ALL:

- (3) Jesus maintains the universe!
By this point, the Jewish mind (and ours) begins to realize that all that we have attributed to Yahweh has been and is executed by His Son.

BY WORD OF
HIS POWER:

Jesus does all this "by the word of His power."
It is not clear whether this says that Jesus does this by the decree of Yahweh's power, or whether he does it by the power in himself granted and delegated to him by his Father.

But the result is the same:

He commands, and all dynamics engage to fulfill!

PURIFICATION
OF SINS:

Here, Paul, in one phrase, shows that Jesus had accomplished in 3-1/2 years what the Law had never done:

He, by one offering, provided the expurgation of sin. Thus is summarized the first advent and its purpose.

SAT DOWN: Having accomplished this, he sat down!

In three words we have the power of sin purification complete. Jesus did what he had to do, and he sat down (waiting for the day when his enemies were to be made his footstool). 10:12, 13; 8:1; 12:2

RIGHT HAND: The acceptance of Jesus' first-advent work is shown by his position (right hand = favor).

MAJESTY
ON HIGH:

The Greek for majesty is MEGALOSUNE. It is used only here, in 8:1, and in Jude 25 (where this Majesty of God is said to be "through Jesus Christ, our Lord"). Thus Paul concludes his introductory verses by a final statement which places the Son so very close to God Himself as to invite no utterances of 'if, but, and, or maybe.'

PART I

JESUS' SUPERIORITY TO ANGELS

Chapter 1:4 to 2:18

The Premise:
While angels administered God's Plan in the past,
the New Order will be administered by one
whose inheritance and nature is greater than theirs.
This administration will be shared by his "body."

— 1:4-13 —

THE OBJECTIVE of these verses is to establish by God's own words through His prophets how and why Jesus holds the position designed for him. By using these prophecies, Paul not only establishes his points about Jesus, but enlightens us greatly about the true and subtle meanings of the prophecies themselves. "The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

— 1:4 —

HAVING
BECOME
BETTER:

Jesus in his pre-human existence was "better" than other angels in that he was always first. He was the archangel. But that is not Paul's point here: Jesus WAS numbered among the angels; and while all servants of God eternally will be His messengers (angels), and while Jesus, even now, therefore, is called an angel (e. g., Revelation 20:1), Paul wants us to understand that Jesus NOW is so far above the angels as not to be considered in the same class anymore. Thus, verse 4 refers back to verse 3 to tell us that Jesus' sin offering and subsequent glorification has (post-manhood) exalted him well beyond his former position in the realm of angelic beings.

AS HE HAS
INHERITED:

Here is a comparison: He is now BECOME as much above angels AS were his inheritance promises much above theirs. To prove this point, Paul will call on prophecy to show that Jesus' inheritance benefits are never promised to other angels. He accomplished his right to his inheritance because of his humility when he became "LOWER than angels."
(See Philippians 2:7-11; Ephesians 1:1-23; Hebrews 2:9.)

— 1:5 —

FOR:

The word means "because." This links us to verse 4 and begins the list which proves Jesus' inheritance to be superior.

THOU ART
...(ETC.):

Psalm 2:7 is Paul's first witness. The context of the Psalm IS the second advent; but the point of verse 7 is that Jesus' second-advent work is based on his first advent exaltation. The MAIN point of Hebrews 1:5 is that Jesus is the only one who can claim this statement from God Himself. Not only is he God's son, but he is the only one who can point back to his resurrection and say: Based on the acceptance by God of my sacrifice, God Himself "brought me to the birth" as the firstborn of the new creation.

Note: "Begotten" here is not used in the sense we normally understand. It is used here idiomatically to mean "brought to the birth." This will be proven by its use by the Apostle.

How do we know that this prophecy relates to Jesus' birth as a new creature? We know it because the Apostle Paul (in Acts 13:33) says that this is its meaning. He even specifies the Psalm 2 usage. Clearly, then, that is also Paul's meaning in Hebrews 1:5 and in 5:5 which is the only other use of the expression in the Bible. In Psalm 2, the reference is to Jesus' kingship; in Hebrews 5 it is to his priesthood. In Hebrews 1 it is simply to show his incredible personal exaltation based on his work as described in 1:3. We are not to think that Jesus wasn't always God's son. Paul's point, rather, is that all of Jesus' previous existence was leading up to this point which God had planned for him. His previous sonship was preliminary to his being "brought to the birth" now in God's very own nature-likeness.

I WILL BE
...(ETC.):

II Samuel 7:14 is Paul's second witness (and his only text outside the Psalms). It certainly appears on the surface as if 7:12-16 is about Solomon. If it were, of course, it would not be too much of a problem in that Jesus' Millennial reign is typified by Solomon—a fact implied in passing by Jesus himself in Matthew 12:42. Indeed, the 40-year reigns of Israel's first three kings typify the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial ages, each being a complete period of testing (40 years).

This II Samuel text is, however, not about Solomon; it is, as Paul shows in Hebrews 1:5, about Jesus. Since II Samuel 7:14 provides a difficulty to this understanding, it is important to note from Adam Clarke's Commentary (Volume

II, page 327) a critical correction in translation. The verse should read:

I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me; even in his suffering for iniquity, [*i.e., the sin offering*] I will chasten him with the rod of men (i. e., the rod due to men) and with the stripes of (due to) the children of Adam.

This takes all difficulty from the passage and additionally shows the Apostle's true and inspired insight into the meaning of this passage. Paul's application of this verse to Jesus NECESSITATES that Clarke's correction be accurate! The prophet Isaiah also supports the true meaning of this verse in Isaiah 53:4, 5, 10, 12.

Again, we should not suppose the angels are not sons. (Compare Job 1:6; Genesis 6:2.) Paul is, instead, stressing the inseparable closeness of father and son after this "bringing to the birth." In the II Samuel prophecy, we also are shown that this PROMISED seed is David's as well as God's—a claim no other angels can make.

— 1:6 —

A note on translation:

The KJV here uses the word "again" as it was used in verse 5; that is, it uses it as if Paul were saying "Here is another text," or "Again, I give you another example." Most other translations, however, use "again" as a modifier to explain that the next citation applies to the time God returns Jesus to earth: "When God brings the firstborn into the world AGAIN"—i.e., at the second advent. This appears to be the most satisfying construction as will be seen by the context of the quotation.

AND WHEN: When God sends Jesus to administer the Kingdom
(Acts 3:20)

WORLD: This is not the Greek word "cosmos" which is the usual source of "world." It is the Greek word "oikoumene" which means the habitable world. Another use of this term can be seen in Revelation 16:14. The thought seems to be that Jesus is sent not just literally to the earth (which he is), but more specifically to its inhabitants—almost more like the symbolic

word “earth.” Jesus is sent (among other things) to restore the race: PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.

HE SAYS:

God says (in Psalm 97). Psalm 97 is about the second advent—about the time when God AGAIN sends Jesus. God will make the commandment we will now consider.

Note another translation problem.

The Psalm says: “Worship him all you gods.”

Why does Paul quote this to say “Let all the angels of God worship him”? The Hebrew text does not justify this. The reason for Paul’s translation is that the popular Bible of his day (we might say the King James of his day) was the Septuagint. When Paul quotes Scripture, he quotes the Septuagint. The Septuagint says “his angels,” whereas the Hebrew says “gods.” Paul doesn’t argue the validity of the translation. We can only conjecture that the reason he doesn’t is that he knew the meaning was proper. After all, angels ARE gods. If we believe that Paul was approving of the meaning as proper, we thus can claim that the gods of Psalm 97:7 are angels. We are making that assumption in our study.

WORSHIP
HIM:

This is a command. Worship of the Son is appropriate because God says so! (Compare John 5:22, 23; 8:54.) We would have to assume that the GOOD ANGELS would do this rather naturally—as did even the wise men when he was a human infant! (Matthew 2:2) Therefore, and because of the placement in Psalm 97, it is subtly suggested that the angels of Hebrews 1:6 are the FALLEN ANGELS. Why would Paul introduce this idea here? Very possibly it is to make the point that Jesus’ superiority over angels will extend even to those who have fallen away and are willing to return.

— 1:5-6 —

Thus we see in the first three texts offered, a wonderful PROGRESSION of thought:

Psalm 2 shows Jesus’ personal exultation to supreme kingship and priesthood.

II Samuel 7 shows him to be the promised ruler who has the most intimate relationship with Yahweh as his strength.
Psalm 97 shows the mercy which, consequently, will be extended NOT ONLY to Israel and the world of mankind, but even beyond the earthly kingdom to the spirit world.

— 1:7-9 —

Before looking specifically at verse 7, it is helpful to note that Paul is going to CONTRAST the material of verse 7 with that of verses 8 and 9. In short, he is saying of the angels (verse 7) that they have fluctuating assignments, but the Son (verses 8, 9) has a permanent position. The angels WORK (verse 7), but the Son RULES (verse 8).

Verse 7 is a quote from Psalm 104:4. It is interesting to note that translations differ greatly in this Psalm verse.

Some say:

He makes his angels winds
And His ministers a flame of fire.

Some say:

He makes winds His angels
And flames of fire His ministers.

(Other variants exist.) It is clear that the above two possibilities differ greatly. In the first instance, angels (sentient beings) can use the inanimate power of the wind. In the second, the inanimate power of the wind is used as a messenger (thus eliminating sentient beings entirely).

The BETTER of the above translations must be the first because Paul's point in Hebrews is to contrast angels (as sentient beings) with Jesus. Thus again, the New Testament clarifies and interprets the Old.

— 1:7 —

While the GENERAL point of this verse is explained above, specific examples of how angels used winds and fire are helpful. Acts 2:2, 3 gives an instance of both. God had His angel(s) symbolize the unseen power (wind) of the Holy Spirit and the righteous judgment and enlightenment (flame) of the Holy Spirit as it was first granted at Pentecost. This "baptism" of the spirit has a similar occurrence at

the Passover exodus. (I Corinthians 10:1-2; Exodus 14:21; 13:21, 22) As the Armageddon crisis comes, the Lord will again put his angels in charge of the winds that will end the old order. (Revelation 7:1-3) The “fire” experienced in the harvest by Babylon is also angel-connected. (Revelation 14:10)

Among other things, Paul seems to be suggesting that angels administer some of the most powerful seen and unseen forces of nature. This is an honor, but, as he will show in the following verses, there is a far higher honor for the son.

— 1:8, 9 —

This and verse 9 are from Psalm 45:6, 7. (The Wedding Psalm.) This, in itself, is of importance. Paul is (at this time only subtly) introducing the concept of the church as part of the anointed. Throughout the Book of Hebrews Paul uses this device of introducing a subject in a small way only to develop it in a much larger way in a subsequent section of his writing.

— 1:8 —

THRONE: A THRONE is not only a symbol of a functioning king, but also of the authority of judgment. This latter part of the symbol is extremely important in this context. Paul is not only contrasting Jesus with angels by showing that he will RULE, but that he is given the authority of passing judgment—something never given to angels, and heretofore reserved for God Himself.

SCEPTER: A scepter symbolizes an INHERITED RIGHT. The “righteous” scepter seems to be a marked contrast to usurped rule by apostates (like Lucifer).

In this verse Paul has chosen a text, thus, which establishes two previous points he has made:

- (1) Jesus was promised this throne in II Samuel 7:13 (Hebrews 1:5):
- (2) Jesus is the one who is rightly the heir (the inheritance, Hebrews 1:2, 4) of Genesis 49:10.

— 1:9 —

This verse is a direct continuance of the Psalm 45 quotation. The words explain why Jesus will be such an excellent judge and why his scepter is characterized by “righteousness.” It also sets the standard for those who are “predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29, NAS)

LOVED &
HATED:

To love righteousness is good and necessary; but not to have an accompanying active hatred for evil would leave a fatal imbalance in the character. It is for this reason that some Christians are set aside in Laodicea. (Revelation 3:15) God requires that we be HOT for righteousness and COLD toward iniquity. Lukewarmness in either case is DISTASTEFUL to Him.

ANOINTED: The correct balance of these perfect traits for perfect judgment ability result in God’s approval of Jesus as the priest and king (the only two offices which were permitted to receive the holy anointing oil).

OIL OF
GLADNESS:

It is gratifying to meditate on the fact that God characterizes this anointing as the OIL OF GLADNESS. It was “for the joy set before him” that Jesus and we “endure.” The “Zion” which we seek means “sunny.” “Isaac,” the type of Jesus and the church, means “laughter of my victory.” The anointing (Psalm 133) is “good and pleasant” and a “life-forever blessing” from Yahweh.

ABOVE

COMPANIONS: It might be quickly and erroneously concluded that “above thy companions” is a reference to the angels to whom Paul is contrasting Jesus; but the companions here are the church. The quote is from the wedding Psalm, and Paul is slowly introducing the mystery to the Hebrews that they will be the bride of this great Son who is far above angels. Here Paul is showing that Jesus is the head (“above”) of the body (his “companions”).

It is, for our edification, important to keep in mind throughout the book of Hebrews that, while the chief theme is the superiority of Jesus over all things and beings, the place of the saints is to be inseparably a PART OF HIS INHERITANCE. The thought is awesome and sobering; but that is exactly Paul’s objective: to give us awe and sobriety in

our privileges and responsibilities as part of the bride and the sin offering.

— **1:10-12** —

Verses 10-12 are a quote from Psalm 102:25, 26. Apparently Paul quotes these to show:

1. Even before Jesus' magnificent rulership to come, Jesus was the active agent in controlling all that has previously happened. (Compare Hebrews 1:2.)
2. Even though the ages and dispensations and epochs have changed over time, there is only consistency in Jesus throughout these ages.
3. Even though the roles of angels varied with the ages, the role of the Son as director has not varied.

— **1:10** —

EARTH &
HEAVENS:

Psalm 102 is a lament for the afflictions of Israel (natural and spiritual) and a hope and prayer for deliverance. As such it ends with the words quoted by Paul which make Jesus' reign the center of all hopes. Thus the Psalm expresses acknowledgement and thanksgiving for help and guidance in the past, with a culmination of hope in the kingdom which Paul introduced in Hebrews 1:8.

While, at first glance, these "heavens" and "earth" might be thought to be a literal reference, verse 11 shows that they are of necessity symbolic (as in II Peter 3). Thus Paul is here yet bolstering his point that Jesus framed the "ages." (Hebrews 1:2)

— 1:11 —

Each succeeding age passes. Thus we “look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

REMAINEST: Even as ages change, it is Paul’s contention that Jesus has headed the operation of these changes—that they are not haphazard, but calculated and controlled by Jesus. He **REMAINS** the constant guardian.

BECOME OLD: Paul uses the Greek word for “old” here [Strong’s 3822] which means “make worn out...declare obsolete”—living in the past. (He also uses it in 8:13 [first “old”] where he adds the word “senescent”—living in the past; Strong’s 1095: the second word “old.”) In both places it is a strong reminder to Jews who want to retain a relationship of some sort with the old Law Covenant. The prophecy of this verse, as well as Paul’s comments in 8:13, tell that “you are living in the past”—a futile effort—if you burden yourself with the Law.

GARMENT: Clothing in Scripture represents justification or a representation of what we are or claim. While the Law, for instance, justified the Jewish nation during the Jewish Age, that “clothing” is outdated.

— 1:12 —

MANTLE: As with Elijah, the “mantle” seems to be particularly that part of clothing representing the exercise of some sort of authority. (II Kings 2:8) Thus, for instance, the authority common to the Jewish Age, the Law, is being set in storage (“rolled up”), being set aside for an age of grace. The mantle of works will return in the Millennium.

THE SAME: But Jesus, himself, who is behind the ages of works and grace, never changes. He is the embodiment of the **SPIRIT OF THE LAW**—a character quality which always is in order.

– 1:13, 14 –

In verse 13 Paul chooses to quote from Psalm 110:1 as his final link in his list of texts showing the superiority of Jesus above angels. He seems to choose it (1) to focus on the WAITING PERIOD before the previous texts concerning Jesus' kingdom will have fulfillment. Hence, the first word is SIT (i.e., WAIT). Before the promises of the second advent come, Jesus must sit and wait until God makes him the conquering general over all opposing forces. Jesus' feet on his enemies is the universal symbol of a victorious conqueror. (See Joshua 10:24, 25.) This symbolism is first introduced in Genesis 3:15, and Paul INCLUDES THE CHURCH in the picture in Romans 16:20. (2) This seems to be Paul's second reason for using this text in Hebrews 1:13. He is ready to INTRODUCE THE CHURCH (the "us" of verse 2) as a forceful part of his presentation. While we don't see Romans 16:20 in Hebrews 1:13, it is almost certainly in Paul's mind as we see by his words in the next verse. In plain language, the message of verses 13 and 14 is:

When the time comes, Jesus will stamp out Satan. YOU will be participating with him in this dramatic work. THAT is why the ANGELS now are appointed the work of protecting your walk. (See Matthew 19:10; Psalm 91:10-12; Psalm 34:7.)

The sobering lesson of these verses, the next chapter, and, indeed, the whole book of Hebrews is:

- (1) To show Jesus' extremely exalted position and
- (2) To make us know the humbling and sobering honor of being accounted worthy to be part of that position's fulfillment.

– 2:1 –

Thus Paul opens Chapter 2 with the words: FOR THIS REASON. It is difficult to capture the powerful force of his plea. He is saying: We have been offered an opportunity so incredible that our attention to our consecrations must be immovable. We know our human tendency to allow us easily to drift from our focus; but this calling is too great to allow such drifting.

— 2:2-18 —

The bulk of Chapter 2 is to show what 1:13, 14 and 2:1 have proclaimed. Chapter 2 is here to convince us of the magnitude and opportunity of our calling to be the body of Christ.

— 2:2-4 —

(The Weymouth translation is particularly good for these three verses.)

Paul has just shown us our high calling. He now wants us to ponder that our responsibilities under this calling are so much greater than those under the Law Covenant. He will also use the opportunity to stress that, not only is Jesus above angels, but our calling is also greater than has been theirs—even though they were administrators of the Law Covenant. (See Acts 7:53.)

WORD
THROUGH
ANGELS:

The Law Covenant

RECOMPENSE: The Law required obedience and imposed penalties for purposeful laxities. (See Philippians 2:12, 13.)

ESCAPE: Thus we must expect that a greater covenant (the Sarah or Grace Covenant) would likewise have requirements and recompenses. (Compare Luke 12: 47, 48.)

FIRST SPOKEN: Our special salvation (immortality) was first spoken by Jesus. (See Hebrews 1:2; II Timothy 1:10.)

CONFIRMED: Certainly Jesus is sufficient authority; but, even as God required two or three witnesses under the Law, He is willing to provide the same for our faith. Jesus announced the new salvation. The Apostles and the disciples who witnessed Jesus' life and acts CONFIRMED its power.

GOD ALSO: God, Himself, provided the miraculous gifts of the spirit to secure the establishment of the church and its faith.

— 2:5 —

Here is the real TRANSITION verse. Just in case we have not received the point by this time, Paul says: The kingdom of which we have been speaking, unlike the Law, will not be administered by angels. It will be administered by you who have (verses 2-4) been appointed heirs of this great salvation! (Galatians 3:19)

— 2:6-9 —

Paul now quotes Psalm 8:4-6. (It is somewhat comforting to see that he can be as lax as we in finding citations! “Someone somewhere said...!”)

WHAT IS MAN: Adam, as representative of the race.

MINDFUL
OF HIM: David poignantly asks the question which each generation of Adam’s posterity has asked: “What does it all mean?” “Why are we here?” “Is there some plan for the universe?”

SON OF MAN: Adam’s descendants

LOOK OUT
FOR HIM: God keeps a watchful eye over the affairs of the race—even when He is not directly dealing with each individually. Thus He makes his rain to fall even on the unjust, and He restrains that part of man’s wrath which will not (ultimately) praise Him.

LOWER THAN
ANGELS: The translations which suggest TIME (“a little while lower”) are wrong. Man is, as a terrestrial being, a little lower in nature and power than the angels. There is no temporary condition implied. This Psalm 8 text is helpful to Paul’s general discussion. He has been discussing the honored place of angels in history. This Psalm confirms this. Angels have been, and always will be, greater than men.

CROWNED: The honor and glory with which Adam was crowned (and with which all mankind will eventually be crowned) refers to the perfection of nature and position which God created and will eventually restore.

APPOINTED
OVER:

This is God's intent for man. It had its representative statement in Eden. (Genesis 1:26) It will have its fullness at the end of the kingdom. (Revelation 22:5; Matthew 25:34; Psalm 115:16)

UNDER
HIS FEET:

These words fit well with 1:13. The symbol is rulership. Just as Jesus and his saints will subdue and rule, so man also is prophesied to subdue and rule the earth and its creatures.

NOTHING NOT
SUBJECT:

Paul begins here to comment on the Psalm he has quoted. His first point is that when mankind was promised to be the ruler over all the earth, it meant ALL the earth. "BUT," Paul says, "we do not yet see this to be true." (It is true only because God said IT WOULD BE SO. Isaiah 14:24; 55:8-11)

BUT WE DO SEE:

Paul's next "BUT" is so important! We "DO SEE" (NAS) Jesus who has been made an exact image in the flesh of Adam. Jesus, too, is:

- (1) made a little lower than the angels
and
- (2) crowned with glory and honor.

Paul is SO CAREFUL to use the exact equivalent description for Jesus as a man as the Psalmist used for Adam. Paul is showing the

RANSOM.

He says so. He says Jesus has these qualities so that, by the grace of God,

"He might taste death for everyone."

This is the first and the VITAL step to get man to the point prophesied by Psalm 8.

— 2:10-18 —

These verses are specific about the inclusion of the church, the body of Christ, as the administrators of the Kingdom. We have seen Paul's subtle introduction of the saints in 1:9, 14. We have seen his more important admonitions to us in 2:1-5

as heirs of a salvation which will result in an assignment far exceeding that of the angels who administered the Law. Now, in 2:10-18, Paul focuses on our legal and practical relationship to Jesus who (verse 9) provided the way for the restoration of the whole race.

WORDS are important to Paul's treatises. Some of these words, if noticed, tie these verses together.

- (1) SUFFERING is mentioned in verses 9, 10, and 18. This suffering is part of the sin-offering process and is clearly shared by the "brethren" of Christ. This suffering is part of the sanctification process featured in verse 11—the process which constitutes us as sons of God and brethren of Christ.
- (2) BRETHREN and CHILDREN (or SONS) are used in verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17. When "brethren" is used, it is from Jesus' relationship; when "children" is used, it is from God's relationship. In all cases it is making the point that the "son" relationship of 1:5 is to be shared (!), NOT with angels (who are, indeed, sons), but with Jesus' disciples. The magnitude of this thought in these verses is the very kernel of the sin offering concept, and also is humbling and sobering to the extreme.

— 2:10 —

HIM: This "Him" is Yahweh. While Jesus has all things for him as God's beloved, and through him as God's active agent, in the end, it is God for Whom all is done. (I Corinthians 15:28) The rest of this verse substantiates that the "Him" is God. It is He who brings His many sons to glory and Who perfected Jesus.

FOR IT WAS FITTING: The "For" connects this verse to verse 9. Paul is saying that (verse 9) Jesus was made a man FOR SUFFERING. Now he points out that this cheerfully-accepted suffering fittingly worked completion in Christ ("perfect") and fittingly makes him head of the other sons who also will be brought to glory.

SONS TO GLORY: Paul is not the least bit hesitant to proclaim God's intent to bring glorification to "many." The Christ is not one but many! (Obadiah 21)

AUTHOR: Jesus is (NAS) “author” or (KJV) “captain” of the other sons. The Greek means “prince-leader” in the sense of one who is both **FIRST** and **CHIEF** in this salvation. The same word is used in 12:2.

OF THEIR SALVATION: If Jesus is the **FIRST** and **CHIEF** of a particular salvation, clearly there are others of the **SAME** salvation. Paul steadily hammers home the concept that the new world promised in verses 6-8 will be established not by angels, but by Jesus **AND** others of the same salvation. Though we can only be humbled by these truths, we must not neglect to accept their import: the offering to do away with sin is made by Jesus **AND** his saints!

SUFFERINGS: Likewise, if Jesus is **FIRST** and **CHIEF** in being perfected by sufferings, his disciples are predestined to take part in the same. (Colossians 1:24) The “death” of Jesus (verse 9) is called a suffering. The saints are included in the same death. (Romans 6:3) Clearly, then, **TWO** objectives are in Paul’s mind. (1) We **DIE** with Jesus as a part of being offered to do away with sin. (2) The attendant experiences of that death (“suffering”) bring our characters to the “perfection” or completion needed to be successful in our new position as part of the mediation of the Kingdom.

— **2:11** —

FOR: Again we have a verse beginning with “for” (because). The word “for” here is saying:
 BECAUSE Jesus was sanctified by sufferings
 (verse 10) **and**
 BECAUSE he was the first of many to be so
 sanctified (verse 10):

HE WHO SANCTIFIES: **JESUS** is the active agent in sanctifying his followers.

THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED: The church undergoes (under the direction of Jesus) the same suffering-for-sanctification process—the

process (verse 10) which God invented in order to bring them to glory as His sons.

THEREFORE:

**ARE ALL
FROM ONE:**

From ONE FATHER (NAS) is the thought.

**FOR WHICH
REASON:**

BECAUSE they all are from ONE FATHER, they are manifestly BRETHREN.

NOT ASHAMED:

Though clearly we are inferior from a fleshly point of view (I Corinthians 1:25-30), Jesus has no shame in calling our sanctified new creatures his brethren because God designed the process which makes us Jesus' brethren. This is strongly (but subtly) shown in the following texts which Paul chooses in order to verify his contention.

— 2:12 —

First Paul quotes Psalm 22:22. He, no doubt, chose this Psalm because it specifically is about the ransom which Paul showed us in 2:9. But this Psalm as closely relates Jesus' sacrifice to his church as does Paul in Hebrews 2. The POWER of this Psalm in showing Paul's point is immeasurable. In Psalm 22:22 Jesus prophesies how he will praise God's name to his brethren. Paul sees the power IMPLIED in the words:

**I WILL
PROCLAIM:**

Jesus would not have to proclaim God's Name (character) to angels. They know all about it. That he must PROCLAIM God's Name to his brethren shows that these brethren are initially STRANGERS TO GOD! Even so, (verse 11) he is not ashamed to call them brethren because he knows God is begetting them as new creatures—"adopting" them, so to speak.

**MIDST OF
CONGREGATION:**

The word Paul uses to translate the Psalm's word for congregation is EKKLESIA. Again, we see that these "brethren" are "called out" (ecclesia) from a condition of separateness from God. Jesus sings God's praise to us, and we respond—a part of the sanctification process of 2:11.

— 2:13 —

In verse 13 Paul quotes Isaiah 8:17 and 18 but curiously (and significantly) breaks Isaiah's thought in two by saying "and again" between the two verses. He clearly wants us to contemplate the two thoughts separately.

TRUST IN HIM: It is important to understand the general context in Isaiah 8 in order to see why Paul uses this one lonely statement in so isolated a manner. After all, standing by itself, what does "I will put my trust in Him" have to do with Paul's subject? The fact is, it has MUCH to do with it. Notice in Isaiah 8:14, 15 that the falls of both natural and apostate spiritual Israel are predicted. These events each mark the start of a new age. The first marks the beginning of the Gospel Age, the second of the kingdom.

Verse 16 instructs that (1) the Law will be bound (the end of the administration of angels) and (2) Jesus' disciples will be sealed (with the Holy spirit). These events mark the change from dealing with Israel to dealing with Gentiles.

Verse 17 shows that Jesus is willing to wait during the Jewish "double" (hiding His face from the house of Jacob). This waiting corresponds to Hebrews 1:13. (It is also echoed in Zechariah 9:10: "I will cut off...the horse from Jerusalem and...speak peace to the heathen.") The last phrase of Isaiah 8:17 is Paul's lonely quote:

Isaiah (NAS):
"I will even look eagerly for Him."
and
Hebrews (NAS):
"I will put my trust in Him."

Paul's point (and Isaiah's) is that Jesus so trusts God that he is willing for the long wait between advents. This text is isolated SPECIFICALLY to show the wait between advents and its purpose.

What HELPS Jesus wait? The answer Paul stresses by beginning "And again...":

BEHOLD I AND
THE CHILDREN:

This is what helps Jesus wait. The intervening centuries are to develop God's CHILDREN (Jesus' brethren) whom God gave him. (Compare John 17:6.) Note, too, that Jesus DOESN'T say, "Behold the children," but "Behold I and the children." He has so entered the spirit of God's purposes that he relishes the RELATIONSHIP between himself and these other "sons" which God will bring to glory—He is not ashamed of them! "BEHOLD US!" Is not Jesus saying in this verse:

I am willingly, anxiously, and actively awaiting
the work of the Gospel Age to have its completion
so that the world will see the manifestation of the
sons of God to fulfill the promise of Psalm 8.
(Romans 8:18, 19, 22, 23)

— 2:14-16 —

The understanding of these verses has created some consternation in the minds of a number of brethren. Central to understanding them is to notice that the context is focusing on the body of Christ—the "children" or sons of God, the seed of Abraham, with which verse 13 concludes and which verse 16 summarizes.

Because the Apostle Paul wrote a nearly-parallel passage in Romans 8:12-17, we are privileged to have him thus interpret his own words here in Hebrews 2. In Romans 8, Paul uses a number of the same words he uses here in Hebrews. In both he speaks of "the flesh" or "flesh and blood." He uses the word "slavery" or "bondage" (both the same Greek). Both passages speak of "fear."

With this in mind, we suggest an interpretive reading:

- 2:13 "Behold the administrators of the kingdom to
 come: I and the children of God whom
 He has given to me."
- 2:14 Because these were not initially children of God,
 but rather condemned sons of Adam needing
 release from their condemnation and alienation
 from God, Jesus (Psalm 49:7) became a man
 to ransom these from their death sentence.
 Thus the power of the devil, instituted in
 Eden, is powerless (Romans 8:1) now over
 these who are God's sons not after the flesh,
 but after the spirit.

- 2:15 These have been delivered from “lifelong slavery” (Weymouth) under the fear of death and its consequences which kept them from having a sonship relationship to God. (Job 14:1-6)
- 2:16 All of this was necessary because, while angels administered the old covenant (2:2, 5), they will not administer the New Covenant. That is reserved for the promised seed of Abraham.

Bondages have existed both because of the Law and because of Adamic condemnation. (Romans 11:30-32) In order to become a part of the promised seed, either or both bondages which held their slaves under the certain “fear of death” had to be removed. Hence (Galatians 4:4), Jesus was “born of a woman” (to remove ADAMIC condemnation) and “born under the Law” (to remove its death sentence). Otherwise (4:5) sonship was not possible.

— 2:14 —

THE CHILDREN: These are those “children” of God with which verse 13 ended. When Paul says “Since then the children share in flesh and blood,” he is saying that the sons (children) of verse 13 couldn’t exist as sons while they are inheritors of Adam’s condemnation.

HE LIKEWISE: Jesus, to remove the Adamic curse, had to become flesh and blood—but not of Adam’s blood line. Paul is here referring back to his reasoning on Psalm 8 where he compared Adam’s perfect humanity to Jesus’ perfect humanity (verses 7 and 9).

**RENDER THE
DEVIL**

POWERLESS: The words of Jesus in Acts 26:17, 18 (quoted there by Paul) substantiate how Satan is rendered powerless in having the power of death to affect the saints. In the Acts passage, Jesus shows how both Jew and Gentile are turned from “the dominion of Satan to God IN ORDER THAT they may receive...an INHERITANCE...by faith” in Jesus. This INHERITANCE, of course, is to be counted as part of the seed of Abraham—to be sons.

POWER OF
DEATH:

This is referring to the present. The saints are NOW released from the power of death. By FAITH we have received the LIFE we would have gained at the close of the Millennium. It is this which we can sacrifice to become SPIRITUAL sons of God—hence, “the children” of verses 13 and 14. This is the thought of II Timothy 1:10 which shows that Jesus “abolished death” as he brought the true gospel of life and immortality to light.

— 2:15 —

DELIVER:

This verb refers to our (the church’s) deliverance from the condemnation in Adam. We HAD TO BE DELIVERED from the death sentence and all of its concomitant human weaknesses and fears before we could be God’s sons.

FEAR OF
DEATH:

This term describes the state of the whole race except for those who have been delivered from it. Remember Paul’s parallel sermon in Romans 8:15. He points out that our deliverance from death and into sonship is NOT SLAVERY which leads to “fear AGAIN.” Thus we HAD this slavery and fear as condemned humans. The new “bondage” to Christ is no bondage! It also has no fear, as our past had.

It is likely that this concept of “FEAR AGAIN” led Bro. Russell to think of the Great Company when he commented on Hebrews 2:15. This text is NOT ABOUT the Great Company, but the Great Company can let itself have “FEAR AGAIN” if it allows its humanity to rise above its spirituality. But that 2:15 is NOT about the Great Company is manifest by the context which leads to verse 16. Verse 16 begins with “For” (Because). It is clear that verse 16 is NOT about the Great Company. Therefore, verse 15 cannot be, either.

— 2:16 —

FOR:

BECAUSE Jesus has delivered the children from the sentence, he has made them part of the seed of Abraham.

DOES NOT TAKE
HOLD OF

ANGELS: Jesus DOES NOT press angels into service to administer the New Covenant (2:5).

DOES TAKE
HOLD OF:

He DOES press the seed of Abraham into service to administer the New Covenant (2:10).

The accurate translation of this verse is important. The literal reading is: “For assuredly he does not take hold of angels, but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham.” The thought is to draft them into the service.

— 2:17 —

THEREFORE:

Therefore = AS THE SEED OF ABRAHAM.
Jesus, too, is part of this seed. This continues the thought from the previous verse.

HAD TO
BE MADE:

Literally: “He was obligated to be...”
In other words, as Jesus AND his disciples together constitute the seed which will bless the world, it is obligatory that the entire seed knows how to be a merciful priesthood, sympathetic to the fallen race and its experiences. Jesus even experienced the estrangement from God when he cried out, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?”

LIKE HIS
BRETHREN:

Like the rest who constitute the seed.

HIGH PRIEST:

Only in Hebrews is Jesus called High Priest.
This had to impress a Jewish mind which had never known a high priest outside of the tribe of Levi. In Hebrews, Jesus is called High Priest fifteen times.

PROPITIATION:

While the word certainly emphasizes and includes the payment for sin, it is here very much inclusive of the idea of the eradication of sin. As the antitype of the tabernacle sin-offering picture, Jesus is less importantly a ransomer than he is a priest. This verse proves the point. One need not be “merciful” to give a ransom; but he must be merciful to be an effectual mediator between God and fallen man. The

ransom paid for “the sin of the world.” This verse makes propitiation for sins.

— **2:18** —

In this verse, Paul returns to the cause of the “children” or “brethren.” Verse 17 showed how Jesus as part of the seed could bless the world ultimately. But this verse shows how his human experience is used first so that he can succor the saints.

TEMPTED: Though he was perfect (even as Adam and Eve in perfection) he was subject to temptation by the adversary. He thus **UNDERSTOOD** the details of temptation. If it was a task for a perfect human to resist, he fully understands how an imperfect human must struggle even more.

AID: We can never forget: **HE IS OUR HELPER.**

**THOSE WHO
ARE TEMPTED:** The saints.

PART II

JESUS' SUPERIORITY TO MOSES

Chapter 3:1 to 4:13

The Premise:

While Moses, the greatest earthly name to the Jew, established a “house,” or covenant arrangement, he was only typical of Jesus who was actually the power behind its establishment. The Law Age promises were fruitless. We have an opportunity to gain what Israel could not attain.

– 3:1-6 –

Throughout his writings, Paul favors the word “therefore.” He uses it to begin this section to impress upon our minds the CONNECTION of previous thoughts to his new presentation. In these verses Paul wishes us to focus on the head of the Abrahamic Seed as contrasted with Moses. In later verses he will return to concentration on the body.

In these verses it is important to note the use of the word “house.” It is easy quickly to assume more than one house is meant, but this is not so. The word is used in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. It always refers to God’s house. This appears to be a code for those in covenant relationship with God. Thus, God’s “house” includes those under the Law, those under Grace now, and ultimately those under the New Covenant. The fact is, as was clearly stated in 1:2, Jesus MADE these ages. Thus he MADE the “house” in each of its phases. So, as these verses conclude, he who MADE the house is obviously far greater than he who served as mediator during one phase.

– 3:1 –

HOLY

BRETHREN:

Paul can call us all “holy” brethren because of the facts of his argument in 2:10-16. We are brethren and we are holy only because we are sanctified as new creatures to be part of the Abrahamic seed.

HEAVENLY

CALLING:

By context it is clear that this is the equivalent of being Abraham’s Seed. There is no other call now. There is only the one hope of our calling. God does not any the less love all, but He is NOW interested in ONLY ONE THING:

“Behold I and the children
God has given me.”

(2:13)

CONSIDER

JESUS:

By doing so, we gain AWE as to our calling and to his incredible station in the plan. It helps us never to cheapen or to take for granted that to which we have been invited.

APOSTLE:

ONLY HERE is Jesus called an Apostle. The word means “sent forth.” (Compare John 17:3.) Clearly Jesus was sent for many reasons, but here the thought is humbling: he is sent FOR US—to lead us in our profession or confession.

Being sent from God, his words to us can be nothing short of authoritative, sacred, and of incredible value. In his great majesty, he is willing to come to us as a messenger—a servant! (Luke 12:37)

HIGH PRIEST: As mentioned, only in Hebrews is Jesus called High Priest. To the Jews there was no higher living earthly authority than the High Priest. He was God’s direct oracle to Israel. This echoes Paul’s point in 1:2.

**OUR
CONFESSION:** Some translators prefer “profession.” Either way the point is important. What we profess and confess is the basis of our Christian lives. (Romans 10:9, 10)

— 3:2 —

**FAITHFUL
TO HIM:** When (3:1) Paul said to “consider” Jesus, he had in mind primarily his FAITHFULNESS. The rest of the chapter will mourn Israel’s failure in this respect and will admonish our attention to faithfulness. In the end, it is Jesus’ faithfulness to God that sets the example to all and shames all who forsake this total faithfulness.

WHO MADE HIM: Some translators prefer “appointed” to “made”—probably because of the comparison to Moses who was not “made” but was “appointed.” But the word is better translated “made” and becomes, among other things, one of the many anti-trinitarian texts that say so much about the relationship of Father and Son. Jesus, despite his glories before, during, and after his manhood, never forgets that he is “made.” This remembrance triggers his rich humility toward his Creator.

AS MOSES: Moses, despite his imperfections and eventual human failing, was also faithful. It is for this reason that he was “the meekest man in all the earth.” (Numbers 12:3) For this he was granted to be a type of Jesus in mediating the covenant between God and Israel.

**IN ALL
HIS HOUSE:** Numbers 12:7 is the source for Paul’s words here. Numbers makes it clear that this is NOT Moses’ house, but God’s. Moses was faithful in his service to God by his ministrations in God’s house—i.e., among those who were in covenant

relationship with God. The word “in” is important. It will soon (verse 5 versus verse 6) be used to make an imperative distinction. Moses was not only faithful as a servant, but he was PART of the house, hence “in” it.

— 3:3, 4 —

Paul now shows why Jesus is so much greater than Moses (the name all Jews revere). He shows that Moses, being “in” or part of the house, is naturally not so important as he who MADE the house. Hebrews 1:2 had shown how Jesus MADE the ages (the periods in which various covenants make various people a part of God’s house). Without argument, “the builder of the house has more honor than the house.” Clearly (verse 4), Paul reasons that Moses only mediated a covenant of which he was part. But Jesus, behind the scenes as God’s agent, BUILT the covenant or house.

— 3:5, 6 —

FAITHFUL IN: Note: Verse 5 has Moses IN God’s house. Verse 6 has Jesus OVER God’s house. These two verses are a contrast between Moses and Jesus. Both are FAITHFUL. But Moses is faithful IN, while Jesus is faithful OVER, the house of God.

AS A SERVANT: It is clear that in one respect Jesus voluntarily is a servant of God. But that is not Paul’s point. He is showing that Moses’ position is that of an appointed servant in someone else’s house, whereas Jesus (verse 5) is the heir of the house. Hence, again, Jesus is by position greater than Moses.

**FOR A
TESTIMONY
OF THINGS
LATER:**

Paul is making a second point. Moses serves as a TYPE of Christ who also will SERVE as a Mediator of a covenant. This, of course, stresses the SIMILARITY rather than the CONTRAST between the two Mediators.

BUT CHRIST: We are back to the contrast which makes Jesus greater.

AS A SON: As mentioned above, Jesus is heir, not a hired servant, of God’s house.

OVER: Because he is heir, he is not IN (as Moses in verse 5), but OVER God's house.

WHOSE
HOUSE
ARE WE:

As the Gospel Age begins, the true seed of Abraham, now under a covenant of grace, has become God's household due to the "fall" of natural Israel (Romans 11). Ephesians 2:19-22 explains how we have become this house.

IF: With this little word, Paul launches the discussion he will pursue through 4:13. Our FAITHFULNESS (as was Jesus' faithfulness in 2:2) becomes the "IF" which will secure our part in this "house." It will rely on confidence—a word which means "with fidelity;" and it will rely on our "boast" of our HOPE. Romans 4:2 uses this same Greek word: Abraham could not boast of works because it would not glorify God. But the church can and should "boast" of hope because that does glorify God. It demonstrates our confidence or faith in His promises.

— 3:7-11 —

Paul begins this section again with one of his favorite words: therefore. In verse 6 he had expressed what will become a recurring theme throughout the book of Hebrews: hold on to our confidence. Now he quotes Psalm 95:7-11 to show how our confidence must far exceed that of Israel under Moses. The psalm contains words which Paul will keep repeating through Chapter 4: TODAY; REST; HARDEN HEARTS.

Very important to receiving a special blessing from Paul's use of Psalm 95 is to note the "untranslated translation" of verse 8 in the New American Standard. The Hebrews 3: reads:

"Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me as in the day of trial in the wilderness."

The Psalm 95:8 reads:

"Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah as in the day of Massah in the wilderness."

Exodus 17:7 clearly is the reference. The place names stress how Israel quarreled with Moses and tested the Lord by showing their lack of faith regarding His leadings of them. This becomes Paul's point for us. We will be successful

only as we retain complete and abiding faith that God's presence constantly is guiding our walk in the narrow way.

— 3:7 —

HOLY SPIRIT: Paul wants to remind us that prophecy, though written by men, is the Word of God—dictated by the Holy Spirit. Thus its authority is unquestionable (as are the inspired words of Jesus and the Apostles). To listen to them brings health and life. To ignore them brings tragedy to any in covenant relationship with the Lord. Peter makes the same point in II Peter 1:20, 21 where the clear translation would be something like:

“But know this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own (the prophet's) prompting; for no prophecy was ever recorded by the prophet's will; but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

TODAY: “Today” equals the Gospel Age. It is a contrast to the **YESTERDAY** when Israel rebelled.

IF YOU HEAR: Paul's admonition (and David's) is not to everyone, but only to those who hear and respond to the “call.” The words are for the Spirit-begotten.

— 3:8 —

DO NOT HARDEN: The Greek is SKLERUNO as in our medical usage SCLEROSIS. Arteriosclerosis is hardening of the arteries. Paul here is speaking of coronary sclerosis—a heart which has lost flexibility. This seems serious for an organ which relies on flexibility in order to supply the body with circulation. The suggestion seems to be that Israel would not allow the Lord to flex and mold their characters to a likeness He desired. Their inflexibility prevented their learning. The lesson for us is manifest.

AS WHEN: (See comments above on 3:7-11.) We, unlike Israel, must not “quarrel” or “grumble” (Exodus 17:3, NAS) with the tutorial experiences from God. Nor must we “test” God—believe that since He's with us, we can go on having our own

way and He will be happy to continue getting us out of trouble.

— 3:9 —

TRIED BY
TESTING:

This is clearly the opposite of the way things ought to be. God is supposed to try us and test us for our development. But Israel's example here shows how perverse we humans can be. It is not for us to try and test God!

SAW MY WORKS: Nevertheless, observe God's patience! For 40 years He worked His works among them, faithfully endeavoring to build their faith without which they were doomed to failure. How potent is this lesson. While the Law was based on works, even the spirit of those works (let alone the letter) was not possible without the faith—the CONFIDENCE (verse 6) that must be attained and maintained.

— 3:10 —

I WAS ANGRY: God uses "Therefore." The NAS in Psalm 95 says he "loathed" that generation.

GO ASTRAY
IN HEARTS:

Deuteronomy 31:27 has Moses telling Israel, "I know your rebellion and willfulness." These are the qualities which Paul wants us to remember to avoid.

DID NOT KNOW
MY WAYS:

Barclay translates it, "and they never learned my ways." This thought is so much more forceful. Not knowing can be changed. Not learning is inexcusable.

— 3:11 —

The NAS Psalm 95:11 is the clearest:

"Therefore I swore in my anger:
Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

ENTER REST:

The REST for Israel is shown in Deuteronomy 12:7-10. It was to be the promised land. However, the same lack of confidence they had in the wilderness followed them into the land so that it also proved for them to be no rest. (See Deuteronomy 28:58-66.) Joshua and Caleb, however, were men of faith. They experienced rest of soul both in the wilderness and in the land.

It is likely, however, in the larger sense, that this oath of God was one to exclude Israel from entering the “rest” which comes from being part of the high calling. The Law was a teacher to lead them to Messiah; but the nation failed to be led there and never entered that rest.

It is interesting to note HOW God rested on the 7th creative day. He did so by handing the administration of that day into the hands of His Son. God thus rested, knowing that Jesus would complete the work and hand it back to God at the close of the Millennium. Thus, in essence, when God says “Enter my rest,” He is admonishing that we, too, trust Jesus as he completes the work. Israel could not accept Jesus and, therefore, could not enter the same rest that God had entered.

Note Volume 6, page 48, especially paragraph 2: “Thus did Jehovah God manifest his confidence in his own great plan of the ages, and in his Only Begotten Son to whom he has committed its full execution. **This confidence of the Father in the Son** is...an illustration of how our faith should so grasp the Anointed One that we also can trust every interest and concern to him...Believers, like God, have perfect confidence in Christ’s ability and willingness to carry out all of Jehovah’s great projects...”

— 3:12-19 —

In these verses Paul begins the application to us of the lessons of Psalm 95. In verses 12-15 he says, in essence,

Don’t have hardened hearts like Israel.
Build the hearts in each other during
this wonderful, limited-time calling.
That is the only way we can hold the
faith with which we began;
and holding it is the essence of success.

Again: don't test God as Israel did!

In verses 15-19, Paul recites Israel's failings for our benefit. Reading these verses QUICKLY helps to get the spirit of Paul's preaching here. The questions in these verses are rhetorical, ending with the ALL-IMPORTANT conclusion: UNBELIEF (lack of faith) is the culprit!

— **3:12** —

- TAKE CARE:** Only by diligence can we avoid Israel's mistakes.
- HEART:** This is a symbol of innermost motivations—often not evident even to ourselves. To have an unbelieving heart is to have innermost motivations not primarily directed by faith. This heart (for a Christian) can only be classified as “evil.” The result of any motivations lacking in the faith element is, in the end, to fall away from the LIVING God.
- LIVING GOD:** Paul says LIVING God because our hearts can set up other gods—gods which are not alive and which do not contribute to our faith development. Israel forgot frequently that God was ALIVE and AMONG them. This verse thus refers back to verse 10.

— **3:13** —

- BUT:** With this word Paul sets up a solution: avoid verse 12 by practicing verse 13.
- ENCOURAGE:** Some translations read “EXHORT.” The context (rather than concordances or lexicons) suggests that “encourage” is the better word. (The same consideration applies in 10:25 which deals with the same concept.) “Exhort” means “put out words.” “Encourage” means “put a heart into.” Because Paul clearly is speaking of heart condition in the previous verse, and the Lord speaks of it in the Psalm 95 quote, ENCOURAGE is the thought.
- DAY AFTER DAY:** Here Paul sets before us a challenge and an ideal and a necessity. The body of Christ must, every day—every opportunity—devote itself to strengthening, edifying, PUTTING A HEART of faith into each other. Anything that would discourage, weaken, hinder, or frustrate the spiritual progress of another must be thoughtfully and pointedly

avoided. This is difficult for the natural man. But it must become the focus and habit of the spiritual man.

TODAY: Paul will not let go of this word for some time. “TODAY” is the equivalent of the Gospel Age. He wants us to meditate on its limited time, its unusual opportunity, and that it is quite different from the “yesterday” of Israel under the Law or the “tomorrow” of the world under the New Covenant of works. “Today” is the high calling. No theme of the book of Hebrews is more evident or important. Paul, in every way possible, pleads with us to recognize, cherish, honor, and pursue this unspeakable offer made to the saints.

Thus he says, keep each others’ hearts strong until the door closes lest any individual fall short of such an opportunity.

HARDENED: Hardening—putting up a wall between ourselves and God—is the interjection of self over faith. (See comments on 4:1.)

DECEITFULNESS: It seems in this context that sin is the loss of faith. Paul warns that this is a common malady. We can deceive ourselves without trying by practicing our own wisdom rather than resting in God’s Providences.

— 3:14 —

PARTAKERS: Successful in becoming members of the 144,000.

IF: Paul here echoes, as he will do repeatedly, his words from verse 6. A good beginning must continue to a good end. The cumulative nature of good meditations (Psalm 19:7-14) is what the true church must develop. The cumulative nature of ignoring weaknesses is what hardened Israel. Thus he will now (in the following verses) show how Israel’s good beginning DID NOT continue:

— 3:15 —

WHILE: This whole verse, a repetition of verses 7 and 8, is put here to say:

Throughout this age and your lives in it, **HOLD FAST** the faith which brought you to saying “yes” to His calling. **KNOW** and **AVOID** what Israel did that made them lose faith.

— **3:16-18** —

To help us remember what to avoid, Paul supplies a list of rhetorical questions. We almost can hear him preaching with each sentence proclaiming, “JUST WHO did this...?”

WHO PROVOKED: With indignation Paul exclaims, **HOW** can anyone dare provoke God?

HEARD: To add to the indignation he adds: “After all, they **HEARD** Him and His promises and **STILL** tested Him!”

ALL WHO CAME OUT: He answers himself to make a point: All who came out died in the wilderness (save Joshua and Caleb). And they did this **DESPITE** the faithful leadership of Moses! Paul clearly wants us to see how perverse our natures are. Even with the **BEST** of leadership, an entire generation can lose faith and destroy itself.

ANGRY 40 YEARS: Again, though in an indignant mood, Paul makes wonderful learning observations. Israel did not fail because God left them! He didn't. Even though He was angry with them, He continued to lead them for the **FULL PERIOD OF TESTING** (of which 40 is a symbol). Israel fell because **THEY LEFT GOD**. And the self-imposed retribution followed: they fell in the wilderness; they did not enter the promised land of rest.

NOT ENTER REST: Here “rest” is the literal blessings promised by entering the land. God swore because it was appropriate. He simply was uttering the eternal law: we get what we deserve. He didn't issue a blanket swearing: “I give up on all of you because most of you have tried Me.’ **NO**. He was specific: “Those who were disobedient” would not enter. Joshua and Caleb did.

— 3:19 —

AND SO WE SEE: This is Paul's way of saying, "Thus we have learned the lesson; thus we see the point."

BECAUSE OF
UNBELIEF:

After all of Paul's detail, he doesn't want us to miss his point—the point upon which he builds most of the book of Hebrews—

DON'T LOSE FAITH.
WITHOUT IT,
WE WILL NOT ATTAIN THE PRIZE.

Exodus 17:7 ends with the cryptic and pathetic statement of Israel's problem:
"Is the Lord among us or not?"
We must never let such a question lodge in our thoughts.

— 4:1 —

THEREFORE: Paul uses this term to concentrate our minds on connections and conclusions. In his writings it is somewhat similar to "And I saw..." in Revelation, and never should be ignored.

FEAR: The Greek is "be alarmed." Alarms STARTLE us. That is Paul's point. If we find ourselves even in the least bit doing what Israel did, we should feel our bodies shake with realization of our unwelcome tendencies. Bro. Russell comments on this verse: "Nearly all who fall away first lose all fear" (Reprint 3596). Self over faith is deadly.

WHILE A
PROMISE
REMAINS:

While the door is yet open and while we haven't abandoned our hope of the high calling.

HIS REST:

There are TWO rests for the Christian. One is to enter consecration—the rest IN THE WILDERNESS. The other is glorification—the rest of being on the other side as part of the body (our "promised land"). This verse refers to the latter.

ANY ONE OF YOU: It seems Paul here has a two-fold meaning. Our consecrations are INDIVIDUAL. Therefore, “any ONE of us” should be self-concerned about our progress. But he also said, “Let US fear lest ANY ONE...” This is likely a reference back to his thought in 3:13. WE (“us”) want to encourage each other individual in the church toward faithfulness.

SHOULD SEEM: This is a weak and ambiguous translation. What does “seem” mean? And “seem” to WHOM? Barclay translates it “be judged.” Strong suggests “be accounted.” The correct thought seems to be “lest any one be accounted (by God) to have come short.”

— 4:2 —

This is a focus verse. Paul compares us with Israel, saying that we BOTH began by having the “good news” preached to us. He probably means the Gospel itself which was first proclaimed to Abraham. (Galatians 3:8) Hebrews here is thus a parallel to Romans 11 where the olive tree is the Abrahamic promise from which the natural branches were excised and the wild branches grafted in.

BUT THE WORD

THEY HEARD: Here is the crux of Paul’s argument. Truth without faith is fruitless. Israel was not profited by the wonderful message BECAUSE:

NOT UNITED

BY FAITH: Faith gives life to information. No wonder, then, that Paul makes faith the catalyst for success throughout this wonderful book. Unless our characters change because of the information we receive, we are fruitless branches worthy of being discarded.

— 4:3-11 —

In these verses Paul focuses on our efforts to live that “rest” which a true Christian experiences when his faith trusts Jesus. Just as God rested as the 7th day began because He, Himself, trusted His Son successfully and faithfully to manage affairs, so He also invites others to enter His state of mind-rest with Him. The opportunity is first offered to Israel; then to us. Even the world will have the opportunity once the mediation has begun.

A paraphrase of these verses is helpful before discussing any particulars.

- 3- We Christians who have believed enough to commit to full consecration have begun in that way of rest because, as God said, “I was angry with Israel’s faith-failures and was thus determined that they would lose the opportunity of the High Calling.” God began His rest in 4126 B.C., and, although He has had so long to wait to enjoy others’ entering it, He was not willing to compromise with Israel on the matter.
- 4- Thus this whole “rest confidently in Jesus” concept was God’s intention when He recorded in Scripture that “God rested on the 7th day from all His works.”
- 5- But He also forcibly says of Israel: “THEY shall NOT enter this rest state.”
- 6- Clearly, then, He INTENDED for someone to enter His rest WITH him, but it was NOT Israel who, despite having the Gospel preached to them through Abraham their father, FAILED through disobedience to enter the rest He wanted to give them.
- 7- Thus, MANY YEARS AFTER Israel’s failure, God is STILL prophesying through David that He would FIX another day’s opportunity for someone else to enter that rest. So, David wrote of “TODAY” (the Gospel Age) and said, “If you hear the High Calling in this new day, do not get hard hearts (as Israel did).”
- 8- If going into the Promised Land with Joshua were the rest which God meant, God never would through David in Psalm 95 have prophesied about another day coming AFTER that.
- 9- Thus we can be certain that we are secure in our belief that we can now enter that rest
- 10- because if we have, indeed, accepted our calling, we, like God, have given up doing our own things.
- 11- Consequently we must struggle to maintain that on-going condition of rest and not be reprobate as was Israel.

— 4:3 —

WE: The Gospel Church

HAVE BELIEVED: As demonstrated by full consecration—figurative “beheading”

ENTER: Now—In the “Today” known as “a day of salvation” or the Gospel Age (II Corinthians 6:2)

THAT REST: The one God promised in Psalm 95 after He had denied it to Israel.

MY REST: Here is the real clue. It is God’s rest—the confidence He had at the time Adam fell that His Son would correct the matter.

ALTHOUGH: God was WILLING to wait a long while to find those willing to have the same confidence in the Son as He did.

HIS WORKS: His active engagement in the affairs of men.

FINISHED: He ceased dealing with human affairs at that remotely-distant date.

— 4:4 —

FOR: Because

HE HAS
THUS SAID: Here is an important concept. The word “THUS” is telling us that in Genesis 2:2 God intended for us to understand that it is possible to put aside all concern, worry, or complaint about a matter AS LONG AS we have total faith that it will all turn out well because it is in good hands.

CONCERNING
THE
SEVENTH DAY: The entire 7000 years in which He remains inactive AWAITING good results. Thus WE can, at any time during this period, ALSO enter His Sabbath Rest—having the same confidence and lack of concern.

– 4:5 –

AGAIN: And I remind you still once more, Israel did not get this point!

– 4:6 –

SINCE IT
REMAINS: Since Israel didn't avail themselves of this promised privilege: (in 4:7)
God FIXED ANOTHER day of opportunity.

FORMERLY
HAD GOSPEL: The Jews

FAILED: Gave up all opportunity to rest in Messiah

BECAUSE OF
DISOBEDIENCE: Disobedience clearly comes from lack of trust—an insecure feeling that God can't or won't handle it for us!

– 4:7 –

(from 4:6) SINCE the opportunity remains:

HE: God

FIXES: The Gospel Age has limits.

CERTAIN DAY: The Christian Age, and calls it

“TODAY:” as opposed to the “yesterday” of Israel's disobedience

THROUGH
DAVID: in Psalm 95:

AFTER SO LONG: written about 500 years AFTER Israel's opportunity began

AS HAS
BEEN SAID: Paul says, “I know I'm repeating; but the point is important!”

“TODAY:” Now, since Jesus' day.

HEAR: The High Calling

DO NOT
HARDEN: Profit from Israel's failure!

— 4:8 —

FOR: Because

IF JOSHUA: If the old type of entering the Holy Land were the real objective, then

HE WOULD
NOT HAVE
SPOKEN:

God would not prophesy through David what would have had fulfillment 500 years earlier. In other words: BELIEVE NOW THAT YOU ARE IN THIS SPECIAL DAY AND SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY!

— 4:9 —

REMAINS: The offer made to Israel now is made to us.

SABBATH REST: We are invited, as God did, not to be concerned with the outcome of the world's ills because we, like Him, can trust in Jesus that it all will be remedied.

PEOPLE OF GOD: The change of terminology here is interesting. Perhaps it is this which stimulated Bro. Russell to apply this verse to the Millennium (which on the surface the context does not seem to warrant). It is certainly possible that Paul is here expanding his horizon to say that, not only will we now be able to enter His rest, but eventually we will enter a greater rest during which ALL WHO WILL BE GOD'S PEOPLE (Israel and the world included) will enjoy a Sabbath of rest and restitution. The thought is lovely even if the succeeding verses do not strongly support it.

— 4:10 —

Paul repeats because he doesn't want us to miss his point first introduced in verse 3:

If we do, as God did and does, fully place our confidence in Jesus' work (present and future), we will not belabor our own plans, ways, preferences, concerns, etc. Thus the spiritual lesson of all of these verses is that Christians, living up to their privileges, will have no inner turmoil. Compare the promise made to Israel in Isaiah 58:13, 14. They did not inherit it. We can.

— **4:11** —

- THEREFORE:** Knowing all of this
- DILIGENT:** Apply all of our resources
- TO ENTER:** Not to begin, but to **BE ENTERED CONTINUALLY INTO**—
to persevere in the narrow way
- THAT REST:** The rest of trust in the Son which God enjoys
- LEST:** So that we do not become statistics as did Israel, whose example was given to keep us from doing the same thing.

— **4:12, 13** —

These two verses conclude Part II of the book of Hebrews. Their message, briefly, is that God is not mocked. His Word will help us distinguish between the old creature and the new. It will help faith triumph over the flesh. Isaiah 29:13-16 gave much the same warning to fleshly Israel who, while they did not have new creatures with which to deal, could not keep their stated intentions in line with their deeds. (Brother Russell deals with this struggle of the new creature as related to 4:12 in Volume 6, p. 136, last paragraph.)

— **4:12** —

- FOR:** This word connects us to the previous material. Thus Paul is saying that God's Word, if we let it, will help us not to fall to our weaker natures, as did Israel.
- WORD OF GOD:** It is likely that Paul is referring exclusively to written Scripture. Even though the New Testament was yet incomplete as Paul was writing, the Old Testament was

available, parts of the New were being distributed, and, before long, “that which is perfect” (the whole Bible—I Corinthians 13:10) would be in the hands of the saints. In the wilderness, Israel had no Scriptures. Moses was in the process of writing the first five books which would be available only by public readings once Israel entered the land—which was AFTER the 40 years of the provocation. (Hebrews 3:8, 9) We are, indeed, blessed to have ready access to such a treasure!

LIVING & ACTIVE: Barclay says “effectively alive.” History has demonstrated the living power of the Word. It has been hidden, burned, and condemned as reading material—all because it is a **LIVING THREAT** to all error by the power of its message. The Bible always requires and gets a **RESPONSE**. No book ever has had its incredible influence.

SHARPER: While we all symbolically call the Bible a “sword” (Ephesians 6:17), Paul here is making the point that the symbol falls short. No sword is so sharp!

**TWO-EDGED
SWORD:**

“Sword” (here and Ephesians 6:17) is not the huge broadsword of King Arthur legends. The Greek implies a fighting knife—something light and swift and easily-cutting in either direction. It is dangerous as an **EXPOSER**, not just as a puncturer. Its power against all kinds of evils (not just religious) is manifest in Psalm 149:6-9.

**PIERCING
AS FAR AS:**

While “sword” has become Paul’s metaphor, it now is clear that our focus must be on **THE WORD**, not on the sword. The power of God’s inspired words will go right through us to the point of separating one part of ourselves from another.

THE DIVISION: These words are important because they are the point of the argument. Paul **WANTS** us to know that in ourselves dwell things which must be separated from—**DIVIDED** from—the reality of our Christian lives.

SOUL & SPIRIT: The first thing which needs separation is our flesh from our new creatures. Paul uses “soul” to represent the fleshly sentient beings which we are. He uses “spirit” (which would here better be translated “mind”) to represent our new thought processes—that which we usually call the “new creature.” These two parts of us cannot dwell in unity. Only the Word of God can separate the one from the other.

**JOINTS &
MARROW:**

These symbols are a little more difficult to fathom, but the thought is quite similar to soul and spirit. Joints are the moving parts of the body—the parts which give direction to our physical bodies. Marrow is the producer of blood → life. It is our marrow—our production of our new life in Christ—which must dominate and be divided from the natural motion (joints) of our fleshly existence. Thus we might say that the Word separates our motivations from our actions. Paul uses this contrast extensively in his writings. He asks who will deliver him from his body; he strives to keep his body under; he says he serves God with his mind, but sin with his body. Romans 6:12-14 summarizes his admonitions for us along this line.

ABLE TO JUDGE: The KJV says, “a discerner.” The Greek is KRITIKOS, meaning decisive. The thought seems to be that when our thoughts and intentions face the Holy Scriptures, it becomes immediately clear whether or not our desires are truly in harmony with those of God.

— **4:13** —

Based on the last phrase of verse 12, these words show that God is fully aware of how we respond to that “decisive” reaction we have when we face His Word and compare it to self.

PART III

JESUS REPLACES
ALL FORMER PRIESTHOODS

Chapter 4:14-8:5

The Premise:

While Jesus' sacrificing was typified by the
Aaronic priesthood, the priesthood of
Melchizedek showed also in type that
Jesus far exceeds any priestly functions of
the Law Covenant.

A NOTE REGARDING PART III OF HEBREWS

This particular section of Hebrews does not appear as clear to the eye at first glance as did the previous two sections. This is due, in part, to the Apostle's interruption of his own discourse for a section of lecturing to the Hebrew brethren of his day—a lecture which does us all good. Thus Paul's lesson on Jesus as superior to the Aaronic Priesthood and on Jesus as the fulfillment of the Melchizedek ideal, has a parenthetical interlude. Part III can be diagrammed as:

(A) **4:14 — 5:10 =**

Jesus as the same as, yet different from, the Aaronic Priesthood, better typified by Melchizedek.

(B) **5:11 — 6:20 =**

Admonitions and encouragements to develop the faith of Abraham upon which the NEW priesthood is centered—thus showing the church (as well as Jesus) as being an integral part of the new priesthood.

(C) **7:1 — 8:5 =**

The reasons for a Melchizedek Priesthood's replacing the Aaronic Priesthood.

— **4:14 - 5:10** —

This set of verses might well be entitled:

THE SAME, ONLY DIFFERENT.

These verses open Paul's discussion on Jesus as a priest far above former priesthods—even though those former priesthods were typical of him. Paul will refer both to the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood and will show, particularly with Aaron, how Jesus is the same and also how he is very different. A contrast with the details of the typical Melchizedek is not possible since, as Paul explains in 5:11, Paul's hearers were not spiritually mature enough to receive whatever lessons Paul might be able to impart. Nevertheless, seeing

how Jesus fulfills the best parts of the Aaronic type, and how he differs from it in several ways, is so beneficial to us all and is very exciting.

Even though these verses begin an entirely new section of Hebrews, they are inseparably connected to what has come before. As we progress through Hebrews, we will be forced constantly to look backwards to former uses of similar words and ideas to see connections. Paul is a great builder. He lays foundations which function as part of later arguments.

— 4:14 —

SINCE THEN: Paul opens this section by linking it with these words to the previous material. Thus he is explaining that we CAN, indeed, enter God's rest (4:11); we CAN, indeed, be successful in having the Word separate our flesh from our New Creatures (4:12); we CAN, indeed, be able to stand honestly before God's all-seeing sight (4:13) BECAUSE we have the priest about which Paul will now tell us.

GREAT HIGH PRIEST: It appears that here and in 10:21 we have the only two instances where priest or high priest has the modifier "great." By this usage it seems Paul is continuing his teaching that Jesus excels over all others. None other has or could be called "great."

PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS: Some translators render this "passed into heaven." This, in itself, would be sufficient to exalt Jesus above other priests. The NAS (and others), however, translate it "passed through the heavens"—a wording which seems more justified by the Greek. Since this wording makes the meaning more obscure, it is easy to see why "into the heavens" would appeal to many translators. Apparently Paul wanted us to understand, as he had taught in chapter 1, that Jesus was not just "in" heaven, but that he was exalted above all other religious authority; he had passed "through" and beyond all other things and beings which had heavenly authority. Hebrews 7:26 gives the thought, and Ephesians 4:10 echoes it.

THE SON OF GOD: Again, Paul need not have added this phrase. He does so to continue his mantra begun in 1:2—God now speaks through His son, not through angels. (1:5; 5:5)

HOLD FAST: It is BECAUSE of this priest that we will be able to “hold fast.” This FAITH element of Hebrews is inescapable. In 3:6 and 3:14 Paul had admonished the same faithfulness—the condition which Israel could not maintain. The entire book of Hebrews centers around this admonition and goal: hang on! Don’t allow faith to fail you.

— 4:15 —

FOR: BECAUSE—because we are not alone!

SYMPATHIZE: Our high priest DOES know what we are going through. At this point it is imperative to emphasize that our flesh IS NOT A CONSIDERATION IN THIS DISCUSSION. While Jesus DID have 30 years of experiencing life as a human, he was a perfect human. But it is NOT his humanity that is our high priest! Nor is it our flesh that is under trial and development. His New Creature lived in this imperfect world for 3-1/2 years just as our New Creatures live in this imperfect world after our begetting. In this we are equals. In this he sympathizes with our

WEAKNESSES: weaknesses—NOT those of our imperfection, but rather the STRUGGLE of New Creature versus its environment. The New Creature is an embryo. It IS weak because it is immature, underdeveloped, and not fully tested. Jesus’ New Creature, too, had to undergo this growth and development—hence 5:8; he learned how costly, how wearying, how weakening the battle can be. In this we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses BECAUSE:

HAS BEEN TEMPTED: He was “tried in all respects” (Diaglott) “as we are.” He was tempted, as are we, by the same three tempters:

THE WORLD,

THE FLESH,

THE DEVIL.

It was with him, as it is with us, that the New Creature was subjected (for purposes of growth) to these enemies of the spiritual mind. This verse echoes 2:18.

WITHOUT SIN: That is, without YIELDING to sin. These words are NOT a commentary on Jesus' perfect flesh! These words are as applicable to us as to him—and THAT is Paul's point. Just as his New Creature did not fail the tests, our New Creatures also will not fail BECAUSE our faith in our high priest will sustain us in overcoming.

— AN ASIDE —

An often-misunderstood section of the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:13) is parallel here.

“And do not lead us
into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.”

Israel was led into the pitfall of tempting God. (Hebrews 3:9) They SAW His works on their behalf for 40 years, and they took for granted that He was with them regardless of their behavior. Thus, God DID deliver them from evil constantly, but THAT led them into the temptation of carelessness and casualness with Him. How sad that God's blessings can make us worse! They can tempt us into attitudes of superiority, false expectations, and an altogether inappropriate casualness with things Divine!

Perhaps Jesus taught his disciples to pray thus for the very argument that Paul makes. Perhaps Jesus had in mind the waywardness of Israel and wanted his disciples forever to keep the lesson in mind—praying fervently always:

“Please continue to deliver us from evil;
but while doing so, please allow
that it not tempt us into any
casual expectations from Thee.”

— 4:16 —

THEREFORE: Here is Paul's conclusion.

DRAW NEAR
WITH
CONFIDENCE:

“Ask and ye shall receive.” Paul, as Jesus before him, wants us to know (Hebrews 2:18) that our high priest IS THERE FOR US. His experiences were, among other things, FOR THE VERY PURPOSE of insuring our success. “Confidence” means WITH FIDELITY, WITH FAITHFULNESS. The theme of Hebrews again is evident:
Be full of faith in order to maintain faith.

THRONE
OF GRACE:

Clearly this is God's throne; but it is Jesus who gives us ACCESS to God's throne. This is Paul's point: we DO have a high priest—an ADVOCATE before God on our behalf. We

thus confidently have access to GRACE—a word which stems from that meaning TO STOOP TO HELP SOMEONE. [See Strong’s 2603, Hebrew text, as in Numbers 6:25: **chanan**, to bend, or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to favor, bestow...]

RECEIVE MERCY

AND GRACE: We must ask; but if we ask IN FAITH, we WILL receive the needed merciful assistance from the highest of all Powers.

IN TIME OF NEED: We all probably would concede that this means all of the time! Perhaps the Apostle’s lesson is that we NEED NOT HAVE NEED. All need will be supplied with its solution—but only when we ask in confidence. We must never try to do things on our own. Entering His Rest is, in part, asking for what we need.

— 5:1-3 —

These three verses clearly are about Aaron. Aaron was a type of Christ, but an imperfect type. Therefore, as we read these verses, it is necessary with each point to say that Jesus is LIKE Aaron in this respect, but UNLIKE Aaron in that respect. It is, in part, because the type is so flawed that Paul uses the opportunity to say (in essence), “The Aaronic priesthood taught much, but Christ is so far superior, that we need an entirely new order of Priesthood for him.”

— 5:1 —

FOR: This connects with 4:14-16. In other words, just as Jesus sympathizes with us (4:15), the point of ALL High Priests was to sympathize with the people.

AMONG MEN: High Priests were sympathetic BECAUSE they were no different.

APPOINTED: In both type and antitype, GOD decides who best will function in this capacity.

ON BEHALF
OF MEN:

Priests receive their offices not for their own glory nor as a reward, but to serve.

PERTAINING
TO GOD:

Priests are not commissioned for worldly wisdom, but for communication with the Divine.

TO OFFER:

The function of a priest was primarily to give to God things from and for the people. It was not a judgment position; nor did it have room for individual inventiveness and creativity.

GIFTS:

Things like thank offerings, peace offerings, etc. which all pointed to the efforts of the world in the Millennial Age to re-establish communion with God.

SACRIFICED
FOR SINS:

Sin offerings represented the atoning sacrifices of the Gospel Age given by Jesus and his disciples.

Thus, the phrase, “to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins,” shows that the Aaronic priesthood was typical of the work of both Gospel and Millennial ages. In this respect, Jesus is LIKE Aaron.

— 5:2 —

This verse shows how Jesus is UNLIKE Aaron. Jesus was not “beset with weakness.” HOWEVER: If we see Jesus functioning in this Gospel Age with us, we can look back at 4:15 where it is clear that Jesus’ own New Creature’s development (which weakened his flesh) does allow him to “deal gently” with us. Thus (in this narrower sense), Jesus IS LIKE Aaron. Jesus is LIKE Aaron because of sympathies, but UNLIKE him because his sympathy does not come from being sinful.

— 5:3 —

In the actual functioning of Aaron, he was, because of his sin as well as the sins of the people, obligated to offer sacrifices for sin—for himself and for the people. Jesus, of course, needed no sin offering “for himself.” But, in the antitype, the priest in Leviticus 16 is NOT JUST JESUS. It is Jesus and his mystical body. SO, while Jesus was UNLIKE Aaron because of perfection, he is LIKE Aaron in that the antitype of Aaron includes US (who are imperfect). Thus the bullock for a sin offering is for Aaron (not Jesus, but for his body members) and his “house”—the tribe of Levi (the Great Multitude in the final picture—those who receive benefits from the sin offering before it is complete, but who do not become priests).

— 5:4 —

Jesus and Aaron are alike in that each was called by God to function in his post.
(John 8:54)

— 5:5, 6 —

The wording is revealing. There are six equivalents here:

1. Jesus receives the office at his glorification.
2. He is, at that point, High Priest.
3. He became God's "son" in the sense of Hebrews 1:3 at that point. (Acts 13:33) All of his past was a prelude to this birth.
4. His "begettal" (in the SPECIAL sense of the word—meaning "brought to the birth") was at that moment. (See notes on 1:5.)
5. This is the first truly "forever" priesthood—not passed on to another.
6. At his glorification he became the true Melchizedek priest—not to obliterate his antitypical Aaronic function, but to TRANSCEND it.

Paul must have been ecstatic in drawing together all of these points at once! And the way he calmly lists these equivalents, while it shows his perfect confidence in his conclusions, is so simple as to cause us nearly to miss the incredible significances.

Paul also has accomplished another amazing feat! Without destroying Aaron as a type of Christ, without taking away the antitypical functions of Aaron from our Lord, Paul has managed to say, "The Aaronic picture is too small! It is insufficient to understand how much greater Jesus is than Aaron could ever picture. We need to see how Melchizedek pictured something far larger, which not only incorporated but transcended any of the Aaronic functions."

The Jewish mind surely was following Paul up to this point with Aaron in mind—seeing how Jesus incorporated the best of the Jewish High Priesthood. Yet here in verse 6—completely out of the blue—Paul quotes Psalm 110:4 as his first mention of this greater priesthood—this with such nonchalance that seems to take for granted that these Hebrews OF COURSE knew that this is the TRUE

High Priest. (Verse 11 suggests that Paul may have done this for shock value more than for confidence in their understanding!)

— 5:7 —

Why does this verse appear at this point? One reason may be to make a connection with 5:1 where the Aaronic priest offers sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 5:7 seems clearly a reference to Matthew 26:36-46. In Gethsemane, Jesus is at the end of his personal offering for sin. Paul here may be showing how the Aaronic and Melchizedek pictures mesh. (Hebrews 5:1 is about Aaron; 5:7, about Melchizedek.) In 5:7, Jesus offers prayers and supplications. This doesn't sound like a sin offering. But it WAS, indeed, ABOUT the sin offering he was giving. It was a prayer to ascertain the success of this all-important matter. As 5:7 says, "he was heard." He was answered, and after Gethsemane he walked with sober confidence and peace in concluding the offering.

Whether or not this verse is a reference to Hebrews 5:1, it certainly is a reference to 4:15. Paul is assuring us that Jesus CAN and DOES sympathize with all who walk the Narrow Way.

— 5:8 —

Clearly Jesus did not have to learn to obey! What he did learn was the COST of OBEDIENCE—the necessary HUMILITY to carry it out. (Philippians 2:8) Verse 8, in telling us about Jesus, also tells us something about ourselves: SONSHIP, while it has enormous advantage, does not guarantee success. Being a son, a perfect son of God—both from the earthly and the New Creature standpoints—does not make one complete or mature ("perfect"). The experiences Jesus had for the development of his New Creature ("the things which he suffered") taught him the meaning—the cost—of obedience. THIS made him whole or complete—or, as the next verse points out, PERFECT.

— 5:9 —

"Being made perfect" is the equivalent of his glorification: spiritual birth, a completed and matured New Creature. Because of this development and its resulting completion, Jesus is now the "source" (NAS) of eternal salvation for us. That was Paul's point at the beginning of this section (4:14-16). Note also: he is our "source" if we "obey him." The same learning through obedience that developed him must also be the tool of our perfecting.

– 5:10 –

When Paul began this discussion in Hebrews 4:14, it was with Jesus being compared to Aaron. When he now concludes it, it is with Jesus being proclaimed Melchizedek. Thus Jesus is a High Priest for us on more than one level. He is certainly the sacrificing priest typified by Aaron who offers us; but, unlike all others, he also is a priest who has “passed through the heavens” and functions as our Advocate. All of this Paul has detailed so that we can “hold fast our confession,” “draw near with confidence,” and receive that “eternal salvation” which God promised to the seed of Abraham.

– 5:11 - 6:20 –

– A DIGRESSION –

This little sermon by Paul is strategically placed. He had shown Jesus’ “perfection” attained through experience (verse 9). He had explained that that same perfection (“eternal salvation” –verse 9) must be ours. Now he feels compelled to show how the Hebrew brethren (and we, by extension) might fail to reach that perfection or maturity (6:1). This is an extension of his point that Israel had failed by hardening their hearts (3:6-8), and he expects better things of us (6:9).

This digression has four distinct sections:

- 5:11 – 6:3** the need for maturity and especially for avoiding backsliding;
- 6:4-8** the horrible prospects for those who backslide or have no growth;
- 6:9-12** Paul’s encouragement toward faithfulness and progress based on the strengths he sees;
- 6:13-20** God’s faithfulness to those who persevere because He wants to develop Abraham’s promised seed.

– 5:11-12 –

In these two verses there are three indications that the Hebrew brethren had been BACKSLIDING. In verse 11 Paul says, “You have become dull of hearing.” (The KJV does not read well here.) Apparently they once were not dull. In verse 12 he says, “You have need again...” Clearly they had to go backwards to re-learn

something poorly learned or not learned at all. In this same verse he says, “You have come to need milk and not solid food.” Since they had to begin with milk originally, this again shows the need for backtracking.

It is important to see this backsliding as the basis for Paul’s sermon in order best to understand its points.

— 5:11 —

MUCH TO SAY: We can only assume that Paul would have taught us considerably more about Melchizedek if he had a ready audience.

HARD TO EXPLAIN: The implication of these words to all saints is so important. Apparently there are many wonderful truths in which we can rejoice and from which we can profit; but even the best teachers cannot communicate the blessings to us if we haven’t laid the proper foundation to receive these truths.

DULL OF HEARING: If we as a group or an ecclesia are not ready to receive blessings, we can frustrate and discourage the efforts of those who can and want to bless us with Scriptural gems. In this case we, today, suffer from the apathetic attitude of these early Christians. We must take care that our own apathy does not frustrate the blessing of others. We are so very interdependent. (Ephesians 4:16)

Apparently some distraction or improper attitude kept these Hebrew brethren from continuing to care or search. Unlike the Bereans, they became lukewarm and even obstructionist! (Acts 17:10-13) It is unfortunate that our humanity seeks a comfortability level and uses it as an enemy of the new creature. Paul has already thrice shown that, contrary to Israel in the wilderness, we must keep that first love, that zealous confidence going until the end. (Hebrews 3:6, 14; 4:14) Stagnancy or regression will be deadly. Among other things, it makes us unable to hear the warnings or the blessings—“dull of hearing.”

— 5:12 —

BY THIS TIME: These three words show that there is a normal expectancy in the growth and sanctification of a saint. Much as the world will be given a minimum of a century to show expected progress (Isaiah 65:20), it is clear from Paul's words that saints also have some sort of timetable for progress.

OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS: This is not in contradiction of James 3:1 which is speaking of those who are elected spiritual guides of the ecclesia. This is speaking of the ideal in which each member of the ecclesia is searching, learning, progressing in understanding and personal growth, and is, thereby, able to help the other members of the ecclesia in their growth. It is the EDIFICATION of which Ephesians 4:16 speaks. But this condition never will occur when saints have a poor foundation of understanding or a poor record of applying truth to life.

NEED AGAIN: Here is Paul's point: these brethren could not teach others because their own basic understanding was flawed and in need of total overhaul—beginning again at the bottom to correct what they had misunderstood or not proven sufficiently in the first place. Much like the foolish virgins, they had to go out to find either what they had lost or never had. "Again" is a key word. Unless the basics are secure, the building will be insecure.

SOMEONE TO TEACH: This is subtle, but it seems to lay at the feet of the elders a part of the responsibility. Paul doesn't say, "You need to go learn," but that "you need someone to teach you."

PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES: Oracles are pronouncements of God. The "elementary principles" of these are the basic truths we first learn. Paul said these brethren needed to learn them again—not get stuck on re-hashing them, but learn them once and for all correctly so that (Hebrews 6:1) they need not continue "laying again" the foundations.

HAVE COME TO NEED: This is a hard saying. It is like a person who finished third grade being told to go back and do second grade over again. These saints, like many today, had a sloppy understanding of

the basics, and meaningful growth would not occur until this fault was remedied. We build piece by piece. (Isaiah 28:9-13) If we take care in doing so, we receive the “rest” (Isaiah 9:12) which has been the subject of Paul’s third and fourth chapters. (Paul uses Isaiah 28 in I Corinthians 14:20, 21 where he links it to not being babes in understanding.)

MILK AND NOT
SOLID FOOD:

“Again” is implied. The point is clear: solid food will be no good for us until the needed maturity from the milk stage is reached. Many today choke on the details of the Word because they have poor foundation understanding.

— 5:13 —

The NAS adds, “only.” It is not in the Greek text but is certainly implied in the context.

FOR: The thought (linked to verse 12) is: “You need milk so that you can eventually digest meat, BECAUSE if you have ONLY milk you will remain babies and you will die from lack of maturing.”

MILK: What IS milk? Clearly it is the BASICS; but more importantly, milk represents facts rather than appreciation. (Verse 14 will tell us this.) A Christian on milk is a Christian who cannot yet truly find God in his experiences. Milk should CREATE A HUNGER. (Matthew 5:6)

Barclay renders this verse: “If a man is still being fed on milk, he is unable to take in instruction on the good life...”

Many on “Plane N” on the chart—unconsecrated—are good examples of the deficiency apparent in the Hebrews to whom Paul writes. Nominal Christians frequently are “happy” on the milk. It creates no hunger for anything more. They frequently even push away any offers of more, being perfectly satisfied with poorly understood basics. What a tragic complacency!

– 5:14 –

SOLID FOOD
FOR MATURE:

As mentioned above, milk represents facts rather than appreciation. A sign to us that some maturation is occurring is that appreciation of the facts can be seen by changes in our characters. We find God—even in our most commonplace experiences. Every “old truth” creates a hunger for a new one because we both see and love the effects.

BECAUSE OF
PRACTICE:

Because we actually have APPLIED truth in our daily living.

SENSES TRAINED: The New Creature has become acutely sensitive—not just in discerning truth from error, but most importantly:

TO DISCERN

GOOD AND EVIL: To love righteousness and hate iniquity. Even here, it is of secondary import that we do this with things around us, but of primary import that we do this with things inside us. (I Corinthians 2:9-16)

– 6:1, 2 –

Paul here summarizes 5:12-14 with his advice and with a list of basic teachings which apparently were continuing items of misunderstanding among the Jewish Christians, and which kept them from growing.

LEAVING THE
ELEMENTARY
TEACHING:

Clearly Paul does not want them or us to “leave” fundamentals in the sense of forgetting them. His point is, “Don’t get stuck in them. Learn them; settle them in your minds as good foundations; then build on them. But don’t keep wondering if you have them right!” (II Timothy 3:7)

ABOUT CHRIST: Literally, “about the Christ;” i.e., about the Messiah. Remember, these are Jewish Christians. They have found the Messiah, and they have questions about their find. It was, perhaps, harder for the Jews to adjust to the dispensational change than it was for a Gentile convert. The Jew had to know what to keep from his past and what to reject. This little phrase, “about the Christ,” is very

important in seeing why Paul will make this particular list of “fundamentals” rather than some other list about Christian fundamentals.

Some might want to relate parts of the coming list to Old Testament items, but the very fact that Paul says these are “elementary teachings about the Christ” says that Paul is talking about Christian doctrine, not Jewish doctrine. At the same time, however, he probably has selected his list BECAUSE of its relationship to Jewish doctrine which is getting in the way of these Hebrews understanding their basics well. He wants them to get over this problem which was holding them back. In a sense this is why he wrote the book of Galatians. Both there and here he is saying, “Get it clear in your head what is Christian and what is the old Law. Separate them, and get on with the building.”

**PRESS ON TO
MATURITY:**

Maturity (or perfection) is an important word in Paul’s lesson. We find it in Hebrews 5:9, 14 and 6:1. The Greek word is closely allied to the word “end” in Matthew 13 (“The harvest is the END of the age”), and to the word “end” in Matthew 24 (“Then shall the END come”). It also is the word used by Paul in I Corinthians 13. (“When that which is PERFECT is come”—i.e., the completed Bible.) This last reference will become very important as we reason on Hebrews 6:2. “Perfect” has the meaning of complete in the sense of wholeness or of reaching an objective.

Here Paul is counseling that the Hebrew brethren must cease from their constant bickering over simple fundamentals of Christianity versus Judaism, and PRESS ON to the development of the Christian fruitage which is the objective (the “end”) of their relationships with Christ.

**NOT LAYING
AGAIN A
FOUNDATION:**

After admonishing them to cease from constantly going over and over the same old questions, Paul begins his list. He could have chosen any number of topics as being basic to Christian understanding; but he chose these five (or six) items. Why? There appear to be two likely reasons:

1. These are the subjects with which the Jewish Christians were having the most difficulties due to their Jewish roots.

2. These subjects all relate to problems of understanding caused by the changes necessitated by the passing of the Jewish Age and the advent of the Gospel Age.

These two reasons actually are the same. Thus only one reason exists: It was difficult to make the switch from a Judaic state of mind to a Christian state of mind. Dispensational change is the key.

It is quite possible that the first “elementary teaching” is only “repentance from dead works,” and the second is “faith toward God.” We will combine them here, however, because the argument of the day of works versus the day of faith (the basis of the book of James) was so great as to make these two items one question. However, separating them into two “elementary teachings” retains all the lessons and does not weaken Paul’s list.

DO NOT KEEP RE-LAYING THESE FOUNDATIONS:

1. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS AND FAITH TOWARD GOD

What Paul means by “dead works” seems clearly identified by him in the context of Hebrews 9:14. “Dead works” are the works of the Law. The Jew must repent (turn away from) the Law (leave Plane P on the chart) and, instead, realize that his justification comes rather by faith (ascend to Plane N). For a Jew this step is very much first and “elementary.” (Acts 15:1-10; Romans 4 and Romans 5:1, 2)

2. OF THE TEACHING OF BAPTISMS

Some translations say “washings.” Washings, of course, were a part of the Jewish Law or, at least, a part of the traditions of the Pharisees. This translation seems invalid since Paul is speaking of the “teaching about the Christ”—not about things in the Law. Therefore, “baptisms” seems surely the best translation here. Besides, it was questions regarding baptisms (John’s versus Jesus,’ etc.) that were plaguing these brethren and were keeping them from being well-established in Christian fundamentals. (See Acts 19:1-7; 8:9-20.)

3. AND LAYING ON OF HANDS

The meaning of this phrase is made clear only by its position in Paul's list. By reading the last text above (Acts 8:9-20), it is clear to see that there was at the time a clear connection between baptism and the receiving of the GIFTS of the Holy Spirit which could only (except for Pentecost and Cornelius' house) be imparted by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. (See Romans 1:11; Acts 19:6.) [Other New Testament uses exist for laying on of hands; but they do not seem to be controversial and, thus, do not seem to threaten the "elementary" fundamentals with which these Jewish Christians struggled.]

This function of gifts is closely related to Paul's prevailing stress on MATURITY or PERFECTION. Thus his argument in I Corinthians 13 is that gifts are "in part" (partial; incomplete; not perfect—see I Corinthians 13:9.) He argues that gifts must "fail" or "be done away" with. (I Corinthians 13:8) If we rely on "elementary" things (given to establish us) only, we will never "mature" or reach "perfection." Thus Paul uses "perfect" (I Corinthians 13:10) to show that the completed Bible will be what we need to lead us to the maturity or perfection of fruit-bearing. Then the "partial" (imperfect) gifts will "be done away." He further links his argument to maturity by comparing the early versus the developed church to his own childhood and adulthood. (I Corinthians 13:11)

Thus this "LAYING ON OF HANDS" doctrine—the teachings about spiritual gifts versus character development—is to show these early Christian Jews that the change of dispensation is not a magic show, but a quick start for a long, hard road of personal development—maturity.

It is interesting to note that the apostate church never has learned this "fundamental." In evangelical circles, gifts still are prized. They are unaware of the anachronism. In the "orthodox" churches, the concept of Apostolic succession is held—still believing (again anachronistically) that

the laying on of hands has authority. Paul is saying that these ideas are childlike and dangerous to the development of any Christian maturity.

4. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Resurrection was not a new concept to Jews. But the change of dispensation complicated the matter. Since Jesus brought “life AND immortality to light,” it became necessary to understand that resurrection was in parts. (II Timothy 1:10) There was to be a “first,” a “better,” and, by implication, some others. Even the timing of so basic a doctrine was in dispute as evidenced by II Timothy 2:18. Paul had attempted, apparently in vain toward some, to clarify the concept in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

5. ETERNAL JUDGMENT

The word for judgment here is KRIMA—sentence, not trial. We again are dealing with concepts affected by the onset of a new dispensation with new information. Judgment (in the sense of a final and irrevocable sentence) was not new to the Jewish mind; but, as with resurrection, here, too, the new age complicated the question. Eternal judgment was not any more simply a question of life or death, but of many questions like (1) Which death? (2) Life where? (3) Which form or level of life? (4) What kind of trial leads to which kind of sentence? The brethren of that day must have struggled mightily with Apostolic statements such as II John 8 which implies partial rewards! Also, in I Corinthians 5:3-5 Paul shows that Apostolic judgment (krino—not a final sentence) results in trials so that a man’s flesh will be destroyed in order that his spirit MAY BE saved—Paul thus leaving the KRIMA (sentence or final decision) to the Lord, where it belongs. Eternal judgment, like resurrection, while a basic doctrine, was becoming a focus of controversy to these Christian Jews. Most important, of course, was for these brethren to realize that their final judgment was now, in the Gospel Age, not later in the Messianic Age—which was the established Judaism concept. This is what Paul wanted them to have constantly in mind. It was because their

present lives would determine their eternal judgment that he was so vitally concerned regarding their striving for maturity. This may be the reason he ends his list of basics with this very sobering lesson to them: It is now or never! The eternal sentence (for them) was not to be in the kingdom. That, as Judaism had taught, was for all mankind.

— 6:3 —

The first edition of Weymouth reads, “And advance we will, If God permits us to do so.” This certainly echoes Paul’s sentiments and resolve in Philippians 3:12-16 which passage seems closely related in that in both (Philippians 3:12 and Hebrews 6:1) he speaks of going on to perfection.

Two questions arise in this otherwise plain verse:

- (1) Why is the pronoun “we”? (It is “us” in 6:1 also.) The thought seems to be that Paul is, and wants to be, included in working with these saints—counted in into the “unity of the body” as a teacher sent from God to help them, yet also as one of them, working together toward perfection. Those who teach grow with, and as a result of, their students.
- (2) The second question is, why does he “If God permits”? We know that growth (sanctification) IS God’s will for us. Why would He not permit it? While James 4:13-15 is not exactly parallel, it does give a clue to what Paul might mean. Attitude has so much to do with our progress. While God WANTS growth in us all, He will NOT permit us to grow spiritually if our attitudes or motives be improper. We must “play by the rules.” Thus Paul is saying, (incorporating the reason for the “we”), I will work with you to obtain this sanctification growth if God permits it to happen (Romans 1:10, 11) due to His recognition that you sincerely desire it and, thus, deserve it. (Luke 19:17; Matthew 25:21; I Corinthians 4:1, 2)
II Thessalonians 2:10 makes it plain that those who receive truth for reasons other than the sincere love of it will perish in their efforts. This thought leads to Paul’s somber thoughts in the next verses.

– 6:4-6 –

Here Paul shows two important concepts:

- (1) If you think you can accept the incredible growth blessings from God lightly, ending up with rejecting them, and then expect reinstatement, **YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE FUNDAMENTALS** (verses 1, 2) of salvation and are, therefore, **REALLY BABES!** You are treating the weightiest matters with casual disrespect!
- (2) Second death, the ultimate punishment for the spirit-begotten of this age, is not dealt out with haphazard randomness, but is reserved for those whose growth has gone far enough to create corresponding responsibility. [Those who “do not know” their Lord’s will are candidates for the Great Company with fewer stripes. Those whose development is greater but whose deeds are sloppy are candidates for the Great Company with many stripes. (Luke 12:47, 48) But here, those with greater development accompanied by REJECTION, are candidates for EXTINCTION.]

To show the development stages toward perfection or maturity, Paul gives what might be called FIVE POINTS TO PERFECTION. They appear to be in progressive order and might even be likened to five progression points in the Tabernacle:

- (1) “enlightenment” upon entering the court,
- (2) the “heavenly gift” of justification by faith in the merit of the brazen altar,
- (3) the spirit begetting upon entering the holy,
- (4) the appreciation of God’s Word from the table of shew-bread, and
- (5) the sanctification appreciation of our work for the coming age by our blessings at the golden altar.

ENLIGHTENED: Paul treats some of these concepts elsewhere. Ephesians 1:18 does not really refer to a court experience, but does well express his desire that the enlightenment will be yours which makes our calling vital. Here in Hebrews, he is showing that the first step in our maturing which creates responsibility is the understanding of concepts of Divine things enough to cause us to pursue them further.

HEAVENLY GIFT: This gift most likely is justification. Paul treats it in Romans 5:1 where it gives us “peace with God,” and it leads (Romans 5:2) to consecration—“this grace in which we stand.” Here in Hebrews, Paul stresses that it “tastes” so good that it whets the appetite for that even closer relationship which comes with the:

HOLY SPIRIT: Being partakers of (i.e., begotten with) the Holy Spirit makes us (Romans 12:2) stand in this new grace relationship where the special favors of expanded prayer privilege and Providential oversight create in us a new and very sobering spiritual presence—the beginning of a “new creature” which is, in essence, the beginning of totally new thought processes. Those thought processes **MUST** (if we are to stay alive as new creatures) make us hunger for the nutrients found only in Scripture. Thus, again, a new “taste” is acquired:

**GOOD WORD
OF GOD:**

It is no accident that Paul uses the modifier “good.” The new creature quickly learns that there is no other “good” food available for spiritual strength than the Bible itself. Any casualness with this source is forbidden. Tasting how “good” this word is becomes the only appropriate response of the new creature toward Holy Writ. Appreciation is the thing here. Valuing the Word increasingly and fervently as time passes and as familiarity with it increases is imperative. (II Timothy 3:14-17) This Word is “inspired”—“God breathed.” Its result is Paul’s final step in this list:

**POWERS OF THE
AGE TO COME:**

Here is the summary result—the vision of the future which becomes part of us. It becomes our motivation, our stability, and the driving force behind our sanctification efforts. The vision of the age to come is the vision which God Himself cherishes in His own mind. (Ephesians 1:9, 10—especially Weymouth First Edition) It thus is our vision also which Paul wants so desperately for us to comprehend in the fullest sense. (Ephesians 1:18-23) It is this vision which makes us so desperately want to experience our resurrection change. (Philippians 3:10, 11) It is this prospective joy which gives us **NOW** more than others can have, as well as the prospects for the future. (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30)

— 6:6 —

Having obtained the former growth elements, how could anyone “fall away”? The Greek word Paul here uses is unique in all the New Testament. It is (Strong’s 3895) “PARAPIPTO”—a combination of the words meaning “to fall” and “beside” or “by the side.” IT seems to mean (in modern equivalents) something like “falling off the band wagon,” or “being swept aside,” or “falling off the edge,” or “losing interest.” Its intent, clearly, is to say that that which has begun and has progressed suddenly has vanished—become of no consequence. The rest of the verse makes it clear that it is such a cut-off from former profession that coming back would constitute a totally new beginning. How could anyone “fall away” like this?

We might think Paul doesn’t answer this. Yet, actually he does answer it by his context.

He is making it clear to the Hebrew brethren that this is possible:

- (1) If we don’t “enter that rest” of faith (4:11)
and
- (2) If we don’t securely lay our foundations (5:12)
and
- (3) If we don’t go on to build on those secure foundations. (6:1)

— IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW —

Paul’s point here is sobering as well as instructive. The “impossible” word means finality. There is nothing possible except extinction. Any other seeming option is non-existent because of the legality of our contract. When we have been accepted in the Beloved, we legally have (even though by faith) had perfection of humanity imputed to us so that we might sacrifice it. Having sacrificed it, it is no longer ours to claim; and if we have also lost that “new creature” begun in us so that something can live on, we have no option. We certainly cannot ask (6:1) for another “repentance.” We surely understood from the foundations (if they were laid correctly) that NOW is our “eternal judgment” (6:2). As Paul so clearly warns (6:6), we cannot “again crucify...the Son of God and put him to open shame.” The Greek is “public infamy.” When the apostate church attempts this through the mass, God calls it the Abomination of Desolation because it takes away the value of the continually efficacious sacrifice. “Public infamy” is a good translation. It says that requesting another chance when the first chance for renewal was not valued, takes God and Jesus for fools. It mocks their goodness and mercy. It treats holy things as common. It suggests that one can trifle with

God. It promotes the possibility of eternal disobedience and chaos in the universe. It looks at Jesus in the face and says, “All of your efforts were a big show.”

Thus, in essence, Paul’s conclusion is that if we have all the benefits, throw them aside, and then think we can come back for more, we have NOT EVEN LAID THE FOUNDATION—we don’t understand salvation at all.

— **6:7-8** —

— **THE PARABLE** —

To illustrate his point, Paul gives a simple parable. In its initial simplicity it teaches that all effort toward cultivation is for the purpose of receiving fruitage. If the ground doesn’t produce, it is rejected.

Some finer points can be made. First, it is only in the tilled garden that fruitage is expected. Therefore, since God is not working in the world, no condemnation comes to it for failure to produce fruitage or for success in producing thorns. But among those in whom He is working, the wonderful cultivation described in 6:4, 5, fruitage is mandatory; and He supplies all of the rain (blessings) and tillage (experiences) needed. If we grow, we “receive a blessing from God.” If we produce the opposite of what is desired (6:8), we are WORTHLESS—something not to be retained. We are “nigh to a curse!” What a phrase! We become so contemptuous in His sight that we are (except that we are not worth remembering) good enough material to become a new profanity! Instead, we merely are burned—eliminated.

Some parallel material is found in Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:15 → following. Here we see that there are no grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.

I Corinthians 3:6 → following shows that while others help tend the garden, it is God’s garden; we are His planting. And II Timothy 2:6 shows that He DESERVES His crop.

— **6:9-20** —

Once Paul has soberly reminded the brethren of the dangers with which they have flirted, he now kindly encourages them to the faith and diligence which will give them victory.

— 6:9 —

CONVINCED: What a lesson for us all. Paul has a positiveness regarding the future which only can be encouraging. He did not hesitate in love to warn them of the most dire consequences if they did not build carefully. Yet immediately he says, “I have confidence that these warnings will prove unnecessary.”

**ACCOMPANY
SALVATION:**

These things seem to be listed in verses 10-12.
Salvation’s walks seems to be accompanied by:

- WORK for God by ministering to saints
- LOVE of His character (name) shown by ministering to His saints
- LACK OF SLOTH
- IMITATORS OF THE FAITHFUL

**SPEAKING
IN THIS WAY:**

Paul shows that it is both possible and proper to speak with proper and intense criticism even though we are full of love for the recipients.

— 6:10 —

NOT UNJUST: God clearly remembers and weighs what we have accomplished in the past—not just what we are doing now.

**STILL
MINISTERING:** It is clear also that He wants good works to continue.

— 6:11 —

**SAME
DILIGENCE:**

In this verse it is difficult to determine the meaning of “same diligence.” It could mean the same as previously, the same as each other, or the same as God in the previous verse. The last seems the most significant because it shows constancy and progression. God remembers what WAS, notices what IS, and certainly wants us YET TO BE continuing toward success.

REALIZE: Thus, if we do this CONTINUANCE, we can realize the objective of our efforts.

HOPE: However, in this context, the objective of faithfulness is not being stressed so much as “full assurance of hope until the end.” Paul seems to say that our constancy of effort will result in the strength of our hope.

— 6:12 —

This verse seems to begin with part 2 of the sentence in verse 11, beginning “we desire...”

SLUGGISH: Paul not only desires (verse 11) “diligence,” but that we be not sluggish. This is the same word as “dull” in 5:11. He has not forgotten the point of his lecture even if we might have. He does not want dullness of hearing to keep us from growing in understanding.

IMITATORS: He suggests that active imitation is the opposite of dullness of hearing. If we follow those who are faithful, we will better “hear” the Lord’s will. He repeats this in Hebrews 12:1-3, 13:7, and I Corinthians 4:16. He is suggesting we NOT use Israel (3:11) as a model, but rather the Ancient Worthies—the chiefest of whom is Abraham. (verse 13)

INHERIT THE PROMISES: As the discussion continues, this phrase will be very important. He does not say, “receive what was promised,” but rather “inherit the promise”—that is, become part of that which was promised. Paul has in mind Galatians 3:9, 14, 16, 29.

— 6:13 —

FOR: This word is here to connect the following verses with 6:12. Hebrews 6:12 was about PATIENCE and FAITH keeping us as inheritors of the promises. Paul NEVER leaves FAITH as his primary topic in the book of Hebrews. Maintaining this faith (6:11) unto the end was best illustrated by Abraham. Paul now wants to show us TWO REASONS why Abraham was able to maintain faith so that we can IMITATE.

MADE THE
PROMISE:

This is the **FIRST** of the reasons for Abraham's faith:
HE BELIEVED THE PROMISE.

SWORE BY
HIMSELF:

This is the second reason why Abraham could maintain faith. His God took the time, the trouble, the remarkable humility, to **SWEAR** that He would keep His promise. How unnecessary! How humbling for Abraham and for us!

— **6:14** —

SAYING:

This quote is from the Genesis 22:16, 17 version of the Abrahamic Covenant. In these verses God **BOTH** swears and promises. Why did Paul choose this version? The Abrahamic Covenant occurs **EARLIER** (chapters 12, 17). One obvious reason is that chapter 22 mentions both the promise and the oath; but, additionally, it shows **CONSTANCY** on Abraham's part. He had believed God in leaving Ur. He had believed God in the birth of Isaac. Now, he again believed God in the offering of Isaac. It is **HERE** that God confirms the Covenant with the oath—as if to say, “You **KEEP ON** with your **FAITH**. I will give you one additional incentive to do so. I will **SWEAR** My faithfulness toward you.”

— **6:15** —

Paul confirms this **CONSTANCY** aspect in this verse by saying,

“And THUS, having patiently waited,
he obtained the promise.”

Abraham already had the promise. But here (Genesis 22) he received it “in a figure” (Hebrews 11:19) by receiving, by **FAITH**, his son out of death.

OBTAINED THE
PROMISE:

That this does **NOT** refer to receiving **WHAT WAS PROMISED** is stated by Paul clearly in Hebrews 11:39. Thus Paul seems to be making this point:

THE PROMISE IS OBTAINED

(and maintained)

BY CONSTANCY IN FAITH.

This is Paul's lesson for the Hebrew brethren and for us. It has been his lesson since 3:6. Do not be like Israel. Do not lose FAITH!

— 6:16 —

Now Paul wants to stress God's humility as a bolster for our faith. Paul says MEN trust a promise because someone swears an oath of faithfulness. It is not that men used to be so reliable that their sworn oath was trustworthy! It was that if something sworn to was not carried out, it was justifiable to KILL the one who had sworn! No wonder Paul says it was "an end of every dispute"! Obviously God need not and should not have to swear! Obviously He could not die if He reneged (which is impossible)! Yet He even pictured this when He "cut" the Covenant with Abraham regarding the inheritance of the land. (Genesis 15) For men, passing through the slain animals was an oath that said, "Let it happen to me as to these animals should I prove unfaithful." Thus Paul continues:

— 6:17 —

IN THE
SAME WAY:

God used the symbol man trusted in order to fortify His promise!

TO SHOW
THE HEIRS:

This is the big one for us. He swore this to show us (not Abraham!), the heirs of the promise, how we can rely on Him! The promise is carried on through us. We are its heirs. WE MUST NEVER LOSE FAITH IN ITS REALITY. God SWORE to show us why we can trust.

— 6:18 —

TWO
UNCHANGABLE
THINGS:

(1) The Promise (sufficient in itself);

(2) The Oath.

TO LIE: In neither could God lie. How much more do we need? Paul wants us to maintain, revel in, and grow in our faithfulness as part of the seed of Promise which he had introduced in 2:5, 10, 16.

STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT: How could it be stronger?

FLED FOR REFUGE: The seed in the flesh are refugees. See Psalm 5:11, 12; Colossians 3:3. Our refuge is our hope in Christ. While IN him, there is no condemnation. (Romans 8:1) We are refugees from the Adamic race.

HOPE: Jesus was able to endure for the joy set before him. Paul parallels our experience. We have the same hope and joy set before us because we believe and live the promise and its confirming oath.

— **6:19** —

HOPE: Paul seems to be using hope and promise almost interchangeably. Hope is fulfillment deferred. (Romans 8:24, 25)

ANCHOR: An anchor lets us move about, but always within certain limits. Here Paul has our “soul(s)” anchored—our very beings are secured.

SURE: (Strong’s 804) = secure or certain

STEADFAST: (Strong’s 949) = stable; no wobble
These two words seem to be used to impress upon us two things: (1) Because of God’s promise and oath, there is no question about our end (if we are faithful). (2) The road, the perseverance, will be without wobble. We will not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, etc. God will not allow us to feel instability as long as our faith remains intact.

WITHIN
THE VEIL:

The center of all Christian experience is The High Calling. It is unseen in the Most Holy; but it is so real that our beings are anchored there.

— **6:20** —

FORERUNNER: Our Lord was the first of the Seed of Abraham to enter the veil. Paul's choice of "forerunner," however, is so excellent in that it stresses the whole seed—head and body. It is not that Jesus has entered, period. It is that the head has entered, and we are close behind.

MELCHIZEDEK: Paul finally returns to the subject he left so abruptly in Hebrews 5:10; but now he has stressed OUR PART in this priesthood. He has equated the Melchizedek priesthood with the Abrahamic Seed.

Jews, thinking of the Most Holy, would think of Aaron, but Paul is trying to enlarge the vision. The sacrificing priesthood (Aaron) is too small for God's plan. A larger, mediatorial kingship is what is needed. Its superiority over the Aaronic order now will be Paul's topic in Chapter 7.

– 7:1-28 –

The point of Chapter 7 is simple. The details are not. The point is that the Aaronic Priesthood is limited and temporary. A higher order of priesthood is needed. While Jesus, in a certain sense, functions as the antitype of Aaron, he, more importantly, is that higher order of priesthood—Melchizedek. And a new priesthood will mean a new law.

– AN ASIDE –

It is very easy to get entangled in a discussion about who might have been the original Melchizedek who met Abraham. This detracts from the primary thrust of this chapter. Nevertheless, our curiosities will not allow us *not* to ask the question. We have not come to a positive conclusion. The two most likely candidates are Shem and a materialized Logos—Michael. That Melchizedek was Shem is the favored viewpoint among Jewish scholars; but it must be remembered that their only information comes from Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. They do not, as we do, have Paul’s writings in Hebrews. The Jewish tradition suggests Shem for at least two reasons:

- (1) They cannot conceive of the Logos.
- (2) They maintained a patriarchal society in which the oldest living male of the tribe was the most revered. At the time of Abraham, that was Shem.

The difficulties with this point of view (not ALL insurmountable) are these:

- 7:3** could not possibly apply to Shem in a personal sense. He HAS a documented genealogy including birth and death dates. He does not abide as a priest perpetually. He died!
- 7:6** suggests that Melchizedek is NOT CONNECTED GENEALOGICALLY to Abraham’s descendents. Shem is.
- 7:8** states that Melchizedek “lives on”—which Shem does not do.

It should be noted, however, that Bro. Russell never seems to question the Jewish viewpoint.

There are fewer difficulties if the original Melchizedek was Michael (all of which seem surmountable). There are many strengths to this being the case. Consider these evidences:

- (1) Paul does not say that Melchizedek was a type—a point he does make about Aaron. If Michael were Melchizedek, then Melchizedek was not a type and our Lord “holds his priesthood perpetually.” (7:24)
- (2) In Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine—exactly what Jesus will do for his disciples later.
- (3) In Genesis 14:18 it states that Melchizedek was “a priest of the Most High God.” At the time, Abraham seemed the most honored MAN on earth. If Melchizedek were higher (and he was), why was not he the recipient of the promises? And since Abraham was addressed directly by God, why was a priest needed?
- (4) In Genesis 14:19, 20 it states that Melchizedek “blessed” Abraham by saying, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High.” Clearly Melchizedek was knowledgeable about Abraham’s favor with God (though there is no record that the two had ever met). Abraham must have felt a little like Nathanael when Jesus simply said, “I saw thee under the fig tree.” Nathanael instantly believed! Apparently so did Abram, because the next sentence says, “And he gave him a tenth of all.”
- (5) In Hebrews 7:1 we again see Melchizedek as a blesser of Abraham.
- (6) In Hebrews 7:2 we notice Paul’s care in TRANSLATING Melchizedek’s titles. Why? It seems likely that he might want us to know that he was not LITERALLY Melchizedek, but literally “King of righteousness”—a function title rather than a proper name. Likewise, he was not literally a King of Salem (a place, at that time, of little earthly import or population); but he is, significantly, “King of peace.”
- (7) All of Hebrews 7:3 is correct about his genealogy IF HE IS NOT A MAN. The phrase “made like the son of God” is difficult with any explanation. Conceivably it simply is saying that this Melchizedek is not a son of man. As such, “he abides a priest perpetually.” Surely the Logos is, by his position from the beginning, a priest of God. Though that priesthood expands or diminishes to fit the age, it is perpetual.

- (8) Paul stresses Melchizedek's Greatness:
Hebrews 7:4, 7, 8.
- (9) In Hebrews 7:8 we have the statement that, in Paul's day, this Melchizedek "lives on." Who, other than our Lord, could this be?
- (10) Finally, it is Paul's contention, whether speaking of the Melchizedek of Abraham's day (Hebrews 7:3), or that of Jesus' day (Hebrews 7:24), that this priesthood does NOT HAVE SUCCESSORS. If the early Melchizedek is not Michael, then he does have a successor in the Person of Jesus.

We still must deal with smaller questions. What is meant by "ORDER of Melchizedek"? (Hebrews 6:20; 7:11, 17) What is meant by the "LIKENESS of Melchizedek"? (Hebrews 7:15)

The answers to both of these seem to be that both God and Paul are using these words as CONTRAST words. God (in Psalm 110) is saying "your priesthood is NOT the Aaronic order; it is the "King of Righteousness" order. Paul does the same. In Hebrews 7:15, "likeness" clearly is in contrast to the Aaronic priesthood. It also is a factor that the priesthood of the saints will not be in the "likeness" or "order" of Aaron, but also, as Jesus, in the "likeness" or "order" of Melchizedek. In this sense, the Melchizedek priesthood becomes an "order" in the sense of a brotherhood.

— 7:1-3 —

We should connect our thoughts with Hebrews 6:19, 20 so that we follow Paul's reasoning. "Jesus has entered...within the veil...a Melchizedek priest."

FOR: This connector word seems to tell us that Jesus, as Melchizedek, is DIRECTOR OF THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE AND SEED. Ever since Chapter 2, Paul has been bringing up our part in this promised seed. Now he stresses that the HEAD of the seed is Melchizedek—the first into the Most Holy, the greater than Abraham.

SLAUGHTER: Why Paul describes the events of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek is not clear. It may be so simple as that it is Paul's way of telling us that he is referring to Genesis. It is likely, however, that the event has deeper significance. Abraham's seed, of course, will be given power over his enemies and will put down kings in the day of wrath (Psalm 110:5—the Melchizedek Psalm). It is AFTER the slaughter (both in Genesis and in Psalm 110) that Abraham's seed will

be “blessed” in the sense of being able to dispense blessings. It is then, in the largest sense, that the tithes will come into the storehouse, and God will pour out a blessing such as can hardly be contained. (Malachi 3:10)

RIGHTEOUSNESS

AND PEACE: Romans 5:1 gives us the sequence: Justification (righteousness) is followed by peace. Melchizedek is king of both conditions. Thus, Paul seems to be saying that once the Abrahamic seed has slaughtered the old order and has begun to bring God the tithes of the new order, justification and peace begin for the whole creation.

WITHOUT

FATHER, ETC.: Unlike the Aaronic priesthood with its rules of succession, necessitated by death and by failure of the law arrangement, this priest of the Millennium is not a man, but a highly-exalted, second-in-command spirit with all of the power and perpetuity needed to bless creation.

— 7:4-10 —

Paul uses these verses to stress the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham and all of his descendants—including the priests of the Law. This was needed not only to wean the Jewish Christians’ minds away from any undue vestiges of Law worship, but also to build Paul’s argument (which he has made since 1:2) of Jesus’ superiority over everything.

— 7:4 —

GREAT: Paul already has made Jesus greater than angels (Chapter 1) and Moses (3:3); now he makes him greater than Abraham. By this time, Jewish Christians (and we) should be getting the point! Note how Paul doesn’t just say Abraham, but Abraham the Patriarch. He doesn’t want us to miss the point that Abraham was the man of the day. Even so, Abraham paid respect to Melchizedek.

TENTH: The Law (and, therefore, tithing) was not yet in existence. Under the Law, tithing was a practical matter instituted to support those who had given up land inheritance. Here, it is

something far greater. It is a percentage which in its multiples represents universality (10), Christ (100), and the Kingdom itself (1000). It is as if, in this one act, Abraham is symbolizing Melchizedek (Abraham's head) as the universally-anointed Millennial ruler—all as a loving response to Melchizedek's giving Abraham bread, wine, and a blessing.

— 7:5, 6 —

Here Paul strengthens the point that Abraham's tithe was something beyond the Law arrangement. At the same time he shows how the Levitical priesthood were lesser than Melchizedek; even though they received a lesser tithe, they yet were only descendants of him who paid tithes.

GENEALOGY: Melchizedek is neither descendant nor progenitor of the Levitical tribe.

PROMISES: Even though Abraham was possessor of the greatest promises ever given a human being, Melchizedek was so great as to bless this one who already was so greatly blessed.

— 7:7 —

This verse stands alone because it is Paul's summary, his point, his lesson, his RULE: In our own modern words—

THERE IS NO POSSIBLE ARGUMENT:
GREAT BLESSINGS ARE PASSED FROM
THE GREATER TO THE LESSER.
(Therefore: Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.)

— 7:8-10 —

In verse 8 Paul introduces a point which he will develop in verses 16, 17, 24, 25. His point is that Melchizedek "lives on," while the other tithes-receivers (the Levites) were dying men.

In verse 9 Paul continues to show the inferiority of Levitical tithes by saying that the Levites, while they received tithes, also paid tithes (through Abraham). This clearly shows the superior meaning of the tithes paid by Abraham. (See notes on verse 4.)

Verse 10 shows, at least in God's sight, the power of genealogy! The Levites, being children of Abraham, never can ascend above Abraham—never can be as great a priesthood as Melchizedek—because their father PAID TITHES to Melchizedek.

This brings to mind Hebrews 11. Abraham (and all the faithful ancients) will not be “made perfect” without the great Melchizedek priesthood.

This also brings to mind the great “mystery” which Jesus posed to the Pharisees: How can David's son be David's Lord? The whole genealogical concept of Hebrews 7:9, 10 argues against it! We have been blessed to know the answer.

— 7:11-24 —

This is a large section, but it is here to stress only a little bit of information. It is full of parenthetical thoughts and comparisons. Both before and after understanding it, it is helpful to read it very fast, trying to make one big sentence of it in order to catch Paul's four main thoughts.

His four main thoughts appear to be these:

- (1) The Levitical priesthood and Law couldn't bring perfection:
Therefore, a new priesthood and law are necessary.
- (2) That Jesus (Melchizedek) is not a priest of the Jewish Law is evident because:
--He is of the tribe of Judah;
--He (unlike Aaron's sons) is not temporary.
- (3) The Law is, thus, being set aside with a better HOPE in its place:
--which is where WE come in (to be administrators of the new law which IS that hope.)
- (4) Aaron's priesthood was only by rules And inheritance; Melchizedek's is by OATH:
--This also makes the COVENANT REPLACEMENT oath-bound.

– 7:11, 12 –

(7:11) Note the priority: “On the bases of it (the priesthood), the people received the Law.” We might often and easily think the Law was primary and the priesthood its servant. Paul says no. Then he argues that since the Levitical priesthood could not bring perfection, a new priesthood was needed.

(7:12) Then, in harmony with his previous reasoning, Paul shows that the new priesthood would necessitate a new law (covenant). [He will develop this later in Hebrews.]

– 7:13-17 –

(7:13) Now Paul begins to show how Jesus can be this new priest, not being a Levite. By saying that Jesus is from a tribe from which no one has officiated at the altar, Paul is saying that the entire Jewish altar function ceases.

(7:14) Please note the contrast: verse 14 begins, “For it is evident...” Verses 15-17 begin, “And this is clearer still...” Thus verse 14 will make one point about Jesus, and 15-17 will make a SUPPORTIVE point.

In verse 14, Paul’s point is that Jesus, being from Judah is OUTSIDE THE MOSAIC ARRANGEMENT concerning priests.

(7:15-16) What is it that is clearer than verse 14? It is clear that the Melchizedek priest has become a priest not on the physical (genealogical) requirements of the Law, BUT BECAUSE HE IS ETERNAL.

(7:17) Thus, Paul quotes Psalm 110 to prove his point. Melchizedek is a priest “FOREVER.” Obviously, genealogy becomes mute when no descendants are required!

Thus Paul has established the primary superiority of the new priesthood: it does not pass away.

– 7:18-24 –

In this series of verses it is important to notice Paul’s comparisons: (NAS)

- (1) Verse 18 begins, “For, on the one hand...”
Verse 19 says, “and on the other hand....”

- (2) Verse 20 says, “as it was...”
Verse 22 says, “so much the more...”
- (3) Verse 23 says, “on the one hand...”
Verse 24 says, “but He, on the other hand...”

Thus we have three comparisons to consider. Let us summarize them first: (numbered as above)

- (1) As the law is being set aside,
A better hope is replacing it.
(which hope is our access to God)
- (2) Since Melchizedek got his priesthood
BY AN OATH,
Thus, Jesus GUARANTEES a better
Covenant (because, as we saw in 7:11,
the priesthood is a BASIS for a
covenant).
- (3) There had to be many Levitical priests
because they kept dying;
But there is only one Melchizedek
because he is eternal.

These are Paul’s three points in this section. (7:18-24) Having laid down these concepts, we now will look back at the details which should not seem threatening.

– 7:18, 19 –

(7:18) Paul says the Law is being set aside because of its weakness and uselessness. He does not find fault with the Law itself, but, as he pointed out in Romans 8:3, it is our weakness which makes the Law useless in bringing about perfection. More importantly, as we saw in Hebrews 7:11, we need a perfect priesthood in order to have a successful law.

(7:19) Now Paul shows that we need not fear that the Law couldn’t bring perfection. We, instead, have a hope of something better. This verse in itself shows that the New Covenant does not replace the Law Covenant at the first advent. It is the HOPE which fills the Gospel Age until the reality will be reached at the Mediatorial Kingdom.

Paul here brings US into the picture. He says it is through this HOPE of the New Covenant that we draw near to God. This is the doctrine of the church's share in the sin offering. Being enthralled by the hope, we offer ourselves to be a part of helping mankind get rid of its sin during the coming New Covenant. What Paul here is saying is that we are invited to be a part of that new priesthood.

— **7:20-22** —

Verse 20 is not as clear as we would like because its objective is not stated until verse 22—as shown in the comparisons at which we have looked. Paul now will focus on another word from Psalm 110. The word is “sworn.” He wants to show that this Melchizedek priesthood is so sacred, so powerful, that God does with it as He did with the Abrahamic promise—He goes out of His way to SWEAR TO IT, to BIND it with an oath (rather than with conditions).

Verse 21 shows that the Aaronic priests were such by legal procedure; but Melchizedek by irrevocable proclamation. Paul quotes Psalm 110 to make the point. We should UNDERLINE the word “sworn” because it is the word upon which Paul is basing his argument.

Verse 22 is the objective of the statement of verse 20. Paul is saying, If the priesthood was confirmed by oath, the covenant is also—by virtue of his reasoning in Hebrews 7:11. Thus we see why the New Covenant can rightly (along with the Abrahamic Covenant) be called “the oath-bound covenant.”

— **7:23, 24** —

Here is Paul's final comparison in the series. Verse 23 shows the mortality, and hence the need for great numbers, in the Levitical priesthood. Verse 24 is here to give us the feeling of stability and permanence—a priest who lives forever and, therefore, an everlasting covenant, one which can bring perfection to the world.

– 7:25 –

Paul’s real concern is not just perfection for the world under a new covenant, but: “Hence, ALSO...” Paul now is referring to the Gospel Age, the period of “hope.” (Hebrews 7:19)

FOREVER: The KJV says, “to the uttermost.” The Greek apparently can be taken either way, meaning either “forever” or “completely.” Both thoughts are good in this verse; both are true. However, there is a strength in translating the word “forever.” Paul begins verse 25 with “hence,” thus connecting it with verse 24 which is speaking of Melchizedek’s PERMANENCE. It is good to note that the “forever” here does not refer to the eternal salvation of each member of the church, but rather to the fact that Jesus is present as our Saviour “forever” through the Gospel Age. This is the very objective of this verse. In paraphrase it says:

Because Jesus doesn’t die, he is able to
be the constant intercessor for his
Church throughout the Gospel Age.
We have an ever-present advocate.

– 7:26-28 –

Verse 26 really is not separate from 25, but because it carries itself through verse 28, it seems a logical unit for examination.

We again have a contrast which is not so obvious but is very important. Verse 26 begins that “It was fitting....” We must wait until verse 28 to find out what Paul means. Again, to paraphrase:

Verses 26, 27: It is fitting that we have a priest
who can offer permanent sacrifice
and intercession

Verse 28: because
The Law did not.

Seeing that connection, we can look at the detail:

Verse 26: We need a high priest (under the present distress of the narrow way) who has no flaws and who is exalted high enough that he can actually accomplish what he needs to do.

Verse 27: What he does not need to do is continually to offer sacrifices which can never take away sin. (Hebrews 10:1) Note that “sacrifices” is PLURAL. (It is not in the KJV; but it is in the Greek and the NAS.)

Paul points out the two parts of the Leviticus 16 sin offering, the bullock (“for his own sins”), and the goat (“for the sins of the people”).

Now Paul makes known the great truth about the sin offering. While its CONSUMING is yet going on to the end of the age, its OFFERING is not. “THIS” (the 2-part sacrifice) “HE DID” (at Jordan and Pentecost) “ONCE” (as one sin offering) “when he offered up himself (head and body). This is NOT a ransom text. It is a sin offering text. It is not about the cross; it is about Jordan and Pentecost. This is one reason that he is “forever” (Hebrews 7:25) through the age present to oversee the consuming process—“to make intercession for” us. (Hebrews 7:25)

— 7:28 —

Now Paul simply wants to complete the transition from Levitical to Melchizedek in one sweet sentence. Paraphrasing once more:

- The Law had appointed, dying, incapable priests;
- But the oath-bound Covenant, which succeeds it, has an oath-appointed, perfect, everlasting priest who is, even better, a Son!

— 8:1-5 —

This section concludes Paul’s discourse on the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood. As we learned in 7:11, the priesthood precedes the Law. Thus, here in Hebrews, Paul discusses the new priesthood before the new Law—which is his next topic.

– 8:1, 2 –

MAIN POINT: Paul is extremely helpful here in taking the time to summarize what has been a detailed and complicated discussion. His “main point” (NAS) actually takes five verses; but it condenses to one concept: The Jewish priesthood was there TO BE A TYPE rather than a success. Jesus is the antitype of the entire tabernacle-Law arrangement.

RIGHT HAND: The cross-references in Hebrews 1:3; 4:14; 6:19, 20, and the “Melchizedek Psalm” (110:1) all are helpful and corroborative here.

It is important, yet somewhat difficult, to realize that Paul’s “main point” has a dichotomy of meaning. Paul has succeeded in convincing us that Jesus is a Melchizedek-order priest—not a Levitical priest. Yet, at the same time he keeps equating Jesus with the antitype of Aaron! 8:1-5 deals with the tabernacle type and antitype—a venue in which we do not find Melchizedek! The difficulty, and at the same time the simplicity, is that he who is Melchizedek functions also as the antitype of Aaron.

THRONE: Thus we have this mixed metaphor. There is no throne in the tabernacle. Yet it is in the tabernacle where we find Jesus as Melchizedek. (6:19, 20; 8:2) He who was, is, and will yet function as the great Melchizedek, also functions to fulfill the type established by the Jewish Law.

SANCTUARY: The NAS and KJV suggest sanctuary and tabernacle as two places. Other translations do not. The interlinear translation in the Diaglott is a good example. It says “holy things” instead of sanctuary. Other translations suggest sanctuary and tabernacle as equivalents: “the sanctuary, EVEN in the true tabernacle.” All three seem workable.

**TRUE
TABERNACLE:** The obvious point of the verse is that Paul is focusing on antitypical meaning. He is speaking of the “true” (the unseen, the spiritual) tabernacle. This, to us, is represented by the planes of existence shown during the Gospel Age on the Chart of the Ages.

— 8:3-5 —

The single point of these three verses is to stress the point that the tabernacle was built TO BE A TYPE.

Verse 3. Paul now is showing how Jesus is the Aaronic antitype but how, on earth (in the literal tabernacle), he never could function as a high priest.

Paraphrasing:

The main function of typical priests was to offer gifts (representing devotions) and sacrifices (representing steps toward atonement). BECAUSE Jesus functions as an antitype, he must also have similar but antitypical offerings. Paul does not explain the details because he already did so in Hebrews 7:27.

Verse 4. As a man, Jesus did not have this capability because he was of the wrong tribe for such activity under the Law. (7:13, 14)

Verse 5. The Jewish priests were doing those things as EXAMPLES and SHADOWS (compare 10:1) of the real (antitypical) or spiritual things.

Now comes one of those delightful examples we have come to expect from Paul. We saw throughout Chapter 7 that when he quotes a text to make a point, he quotes it to SINGLE OUT ONE WORD to prove his contention. For example, in 7:17 he quotes the Psalm because he wants to emphasize the word “forever.” In 7:21 he quotes the Psalm because he wants to emphasize the word “sworn.” Now, in 8:5, he quotes God speaking to Moses because he wants to emphasize the word “pattern.” This is the Greek word TYPOS, “type.” THAT is Paul’s big point in these five verses. The Law is only a TYPE. We should be interested in the REALITY.

PART IV

JESUS AS THE BASIS
OF THE NEW COVENANT

Chapter 8:6 – 9:28

The Propositions:

Jesus will mediate a New Covenant
for the restoration of Israel.

The tabernacle sacrifices typed the
Gospel Age's spilling of blood
which will seal that Covenant.

— 8:6 —

It might seem strange to begin a whole new section of Hebrews with a verse that begins with “but.” Hebrews 8:6 is, however, a new beginning in that the focus now is on the New Covenant, not on Melchizedek.

Nevertheless, there is a strong connection with the verses which immediately precede this one.

BUT NOW: “Now” is the Gospel Age. The word is in contrast to the Jewish Age types mentioned in 8:5.

**MORE
EXCELLENT
MINISTRY:**

In 1:4 Paul tells us that Jesus had a “more excellent name.” Now he shows that his ministry also is “more excellent.” The contrast here is to Moses and the Jewish priesthood.

Barclay is helpful in his rendition of this verse:

“But in the new situation our high priest has been given a ministry which is as much superior to that of the Levitical priests as the covenant of which he is the mediator is a better covenant, for this covenant was established on the basis of better promises.”

It is important to note that in the type, mediator and priesthood were not the same individuals. This is not so in antitype. Jesus is both Mediator (as was Moses) and High Priest (as was Aaron). Understanding this helps in understanding 8:6. Jesus’ “ministry” covers his offering of the sacrifices which seal the Covenant. This takes the entire Gospel Age. Then (in the mediation) he functions to mediate that Covenant. Thus this verse shows these two parts:

(1) he obtained the ministry of the
Gospel Age:
= SACRIFICING

(2) just as he also is (appointed)
Mediator in the Millennial Age:
= BLESSING.

ENACTED ON
BETTER
PROMISES:

That the New Covenant is “enacted” (Greek = legislated) at the beginning of the Gospel Age is clear. That it is NOT IN FORCE until the Millennium also is clear in that it is (in the Gospel Age) yet evident ONLY AS “BETTER PROMISES.” Promises are not yet reality. They are assurances of things to come.

The promises about the New Covenant are “better” in a number of ways. Among others:

- (1) The priesthood which will administer it is not mortal, imperfect, or changeable.
(7:24)
- (2) The Law will not be written on stone, but in the hearts.
(8:10)
- (3) Even the foolish will not lose their way.
(Isaiah 35:8)
- (4) Heredity will not be a factor.
(Ezekiel 18:4)

— 8:7 —

FAULTLESS:

After using the word “better” in 8:6, Paul is showing that the New Covenant also is better than the Old because the Old Covenant had a fault. Verse 8 shows us that the “fault” was not with the Covenant, but with “them”—those who were under it. The real point is that if there is a problem with ANY PART of an arrangement, the entire arrangement is faulty. Thus, the Old (or “first”) Law Covenant has a fault, and, therefore, there IS A NEED FOR A “SECOND” Law Covenant—which we call “The New Covenant.”

It is very important to see Paul’s reasoning here as a foil to the occasionally mentioned error that the Church is under the New Covenant. Paul clearly shows that NO NEED exists for a New Covenant if the Old Covenant worked. BOTH COVENANTS accomplish the same things and offer the same rewards. One is a REPLACEMENT for the other. What the first did not accomplish, the second will. Thus, as the Law did not promise spiritual life, neither does the New

Law; the Church, thus, is distinctly NOT under this arrangement.

— 8:8 —

FAULT WITH
THEM:

Now Paul quotes Jeremiah all the way through verse 12 BECAUSE JEREMIAH SUPPORTS HIS ARGUMENT. He begins by saying that the “fault” with the Old Law Covenant was the people who were under it.

— 8:8-12 —

Paul quotes Jeremiah from the Septuagint Bible—the King James Version of his day. It differs slightly from the Jeremiah text with which we are familiar, but the concepts are the same. The following is a paraphrase of verses 8-12:

— 8:8 —

Because God saw the inability (and even the general unwillingness) of Israel to keep the Covenant, He says, “I will give you all (the 10 tribes and the 2) a New Covenant.”

— 8:9 —

“It will not be like the covenant arrangement I made with you in Egypt because I refuse to continue any arrangement you can break. I divorced Israel for its unfaithfulness.” (See Jeremiah 31:32, KJV margin.) “And should I not have done so?” (Compare also Isaiah 50:1; Deuteronomy 30:1-9; Luke 16:18 followed by the “divorce parable” by which God shows the rejection of Israel and acceptance of Gentiles.)

We call this divorce period the JEWISH DOUBLE OF DISFAVOR.

— 8:10 —

“Here is what I will do for you so that our covenant relationship will be successful: I will make a New Covenant with you AFTER THE DAYS WHEN I WILL NOT DEAL WITH YOU—AFTER THE DIVORCE PERIOD—AFTER THE DOUBLE OF DISFAVOR:

“After those days I will give you a covenant written in your minds and hearts instead of on stone and papyrus. Thus I can be your God, and you, My people.”

— 8:11 —

“You will not be responsible to teach others about Me because I will arrange that the knowledge of Me will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. No one will be in ignorance. There will be no misunderstandings or misinterpretations.”

— 8:12 —

“And I will have forgotten your sins which will be buried in the merit of the Ransom; and your iniquities as you progress up the highway of holiness will have all the needed mechanisms for forgiveness.”

— 8:13 —

Paul now comments to show how things stand in this day. He says (paraphrasing), “When God said, ‘New Covenant,’ He showed that the Old Covenant was obsolete. As we stand here today, we see that the New Covenant has been enacted (legislated), and our great High Priest has initiated the sacrifices which will seal it. (7:6) Since the Old Covenant is becoming old to those who understand the matter (Romans 10:4), those who live under it yet are finding it senile (Greek, *senescent*) and are living in the past. The Law is ready to disappear once its replacement appears after the double of disfavor.”

CHAPTERS 9 and 10

While the entire book of Hebrews is an incredible source of information about our Lord, his relationship to us, and the types and prophecies which confirm these things, these two chapters in particular stand out as the pinnacle of Paul's presentation. In them he presents the doctrinal philosophies of the New Covenant and the sin offering which makes it all possible. This, it seems, is the very objective of the epistle to the Hebrews. Everything prior and subsequent to these two chapters gives supportive and encouraging detail to help us to be a part of this highest of all callings.

CHAPTER 9

Chapter 9 divides itself neatly into four parts. The first two parts show (1-7) the typical tabernacle as representative (8-14) of the sacrifices of the Gospel Age. The rooms of the typical tabernacle become the antitypical planes of relationship during the Gospel Age as shown on the Chart of the Ages. It is not unlikely that these verses were the stimulus for Bro. Russell's visual representation of the planes on the chart extending to the rooms of the tabernacle drawing.

The second two parts of this chapter likewise show a relationship between type and antitype—but this time comparing the making of the typical Law Covenant (16-22) to the making of its antitype, the New Covenant (23-28). The explanation of each focuses on the BLOOD which makes the Covenant functional. This is the CENTER of Paul's argument.

It is important to see the relationship of tabernacle and covenant in Paul's mind. It was the annual atonement day (Leviticus 16) of the tabernacle which REINSTITUTED the Law Covenant for Israel. Thus each year was a type. The sacrifices of ONE DAY created the relationship of Israel to God for the FOLLOWING YEAR. Thus, in antitype, the sacrifices of the Gospel Age create the relationship for the world with God in the FOLLOWING AGE, the Millennium. It is no accident that Paul treats tabernacle and covenant as one unit. The sin offering of the Gospel Age, and the New Covenant which follow it, are inseparable!

– 9:1-7 –

These verses simply describe the tabernacle, but culminate (verse 7) with its chief service: the Day of Atonement—the Sin Offering. Paul, the first Messenger to the Church, apologizes (verse 5) that he cannot go into a detailed explanation of all typical wonders. He (and the Lord) left this for the 7th angel to do. However, he does want us to know (verse 7) that his focus is on the Day of Atonement. THIS he WILL treat in detail.

– 9:1 –

This verse continues the thought of Chapter 8—a New Covenant is coming, BUT it, like the Old Covenant, is reliant on the services of atonement. In the Old Covenant, this was accomplished in a literal, physical, earthly building.

– 9:2-5 –

Paul lists the contents of the tabernacle’s two chambers—no doubt because he wants the saints eventually to consider them even though (verse 5) he will not do so personally.

We likely are to get waylaid by the adversary in these verses simply because we immediately are taken aback by Paul’s either mistakenly placing the golden altar in the wrong place, or by his actually omitting mention of it entirely.

In verse 4 we have (depending on translators) either a misplaced golden altar or a censor in the Most Holy. The Diaglott, to our minds, gives the best solution to the problem by adopting the reading of the Vatican Manuscript which places the golden altar in verse 2, and omits the golden censor from verse 4. As this manuscript accords perfectly with Moses, it seems eminently correct.

Clarke gets around the problem thusly:

- In verse 2 he suggests that the word usually translated “table” is the altar. Thus he has candlestick, altar, and showbread in the Holy.
- In verse 4 he suggests that the priest carried the censor in on the Atonement Day, left it there for a year, and brought it out when he

replaced it with a new one yet burning with incense.

William Barclay, in his “The New Daily Study Bible,” is very original in his approach. He gives verses 2 into 4 as follows:

“For the first tabernacle was constructed, and in it there was the lamp stand and the table with the showbread, and it was called the holy place.

[Barclay does not account for the missing altar here, but refers to it uniquely in the next two sentences.]

“Behind the second curtain, there was that part of the tabernacle which was called the Holy of Holies. It was approached by means of the golden altar of Incense, and it had in it the ark of the covenant....”

Both Clarke and Barclay (and others) thus show that there somehow is an error in the way verses 2 and 4 usually are presented to us. We are grateful for their various efforts, and take comfort in the realization that there is more than one way to see that Hebrews does not contradict Moses.

We must remember also that these verses are non-interpretive; they merely are a catalogue of furnishings upon which the Apostle admits he will make no comments. Thus, it is wisest to pass further into his enlightened discourse to see what he DOES consider imperative for our understanding and welfare.

– 9:6-7 –

It would be a mistake to think that Paul felt that most of the tabernacle services were unimportant. Yet, in these two verses he is saying that the REAL IMPORT (as far as his topic of sin offering and covenant is concerned) is the ONCE A YEAR service by the High Priest, NOT WITHOUT BLOOD, for the benefit of “himself and for the sins of the people...” Here, indeed, is the point of importance for Paul. He rejoices in, and wants us to understand and rejoice in, the relationship of the sacrifice (bull and goat) to the functioning of the subsequent covenant benefits. This is the CORE VERSE of Chapters 8, 9, and 10. To miss its import is to miss the purpose of the Book of Hebrews.

To emphasize Paul’s point, it is helpful to do a little homey paraphrase of verses 6 and 7, noting in particular how verse 7 begins with “but”:

Verse 6: Once the tabernacle was established,

the priesthood had its regular, hum-drum, continual, daily ministries confined mostly to the 'holy;'

Verse 7:

BUT,

The MOST HOLY is the thing! And it was NOT regular, hum-drum, continual, or daily! It had one special, annual occasion as its purpose: the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) on which the priest needed BLOOD to typically do away with the (1) sins of the priesthood, and (2) also the unintentional sins of the people for the ensuing (future) year.

Paul is so excited to focus in on the sin offerings! This is his main objective in writing Hebrews. He wants us to know and to internalize that we are part of the offering that will bring about the New Covenant. It also is instructive to note how the Sin Offering for the people is for "sins...committed in ignorance." (NAS) [The Greek is A-GNOMIA, i.e., without knowledge—inherited sin as opposed to intentional sin.] We never should miss the point when considering atonement doctrines: intentional sin requires expiations beyond the ransom. Willful violations of righteousness will not go unpunished—now and in the Millennium.

– 9:8-10 –

Paul begins verse 8 by showing that the entire tabernacle arrangement was a work of the Holy Spirit to SHOW or SIGNIFY to us the meanings of the Christian calling. Paul's simple words here are the equivalent of Peter's in I Peter 1:10-12.

Paul's words here are full of meaning in showing us how the high calling was something inconceivable to the Jewish mind while they were practicing the ceremonies of the Law. We MUST read between the lines here to see the full significance of his argument. Paul already has IN MIND the words he will write in 10:1, 2. Here, however, in 9:8 his is generalizing, and we might well miss his point. Actually he is saying:

While the typical tabernacle ceremonies still function, it is not possible to understand the purpose of the Gospel Age. If the MEANING of the Sin Offering were DISCLOSED, the typical sacrifices would be RECOGNIZED as ineffectual and typical.

This is the argument of 10:1, 2, and it is the not-so-obvious point of 9:8.

His statement regarding what the Holy Spirit is signifying by the type is CONTINUED and EXPANDED by verses 9 and 10. Hence, paraphrasing the connective idea between verse 8 and verse 9:

(8) The Holy Spirit, by allowing the type to continue until Jesus, (9) was symbolizing that no TRULY EFFICACIOUS sacrifice can happen until the (10) “time of reformation” —the Gospel Age.

Thus:

PRESENT TIME: The KJV says, “a figure for the time then present”—i.e., the Jewish Age. This is wrong. The NAS reads, “which is a symbol for the present time” (the Gospel Age).

ACCORDINGLY: (NAS) Thus, all of the gifts and sacrifices of the tabernacle were typical, not efficacious.

WORSHIPPER: (KJV = “him that did the service.”) This refers TO THE PRIESTS, not the people.

CONSCIENCE: This is a marvelous observation by Paul. He is, in essence, saying that the Jewish priesthood well knew that their efforts mostly were futile. They were observing God’s instructions because they had a band-aid effect and that carrying them out insured God’s help along the way. However, those priests, like most religious people anywhere, felt the incompleteness, the long-term ineffectuality, the temporary and partial benefit of their actions. Their consciences cried out to self and to God, “There must be something more!”

The NAS margin reads, “regulations for the FLESH imposed until a time of reformation.” The Law WAS for the flesh. It was NOT for the spirit. Spirit begetting was yet an unknown thing. The Law PICTURED spiritual things, but it did not MINISTER to spiritual things. But NOW, (verse 8), the way into the Most Holy—the spiritual path—is DISCLOSED!

– 9:11 –

BUT: Here is the swing word. Spirituality is now disclosed. The way into the Most Holy has been opened! The “new” tabernacle now functions—not a building, but a set of **CONDITIONS** through which acceptable sacrifice can be offered to eventually usher in the New Covenant for the world. The “but” means that, even though **THEIR** consciences could not be cleansed, Paul now will show us that **OURS** can! (verse 14)

**CHRIST
APPEARED:**

The “new” tabernacle has a new priest. While we have discussed Jesus as Melchizedek, Paul here is going to stress him as the antitypical Aaron. Thus he is being pictured in relationship to the tabernacle—something which Melchizedek never served.

While we correctly are aware that Aaron (in Leviticus 16) represented **BOTH** Jesus and the saints, it will be important in this context to realize that Paul must and will refer to the High Priest in part as Jesus because he wants us to see how Jesus **OPENED THE WAY** for us (the goat class) into the real Most Holy. Our part, in this context, will be more obviously represented in the sacrifices of the Sin Offering where Paul is so careful to mention consistently both Bull and Goat.

REMEMBER that all of the comment in 9:11-28 is based on 9:7—the two animals offered for two reasons, both constituting **ONE** offering.

**GOOD THINGS
TO COME:**

In 9:1 Paul said that the Law Covenant had to be serviced by the tabernacle sacrifices. The “good things to come” (the New Covenant) likewise rely **FIRST** on the services of the Gospel Age. That is **WHY** they are “to come.” They **CANNOT COME** until the sacrificing is complete—which is **EXACTLY** the point and meaning of verses 11-17.

**THROUGH THE
GREATER
TABERNACLE:**

The NAS unfortunately says, “He entered through...” This is not correct. The translation can be corrected easily by crossing out “He entered”—which words are italicized and added by the translators. The thought, of course, is that the “good things to come” come **THROUGH** the services of the

greater (antitypical) tabernacle. Again, this is Paul's linking tabernacle (sacrifices) to covenant (resulting blessings).

NOT OF THIS
CREATION:

This "greater and more perfect tabernacle" is NOT a building, "not made with hands"—"not a part of the created world at all." (Barclay) It is a set of conditions, regulations, and opportunities to allow us to sacrifice in order to become the spilled blood which makes the New Covenant "valid" (9:17). It is what is represented on the Chart of the Ages by planes M and L.

– 9:12 –

NOT GOATS
AND CALVES:

It is, likewise, not the literal blood of literal animals that will make "valid" the New Covenant to come.

BUT HIS
OWN BLOOD:

We could easily and simply say that this is the blood of Jesus. However, this is not Paul's real point. We cannot in any way negate the thought that it is Jesus' blood ALONE that does everything. Without it, there is nothing. Yet we also cannot deny HOW his blood does the things it does. The blood of the bullock sanctified the blood of the goat and made it "holy and acceptable" as a sacrifice. (Romans 12:1)

This thought is INESCAPABLE in this verse. Paul says the typical animal^S did not guarantee the "good things to come," but "his own blood" DOES. Therefore, his blood is PLURAL in terms of the offering for sin. "His own blood" is offered, JUST AS IN THE TABERNACLE, first as a bullock to sanctify the way into the Most Holy, then as a goat to complete the offering. The High Priest WAS a type of Jesus AND his body. Therefore "his" means head and body. The fact is, the blood of the antitypical goat HAS MERIT because Jesus' sacrifice GAVE IT MERIT. To say that our blood or sacrifice has no merit is to deny the ability of Jesus' sacrifice to make something holy! It is true that the blood of the church has no INHERENT merit; but it does have IMPUTED merit.

HE ENTERED

ONCE FOR ALL: This does NOT picture Jesus as the ransom. This pictures the High Priest entering ONCE (a year) to make the two-part offering for sin which will guarantee “eternal deliverance” (not redemption). This refers NOT to Calvary, but to Jordan and Pentecost when the two parts of the sin offering were presented. In each case, time followed to allow the actual death of the sacrificed humans. For Jesus, 3-1/2 years were required. For the goat, two millennia are needed.

– 9:13-15 –

Verse 13 is entirely a reference to the Jewish Age. In the Jewish Age, the people were brought again under the Law Covenant each year by the bull and goat of Leviticus 16. BUT THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH! They had to then apply the lessons of the past (red heifer) to cleanse their lives. This is, antitypically, the whole philosophy of the permission of evil. In the Kingdom, mankind will have to cleanse their humanity—not only by accepting the value of the sin offering, but also by applying the lessons learned through the 6,000 years of the permission of evil. They will thus overcome as did the Ancient Worthies, whose sterling overcoming examples are pictured by the red heifer.

Now here is the important point of verse 13 which sets the stage for the next two verses:

Until ALL THREE applications have occurred in the antitype, mankind will not be in full covenant relationship with God as shown in I Corinthians 15:24. The three items: Jesus’ sacrifice, the church’s sacrifice, and the application of the wisdom from the “princes in all the earth.” (Psalm 45:16)

Verses 14 and 15 need intense scrutiny in order to grasp their true meaning. It would be so very easy to think that verse 14 is the comparison to verse 13, meaning that as the sacrifices cleansed the Jews, Jesus’ sacrifice cleanses us. BUT THAT IS NOT THE MEANING AT ALL.

In actuality, the key to help the understanding of verse 14 is to notice the word CONSCIENCE which Paul previously used in verse 9. In verse 9, conscience was of the “worshipper,” (KJV = “him that did the service.”) Consider verse 9 again. It is saying that the PRIESTHOOD knew in its conscience that sin was not being satisfied. In verse 14, however, Paul is following up verse 9 by saying that WE (the new priesthood and offerings) DO HAVE OUR CONSCIENCES SATISFIED; we KNOW that these services of the Gospel Age WILL provide a covenant that WILL take away sin. We know that we have been cleansed so that we can be an

acceptable offering. Our consciences are satisfied that the blood of our antitypical bullock is fully meritorious and effectual.

We will see shortly the inseparable connection of this verse to verse 15. However, first we must be able to comprehend the function of verse 14.

FIRST: In this verse we must see that by “Christ,” Paul here means Jesus alone—Jesus as the antitypical bullock of verse 13. This is the antitype of the first of the THREE REQUIREMENTS of verse 13. The blood of the bullock, unblemished, was offered to God. (“Through the eternal spirit” seems a reference back to verse 8. It is by the Holy Spirit that the types were instituted. It is by the guidance of the same spirit that the antitype occurs.)

SECONDLY: The blood of the bullock gives us, the goat class, a clear conscience to be offered as part two of the sin offering, and as the SECOND requirement of verse 13.

Now, here is an additional important consideration: Recall that while this discussion includes all the saints, there is a special focus on Jewish Christians who were leaving the Law Covenant. Thus “cleanse your conscience from dead works” is a key phrase aimed at our Jewish Brethren who, under the Law, may have had “cleansing of the flesh” (verse 13), but did not thereby have pure consciences. The blood of Christ (the bullock) released them from the law types so that they could, in the spirit, in clear conscience, become the sacrificial goat which would truly “serve the living God.”

- 9:15 -

We will notice that we have thus far fulfilled TWO parts of the verse 13 type. We have seen the bullock and goat offered. The red heifer, of course, represents the Kingdom part of the cleansing process. Verse 15 begins with this THIRD PART of the verse 13 antitype: the New Covenant (the red heifer era).

We must read again with intense care. Note the NEB, which perhaps is the clearest English version:

“And therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, or testament, under which, now that there has been a death to bring deliverance from sins committed under the former covenant, those whom God has called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

We now are prepared to understand this verse and its connection to the previous two verses.

THEREFORE: In other words, BECAUSE; because the bullock and goat (verse 14) have been offered, he is authorized as mediator for this New Covenant. Paul will repeat this point in verses 16 and 17. Until the sacrifices are made, there can be no mediation of a covenant—no red heifer era.

UNDER WHICH: In a number of different translations it is possible to have two different interpretations for the rest of verse 15. However, the NEB seems most satisfying contextually.

Let's first establish a point from another text by Paul. In Galatians 4:5, Paul establishes that Jesus' birth needed TWO QUALIFICATIONS. Jesus needed to be "born of a woman." He had to be a human (not of Adamic ancestry) in order to give a RANSOM. Yet Paul also stipulates that Jesus must be "born under the Law in order that he might redeem those who were under the Law." This is the same point he is making in Hebrews 9:15. Jesus' death not only provided a sin offering for the whole race to be blessed under the New Covenant, but he RELEASED ISRAEL from its bondage to the Old Covenant so that they too "may receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

To Gentiles this might seem unimportant. To the Jewish mind it was vital. Just as verse 14 released Jews from the Law so they could be disciples ("serve the living God"), so also verse 15 releases the rest of the Jews from the Law condemnation so they can participate in the blessings of this New Law which Jesus mediates, because the sin offerings make it "valid."

- 9:16, 17 -

Nearly all translators miss the point here. The Diaglott is an exception. We all should correct our Bibles to incorporate the marvelous understanding found in Dr. Wilson's translating:

"For where a covenant exists, the death of that which has ratified it is necessary to be produced; because a covenant is firm over dead victims since it is never valid when that

which ratifies it is alive.” (See also Clarke.)

Paul is not speaking of last wills and testaments! He is speaking of Biblical covenants. He is continuing the same argument found in 9:7-15. He is continuing to tell us that there can be no New Covenant until the blood of the New Covenant (the antitypical sin offering of Leviticus 16) is complete—until all the victims (animals) have been slain, and their blood offered.

– 9:18-20 –

The objective of these verses is ultimately simple. They refer back to the point Paul has just made, and they refer forward to his contrast in 9:23-26. His point is this: Just as the New Covenant will not be valid without blood sacrifices of Jesus and the Church, so also the Old Law Covenant was not valid until Moses sacrificed animals and applied their blood.

If we got that much from these verses, we have Paul’s point.

Unfortunately, there are many confusing little details in these verses which need explanations for inquiring minds.

– 9:19-20 –

These verses are a reference to Exodus 24:4-8 which does not mention all of these items. It does mention the blood of calves and goats—but not clearly. The goats apparently were the animals listed as “burnt offerings.” The water, scarlet wool, and hyssop are NOT mentioned. As Paul knew things by tradition confirmed by inspiration (such as the 40-year reign of Saul), we must assume he is informing us of things Exodus does not specify.

It is interesting to note that water, scarlet string, and hyssop are, all three, mentioned in two ceremonies of cleansing: (1) The cleansing of lepers (Leviticus 14:6) and (2) the cleansing by ashes of the Red Heifer (Numbers 19:6, 18). Since Paul is speaking of a cleansing process (9:22), it seems at least likely that those symbols were, indeed, part of the Sinai Law inauguration. After all, some things seem, by reason, to be required. If the blood were mixed with water, it would forestall coagulation and go further. The sprinkling needed a tool: hyssop (which traditionally symbolized purging). The hyssop probably needed to be bound in a

bunch. The binding, according to Paul, likely was red wool string—possibly a connection with Isaiah 1:18.

Bro. Frey points out that Exodus 24 does not say that Moses sprinkled the book, but that Paul does say so by inspiration.

Clarke thinks the Hebrews 9:19 translation is faulty and, because of that fault, Paul does not say that the book was sprinkled, but, that if it were, it signified that the Covenant was ratified by the same blood that resulted in the cleansing of the people via the Covenant. (Cf. Matthew 26:28 in antitype.)

Clarke translates the passage:

“For after every commandment of the Law had been recited by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves, and of the goats, with water and scarlet wool, and the book itself, and sprinkled all the people.”

Then he suggests the following steps occurred:

1. received blood in basins
2. mingled it with water to prevent coagulating
3. took hyssop
4. bound it with thread of scarlet wool
5. dipped it in basin
6. sprinkled on people (nearest him as representative of all)

Verse 20 is, of course, the point. No blood, no Covenant! No Gospel Age sacrifices, no Millennium! No bullock and goat, no Red Heifer! (Hebrews 11:40)

— 9:21 —

Verse 21 poses a few other questions. Clearly, Paul is jumping ahead in time. There was no tabernacle when the Law was instituted. Why, then, does he bring it up here? There are two reasons: (1) He has been talking about it and how it served the Law (9:1). He also has shown how it was an annual re-affirmation of the Law (9:7). (2) He is just about to return to discussing its antitypical applications (9:23-28). Thus in 9:21 he is showing that BLOOD made the typical tabernacle functional, and does so also for the antitypical tabernacle (9:11, 12).

BLOOD is Paul's continuing topic. He wants us to know that the blood of the sin offering (Jesus and us) is the imperative to the salvation of the next age (9:28).

The problem, of course, is that it is difficult to show that Moses sprinkled the tent and "all the vessels of the ministry" with blood! He did sprinkle nearly everything with the anointing oil (Exodus 40:9); and in various services, he and Aaron sprinkled blood in various places (e.g., Leviticus 8:15, 19, 30; 9:9, etc.) But Paul's all-inclusive sprinkling picture again makes us think that he knew more than was recorded in the writings of Moses.

- 9:22 -

Verse 22 is better in the KJV than in the NAS. Omitting the italicized words in the NAS corrects the problem. Paul says "almost" because some things were cleansed by water, some by fire (Numbers 31:23), and some by the ashes of a red heifer. (Numbers 19:2-10) Paul is not interested in these here. He is stressing blood because he is stressing the work of the Gospel Age in establishing the New Covenant.

- 9:23-28 -

In these verses Paul concludes his dissertation on how the antitypical tabernacle serves the antitypical covenant. Again, the lesson is simple, although the details are complex. The lesson of these verses can be paraphrased thusly:

Verse 23 -- The types of heaven's true objectives had to be cleansed with the typical sin offerings; the antitypes rely on **BETTER SACRIFICES** (the humanity of Jesus and his followers).

Verse 24 -- Thus Jesus (the antitypical bullock) did not enter a tent which was only a type, but he entered heaven itself to appear to God's favor for the goat class.

Verse 25 -- Unlike the Aaronic priest, who went into God's typical presence annually with the Blood of bulls and goats,

Verse 26 -- our antitypical Aaron manifested himself

once at the conjunction of the ages to actually do away with sin by the sacrifice of his mystical antitype (head at Jordan, and body at Pentecost).

Verse 27 -- And just as the Aaronic priesthood was required to “die” in type (via their animals) annually, and this produced the favorable judgment for Israel for the ensuing year,

Verse 28 -- thus the Christ having been offered in the Gospel Age as one sin offering, will appear again, not as a sin offering, but for the salvation promised in the New Covenant to be given to the poor, groaning creation which has eagerly (though ignorantly) been awaiting him. (Romans 8:19)

That is the simple story. It is glorious to behold and to comprehend. Now, it also is helpful to focus on a few of the details of these verses which confirm the paraphrase we just made.

– 9:23 –

- PATTERNS:** The KJV is “patterns;” the NAS is “copies.” The Greek noun means figure, copy, or example. It takes on more meaning when we see that the word is the noun form of a verb which means, “to show secretly,” or, “to show by tracing out.”
- HEAVENS:** This is not referring exclusively (or even necessarily) to things literally in heaven. Rather, this is Paul’s way of contrasting spiritual things of the antitype to physical things of the type. It is shorthand for the point he made in 9:11.
- WITH THESE:** The end of the verse lets us know that the antecedent of “these” is SACRIFICES, not water, hyssop, red wool, ashes, etc. Paul means the BLOOD SACRIFICES of bulls and goats.
- BETTER SACRIFICES:** Jesus and his church.

– 9:24 –

- HOLY PLACE:** In this verse and the next, there has been, due to translations, discussion as to which room(s) of the tabernacle might be indicated. The Greek text seems to indicate that neither (or rather both) are meant. The best translation would be “sanctuary.” The thought is that Jesus (or the antitypical Aaron) progressed through the sanctuary in Leviticus 16 in order to secure the benefits.
- CHRIST:** Paul in this verse (not the next) is centering on Jesus, the head, the bullock—not on the picture of Aaron as head and body. Jesus entered heaven as the **FIRST PART** of the sin offering.
- FOR US:** The **FIRST** entry of Aaron with blood of the bullock was “for us” (“for himself”—Leviticus 16).
- PRESENCE:** It is true that Jesus was in God’s presence on our behalf. Note, however, that the Greek here is “prosopon” = face or favor (as in Acts 3:19). This suggests that Jesus enters the antitypical Most Holy in God’s favor on behalf of us—the goat sacrifice to follow.

– 9:25 –

- OFFER OFTEN:** This phrase and the beginning of 9:26 are there to show the permanent efficacy of this sin offering as opposed to the need for an annual reinstatement of the Law Covenant by the Leviticus 16 sacrifices. Paul is “rubbing in” the lesson that the repetitions of the Law sacrifices **PROVE** its incapacities, and that the antitypical tabernacle has no such weaknesses; nor will the covenant in which it results.
- BLOOD OF OTHERS:** This little phrase says two important things:
- (1) It says that the Aaronic priesthood really didn’t offer itself. It offered animals representing itself. This is one reason that the offerings were not efficacious.
 - (2) It also shows that this verse, unlike verse 24, has now expanded the

consideration beyond the blood of
Jesus because the high priest
offered the blood of TWO animals.

HIGH PRIEST: In verse 25 Paul said “Christ” entered “for us.” He now expands the picture beyond Christ to the entire antitypical “high priest,” i.e., head and body. Thus, as we approach verse 26, we are to have in mind the entire sin offering in two parts: head and body, bullock and goat.

– 9:26 –

We must keep in mind the lesson of verse 25 here; we now are learning about the entire high priest’s sacrifice—not just that of the head.

ONCE: The antitypical Day of Atonement. This “day” has the animals offered at its outset (Jordan and Pentecost), but the actual death of these human sacrifices takes time: 3-1/2 years for the bullock, and 2,000 years for the goat.

CONSUMMATION
OF THE AGES: The Greek is SUNTELEA. It is the word Jesus uses for “end” of the age in Matthew 13:39. It does not mean a point in time, but a period of summing up. Rotherham translates it here as “conjunction” of the ages. Clearly, Jesus, as the antitype of Aaron, offered the antitypical two animals as the Gospel Age was beginning and the Jewish Age ending. This great antitypical sin offering was the “summing up” or ending of the typical intentions of the outgoing age, and the sum total meaning of the work of the incoming age. Paul is saying so MUCH by these few words!

MANIFESTED: To those who could accept it, the true Aaron, the true Christ (the mystery of head and body) was manifested at the first advent. However, as few understand, this first advent manifestation was TO DIE (2:9-11) as a sin offering.

PUT AWAY SIN: Not then! Yet as a result of then—once the sacrificing is terminated. Or, as verse 28 points out, when he appears “a second time.”

OF HIMSELF: Head and body; Jordan and Pentecost; antitypical bull and goat.

– 9:27 –

Understanding the previous context makes verses 27 and 28 so easy and so reasonable, and so unlike what most of churchianity has done with them!

- THE MEN:** Perhaps the best way to understand who is meant by “the men” (Greek), is to understand the first two words of verse 28. “SO CHRIST...” is how verse 28 opens. This is a contrast or comparison. Whoever “the men” of verse 27 are, they are **THE TYPE** of “the Christ.” In verse 28 we have seen already who this is! Paul has made the point continuously! Aaron is the type of Christ. Thus, “the men” of verse 27 are the successive high priests who have typified the sacrificial work of “the Christ” (head and body). The logic is inescapable!
- INASMUCH:** When Paul opens verse 27 with this word, he is telling us the sum total of his lecture on the tabernacle sin offering lesson. He is saying, “Inasmuch as Leviticus 16 had the effect of saving Israel for the ensuing year...(verse 28) so its antitype will do for the world.
- APPOINTED:** The Greek word means “to be laid away” or “to be laid up in store.” In other words, the Law dictated that the high priest (“the men”) must do this because it had so much meaning in antitype.
- TO DIE ONCE:** “Once” is a reference to the once-annual observance of this important type. (See 9:7.) “To die” means to die in figure—even as in Hebrews 11:19 Isaac was resurrected “in a figure.” Paul yet has 9:25, 26 in mind. The high priest “offered himself,” BUT with the “blood of others”! This means HE DIED, (but only figuratively—UNLIKE Jesus [verse 26], who died ACTUALLY).
- AFTER THIS:** How important! Paul still is making his oft-repeated point: no covenant, no blessing, until AFTER the sacrifices!
- THE JUDGMENT:** Israel was, because of the sacrifices, now again (for another year), in judgment (covenant) relationship with God. How lovely! How simple! How accurate with reality!

– 9:28 –

- SO CHRIST:** THE Christ (as the antitype of the Jewish High Priest). The word “so” here is a confirmation that we have understood verse 27. If verse 27 makes sense in its relationship to verse 28, the word “so” is vindicated.
- ALSO:** Just like “the men” of verse 27 = Aaron, Head and Body.
- OFFERED ONCE:** At Jordan and Pentecost, the SUNTELIA of the AGES.
- TO BEAR SINS:** That’s the point of the sin offering. That’s the point of the first advent (and the Gospel Age which witnesses its total sacrificial accomplishment).
- OF THE MANY:** The masses, the people. This very much justifies the inclusion of the goat in this picture. The sin offering is for the sins of “himself” (via the bullock) and “the people” (via the goat). Paul began this argument in 9:7.
- SHALL APPEAR:** In verse 26, Aaron was “manifested” at the first advent for the express purpose of sacrifice. Now, at the second advent, the Christ again is manifested “a second time.”
- FOR SALVATION:** The second advent is for the purpose of salvation—not sacrifice, thus:
- WITHOUT SIN:** Must read: “Without a sin offering.”
Christ’s second manifestation is no longer for the purpose of sacrifice. The age of sacrifice will have been completed; the covenant of salvation and blessing will be functioning.
- TO THOSE:** The covenant will be available to all who want it.
Some will jump in early, some later. (Revelation 22:17)
However, as Romans 18:19 makes abundantly clear, the whole creation eagerly awaits the second manifestation of THE CHRIST!

– CHAPTER 10 –

While Hebrews 9 touches strongly on the sin-offering, its primary function was to show how the tabernacle would have its antitype. Chapter 10, however, has a strong focus on Jesus and his body as the sin offering which must precede the New Covenant. The chapter divides easily into the following parts:

- 1 - 4: The sacrifices of the Law were ineffective; nevertheless, they, among other things, provide pictures of good things to come.

- 5 - 10: The antitypical sacrifices are Jesus and his body members.

- 11 - 18: The New Covenant must await the completion of the sacrifices offered for sin at the beginning of the Gospel Age.

- 19 - 39: Knowing of our great privileges in the sin offering, it is incumbent upon us to continue in the confidence with which we began so that the desired ends will be attained.

– 10:1-4 –

These verses are here to re-state that which 9:9 had taught. They set the stage for a discussion of how the true (antitypical) sacrifices work.

– 10:1 –

A SHADOW: We use the term “type” loosely. The word “shadow” (Greek = skia) refers to a particular kind of type—that which recurs continually, at least until that which it represents appears on the scene. Hence Paul is speaking specifically about ceremonies which occur with regularity. (It is possible for a “type” to happen only once; but this never is true of a “shadow.”)

Another lesson in Paul’s first phrase here is that the Law is,

indeed, a shadow—a forerunner, a teacher, a predictor, a prophecy of something else. He is, in essence, with a few words, dismissing the Law as a final or effective tool for anything in itself. He says it is there not for itself, but for what it predicts.

TO COME: Paul says the Law predicts “good things to come.” The implication of “good things” is that, whatever they may be, they are BETTER than what the Law was.

VERY IMAGE: When we are told the Law is not the very image of the reality, we should feel relieved when we find ourselves trying to explain detail that is not clear in the type. Paul is excusing the picture as being incapable of showing and teaching the fine nuances of the reality. Just as a literal shadow cannot show the detail of that which casts it, neither can the Law services adequately picture what we want to know of our Lord and ourselves as pictured in it.

This is an important lesson. Too often we might tend to struggle with and argue over what is signified in the type. But, now that we have seen and experienced the antitype, we can say with a confident security what the type meant. In other words: The New Testament writings really DO reveal what the Old Testament writings conceal. We should not interpret New Testament truths and prophecies by the Old Testament words. We should interpret the Old Testament words by what the Apostles have taught. As an example, we should not interpret Revelation by Jeremiah, but, rather, Jeremiah by Revelation. Likewise, as did Bro. Russell, Leviticus should be interpreted by Hebrews, Galatians, etc. Knowing this will help keep us from making things into types not warranted by Apostolic writings.

“To Come” is a reference not to one, but to two ages. As the Atonement Day (Leviticus 16) sanctified Israel for the following year of leadings from the Lord, the entire “shadow” function of the Law was there to picture how the sacrifices of the Gospel Age would sanctify the world’s experiences in the Millennial Age—both ages “to come” after the Jewish Age types.

CAN NEVER
PERFECT:

Paul has said the Law was only a shadow—incapable of doing what is REAL. He now expands the argument to say that, therefore, the typical priesthood was not made “perfect”—not

given an assurance in their consciences that what they were doing could really solve the problems at hand. (Cf. 9:9)

CONTINUALLY: This is the same Greek word as “forever” in 10:12 and 14. It almost is exhausting to think of the state of mind, heart, and conscience of the Jewish Priesthood: “Will this go on FOREVER as it is now with no better results?” What a contrast we will have in 12 and 14 when ONE offering will, indeed, FOREVER result in the glories promised under the New Covenant!

– 10:2 –

The point is clear. If sacrifices really worked, they would not have to be repeated. Paul is yet focusing on the priesthood—“the worshippers.” This is important. While the sacrifices ultimately are for the people, the RESULTS never will reach the people until the “worshippers” (the priesthood) have successfully given a sacrifice WHICH WORKS! But the Jewish priesthood’s “conscience” knew very well that these sacrifices did not really work! So, they kept offering them “continually” in hopes that they somehow would eventually work—not knowing (9:8) that the sacrifices they were offering were only TYPICAL of those which would truly satisfy “the Most Holy.”

WE do know this. We know that no more sacrifice is needed—only the completion of that which already has been offered (Jordan and Pentecost).

– 10:3 –

But the Jewish priests did not know this. They knew only, year after year, that they were being reminded that the problems were not yet solved.

– 10:4 –

Paul’s entire conclusion regarding Jewish Age atonement sacrifices is this: blood from bulls and goats (Leviticus 16) is insufficient.

– 10:5-10 –

This whole section begins with THEREFORE—because blood from bulls and goats (10:4) won't work, something else has been provided. The content of these next few verses is exciting and inspiring and humbling beyond words. As we carefully consider their impact, we will learn more about the 40th Psalm, about Jesus' sacrifice, and about the unspeakable privilege we have been given. These verses deserve and demand careful and prayerful scrutiny. Their lessons can do no less than heighten our consecration concepts and vows.

– 10:5-7 –

Begin the consideration of these verses by reading the 40th Psalm. It clearly is about the Church. In fact, we might never isolate verses 7 and 8 as being about Jesus, the Head of the Church, unless Paul had made a point of doing so. It is important to understand that Psalm 40:7 and 8 are primarily about Jesus. The Apostle says so; and to understand Hebrews 10:5-10, we must keep this in mind. Yet, also, we must keep in mind that Psalm 40 is about us. Paul will make this plain in his discussion. Let's see the glorious detail:

– 10:5 –

THEREFORE: This common word takes on immense import in this context. Paul is holding us in suspense as he ends verse 4. To paraphrase: The Jewish atonement sacrifices don't work. Now, where does that leave us?

INTO THE WORLD: His answer is pointed. It leaves us with JESUS' COMING INTO THE WORLD at his first advent. Paul says Jesus is the sacrifice that WILL work. And to prove his point, Paul turns to Psalm 40 and tells us that verses 6-8 of that Psalm are a report of Jesus' commitment to being the SUBSTITUTE for part of the Jewish sacrifices. Again, let's paraphrase:

SACRIFICE: “Father, I know that your intent from the beginning was not to desire or accept the atonement day animals as efficacious for the sins of the world. But you have accepted my self-imposed servitude and marked it for its commitment.”

WHAT?

It is quite on purpose that the last sentence seems to be so convoluted in representing the words of Hebrews 10:5.

Consider:

When reading Psalm 40:6, hopefully we noticed the dramatic difference against Hebrews 10:5:

- Hebrews 10: “But a body Thou hast prepared me.”
- Psalm 40: “Mine ears hast Thou digged.”
[Margin]

How can Paul have so mis-quoted? Well, the easy, correct, dry, and somewhat unbeneficial answer is that he was using the Septuagint translation—sort of the King James Jewish Bible (in Greek) of his day. But we can get so much more by probing deeper.

We must understand that in ancient times there were two basic kinds of slavery. One was by force, the other by free will. Slaves who HAD to be slaves might be chained, watched, or otherwise kept “faithful” to their masters. But slaves who WANTED to be in servitude to their masters, and did so voluntarily, were identified by having their ears pierced and having rings inserted in the holes. (See Exodus 21:5, 6.) It is this last meaning which is present in Psalm 40. The Septuagint translators simply show that Jesus’ voluntary servitude was symbolized by his body’s being “prepared”—marked for voluntary service. The translation is not really clear. The Hebrew of Psalm 40, however, is so much more explicit. Thus, again, we can paraphrase:

Father, I know typical offerings were not your long-term intention; but you have accepted my offering to be a human sacrifice instead—(my voluntary servitude to that end, my consecration to serve UNTO DEATH)—by giving me the pierced ear of acceptance for this assignment.

What a wonderful thought!

– AN ASIDE –

In reading Bro. Russell on the word “body” in this verse, we note that he variously interprets it as (1) Jesus’ literal flesh, or (2) the “mystical body of Christ”—the saints as the “body” of the Messiah class. This is one case where both answers are correct (as we will soon see). Psalm 40 is about the saints; but Paul is ISOLATING the lesson about Jesus first because he wants us to understand how he (the antitypical bullock) is the first to consecrate his flesh to die as the REAL sin offering.

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Therefore, the “body” of this verse is most particularly the literal flesh of Jesus—the perfect man placing himself in voluntary servitude to be a human sacrifice, a replacement for the bullock part of verse 4. We will do the same as we function as the replacement for the goat part of verse 4; but that is the lesson of another verse to come.

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– 10:6, 7 –

The sixth verse repeats the reasoning of the first part of verse 5; the seventh verse repeats in alternate terms the commitment of verse 5. It almost is saying, “In case you missed the symbolism of verse 5, I will state it clearly in verse 7.”

BEHOLD: This little world always seems to ask that we slow down, sit back, and meditate on the import of what follows.

COME TO DO
THY WILL: Paraphrasing: “The reason I have come—the ONLY reason I have come with a human body—is to accomplish what THY WILL REALLY IS. It was NOT animal sacrifices. It was human sacrifice. This is the reason I have come.”

IN THE BOOK: This little parenthesis, occurring way back when the Psalm was written, clearly indicates that the pre-Psalm writings prophesy of the sacrifice of Christ. It was done in allegory with Abraham and Isaac. It was done in all sorts of symbols like the clothing for Adam and Eve, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the services of the Tabernacle, etc. The important point is: This is not a change of plans on God’s part. The

lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. God didn't suddenly say, "The Law doesn't work; let's find another plan." NO! The true sin offering was ordained from the beginning. Jesus now says, "It's time for the writing of the Book to be fulfilled. I have come to do it."

– 10:8, 9 –

Paul now wishes to explain a little about the text he has just quoted. Verse 8 mostly is filled with re-stating that God has no pleasure in the animal sacrifices. Then Paul concludes by reminding us:

"which are offered according to the Law."

This little reminder has more than one function.

- (1) It points out that, even though God, Himself, instituted the Law, He clearly DID NOT intend it to accomplish what He would, ultimately, "take pleasure in."
- (2) It also sets the stage for the lesson of the next verse. It implies strongly that BOTH the Law and its sacrifices would be replaced by something different.

When verse 9 opens, Jesus is saying, in response to the two implications stated above,

BEHOLD:	"Just think about the import!"
I HAVE COME:	"This is why I am now a man."
TO DO THY WILL:	"Your will was NOT the Law or its sacrifices. I have come to <u>be</u> the sacrifice You delight in as well as, then, to mediate a Covenant you will have pleasure in."

Consequently, the three suggestions normally offered for the meaning of the rest of this verse ALL are true:

- (1) Jesus is taking away the type in order to establish the antitype.
- (2) He is taking away the ineffective sacrifices (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 16:18) by giving the efficacious ones.
- (3) He is phasing out the Law so that it will be replaced ultimately by the New Covenant.

–10:10 –

HERE is the verse to “behold” with great wonder, care, humility, and with a recognition of what it means concerning us. It is a follow-up and direct application and explanation of what Paul had taught in 7:27.

BY THIS WILL: We must take great care to remember the antecedent of this phrase. We saw it in 10:7 and 10:9. The “WILL” to which this refers is GOD’S WILL TO HAVE HUMAN SACRIFICES INSTEAD OF BULLS AND GOATS. (10:4) We already have seen that Jesus fulfilled this “will” by coming as a human to be the antitypical bullock. But the goat has been ignored thus far. This verse is here to deal with the goat.

WE: This is the next important word. This verse is about us, the goat class. Please catch the connection of “By this will” to “we.” WE are being INCLUDED in this will of God to have human sacrifices replace the animals of Leviticus 16.

HAVE BEEN
SANCTIFIED: This is NOT in any sense talking about our justification. Our justified was NECESSARY to put us into a condition that would make us acceptable to be sacrificed. (Romans 8:1; 12:1) BUT THIS IS NOT THE TOPIC OF THIS VERSE!

Let’s paraphrase the verse up to this point:
Because God’s will is to have the true sin offering be humans, not animals;
because God’s WILL was PARTLY met by Jesus’ humanity being offered;
because, though, Jesus DID NOT fulfill the offering of the goat;
WE HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE (sanctified) TO FULFILL THAT ASPECT OF GOD’S WILL.

BY THE
OFFERING OF
THE BODY: “Body” here is not Jesus’ humanity as it was in verse 5.
“Body” here is the “mystical” body of Christ. (I Corinthians 6:18; 10:16, 17; 12:12-14, 20, 24, 27; Hebrews 13:3)
Therefore, this is showing that our sanctification process is accomplished BY OUR BEING OFFERED as the high priest’s body—or, in other terms, by our being offered as the antitypical goat.

ONCE:

This, of course, is Paul's point at the head of this chapter. The Law DID NOT accomplish anything as was demonstrated by its need to keep re-offering the sacrifices annually. But THIS one-time offering of THE CHRIST (head and body; bullock and goat) WILL BE EFFICACIOUS in the removal of the world's sin. This ONCE, is the same "once" as 7:27. It is "once" in TWO PARTS as shown in Leviticus 16. It is FIRST "for himself"—i.e., to cleanse his "body" so it could be offered. When his "body" IS offered (as the goat), it is "then" on behalf of "the sins of the people."

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This verse should stop us. If it is not abundantly clear to our understanding, we should review it over and over again until it is clear. **If there is any one verse that epitomizes the purpose of the book of Hebrews concerning us, it likely is this verse.**

– 10:11-18 –

Paul uses these verses to summarize.

- Verse 11 shows the inadequacy of typical sacrifices.
- Verse 12 shows the all-time efficacy of the antitypical sacrifices.
- Verses 12 and 13 show that the sacrifice (the goat's part) takes TIME for its actual completion. During this time Jesus "sits" and "waits" (KJV = "expecting") the completion when he can begin to subdue his enemies.
- Verse 14 shows that his expectation or waiting will be rewarded because he knows that his under-priests are "perfected" in their consciences.
- Verse 15 shows that Jeremiah's prophecy confirms this waiting period by using the word "AFTER."
- Verses 16 and 17 quote Jeremiah's prophecy with the intent of showing:
 - (a) the New Covenant must wait until "after those days" of waiting and sitting;
 - (b) that the intent of the New Covenant is to take away the sins of the people.
- Verse 18 shows that when, therefore, the New

Covenant begins to take away sin, the waiting period of sin offering must be over.

That is the essence of these verses. They are simple and to the point. A review of this section will be helpful after considering the following look at some of the details.

– **10:11** –

Because of the larger context, we can conclude that Paul is yet speaking of High Priests and that he is speaking in a Leviticus 16 scenario. Thus, “daily” means every atonement day (i.e., once a year, not once a day). “Time after time” (KJV = “oftentimes”) is Paul’s reference back to verse 1; and his point that these typical atonement sacrifices don’t work is his reference back to verses 2-4. He does all of this to set the stage for his contrasting point in the next verses.

– **10:12** –

Here is the contrast:

BUT HE: Jesus, unlike his Aaronic type

HAVING OFFERED: This is important. The sin offering WAS offered at Jordan and Pentecost. It is NOT offered throughout the Gospel Age. It TAKES the whole Gospel Age for the sacrifice to be completed, but it WAS OFFERED (past tense) at the beginning of the age. God showed his acceptance of the offering in each case (Jordan and Pentecost) by the giving of the Holy Spirit. That giving of the Holy Spirit was God’s guarantee to Jesus that the offering will work—even if it takes 2000 years to complete. **THUS** Jesus can:

SIT DOWN: He can sit down at God’s right hand of favor **ASSURED** that the success of the offering was certain. That is the intent of verse 14.

The quote in this verse and the next is from Psalm 110:1.

– 10:13 –

- WAITING: (KJV = expecting.) This is assured expectation and waiting. It is knowing the end from the beginning.
- ONWARD: (KJV = henceforth.) This is the entire Gospel Age after Pentecost. It (the “onward,” the “waiting”) is the point that Paul will prove by quoting Jeremiah. Paul’s entire lesson in this section is that there can be no RESULTS from the sin offering, no New Covenant, no forgiveness of the sins of the people, no subjugation of enemies UNTIL “after” the waiting period during which the sacrificing of the goat is being completed.
- UNTIL: The quote from Psalm 110:1 continues. The concept had been introduced by Paul as early as Hebrews 1:3!

The point of this verse, and of its prophecy in Psalm 110, is NOT that Jesus waits “until” his enemies ALL HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED. It is that Jesus waits until he, himself can begin the process of subjecting them. This is proven by Paul’s writings in I Corinthians 15:24-28. The part the goat class will play in this subjection of enemies is further shown in I Corinthians 15:29 by saying, “If this whole Millennial Age work is NOT the assignment of the whole Christ, then why do we bother being baptized and subjecting ourselves to the trials therewith associated?”

– 10:14 –

This verse comments on the previous two. First it draws our memories to the “one offering” of verse 12. We saw that the “one sacrifice for sins” was the antitypical equivalent of (verse 4) the bulls and goats of Leviticus 16. Then it draws our attention back to the lesson of 10:10. WE are sanctified BY BEING PART OF THE SIN OFFERING—part of the “body of Christ” which is being offered to do away with sin.

The word “FOR” with which this verse begins is very important. It explains the WHY of Jesus’ being able to sit and expect (or wait) confidently for the peaceable Kingdom. He can confidently wait BECAUSE he knows the offering of the goat class HAS BEEN ACCEPTED and will complete the sin offering necessary for the functioning of the New Covenant. THAT is why the next verses follow. He

KNOWS the sacrifice has been accepted, will be completed, and that AFTERWARD (as the Holy Spirit had promised) the New Covenant WILL COME.

– 10:15 –

This verse is translated miserably by just about everyone. It is easy to understand why. No one of the translators apparently understood the concept of a Gospel Age of sacrifice-completion followed by a Millennial Age New Covenant. This MUST be understood in order to translate this verse with any meaning.

The verse seems relatively unimportant at first glance, but that is the fault of the translators. There is an extremely important word in this verse. The word is “AFTER.” Some translators omit it! The point, of course, is that the Apostle is using this verse and the quotation of verses 16 and 17 to make the point that it is only AFTER the waiting period that the New Covenant can function.

While we are not translators, we suggest that verse 15 should read something like this:

“And the Holy Spirit also witnesses this to us by saying, ‘AFTER.’”

– 10:16, 17 –

Now Paul quotes that part of Jeremiah 31 which makes the points he wishes to make.

- verse 16: The Covenant I will make with Israel which will change their hearts and minds, I will make AFTER those days when Jesus was sitting in expectation.
- verse 17: When this Covenant is operating, I will wipe out their sins and forget about their lawless deeds.

[Compare Hebrews 10:16, 17 with Paul’s similar remarks in Romans 11:26.]

– 10:18 –

THE CONCLUSION

Paul now draws together all of his thoughts and points from verses 11-17 to make his point about the intervening Gospel Age of sin offering completion. His point:

Once sins are being forgiven, it will be clear that the offering to do away with them is completed.

In other words: Once the sin offering is complete, it will be possible for the New Covenant to function—but not before! It is this completion for which Jesus sits and waits in expectation.

– 10:19-25 –

Now Paul draws us to the application of the doctrine he has just taught.

- Verse 19 shows that we have a “conscience” that allows us to present ourselves as part of the sin offering because our antitypical bullock is a REAL offering, not a pictorial, symbolic, typical sacrifice.
- Verse 20 shows that a way has been inaugurated for us as into the antitypical Most Holy. It is “new and living” as opposed to the old typical Tabernacle which did not give life. His sacrifice, his humanity given up, made possible a way for us into the Most Holy as a sacrifice.
- Verse 21 shows Jesus as the antitypical High Priest, and we, in him, the dwelling place of God.
- Verse 22 shows that we, unlike the typical Jewish priesthood, have faith that the sacrifices are efficacious, that our consciences are “perfected” by confidence in the true sacrifice, and that our bodies are justified legally and, to the best of our abilities, in deeds, by these truths.
- Verse 23 admonishes that we not let these things slip and that He will sustain us in that effort.
- Verse 24 asks that, as a real body functions, we should stimulate all the body members to work in concert.
- Verse 25 suggests strongly that isolation is our enemy. Exhortation and/or encouragement is imperative and will grow in import as the age ends.

A few details regarding these verses follow.

– 10:19 –

Entering the Most Holy, i.e., having even the concept that we could be part of the offering for sin, takes CONFIDENCE far beyond what any son of Adam could claim. But Paul says we MUST claim this based on the bullock's blood. He says, in essence, that if we do not have faith enough to accept this call, we do not believe that the blood of Jesus is capable of cleansing us to make us acceptable.

– 10:20 –

By equating the veil into the Most Holy to the flesh of Jesus, and by taking our minds to how that veil was torn at his death, Paul is showing that Jesus DOES open the Most Holy access to us. He is commenting on 9:8 which said that while the typical arrangement still functioned, the concept of our entering the Most Holy was impossible.

– 10:21, 22 –

It is clear that we do not enter the offering by ourselves by individual initiative. We enter by being a part of the High Priest. Remember in Leviticus 16 (and Hebrews 9:7) that when the bullock was offered, it was “for Aaron and his house.” It cleansed his own body (the “body” of Christ) and his house, the Levites—those without an inheritance in the land who would fall short of the priesthood.

In verse 22 Paul introduces the “full assurance of faith”—the tool which will keep us in the way. He will develop this in Chapters 11 and 12.

– 10:23 –

This verse repeats a refrain Paul introduced in 3:6, 14. He also stresses “confession” (KJV = profession) and holding fast to it with God's help. (Philippians 1:6) It is important that we have STATED our objectives—that we wish to offer ourselves to accompany Jesus in the removal of sin from the race. Because we have OFFERED ourselves to do so, we are part of a sin offering. Being faithful, it here suggests, is greatly aided by our continuance in confessing this profession.

The NAS says “confession of our HOPE.” The KJV says “profession of our FAITH.” The former likely is more accurate. Our strength will derive less from BELIEVING in the sin offering than it will from HOPING (and, therefore, striving) to be a part of it.

– 10:24, 25 –

Strength comes from being part OF THE BODY—all of whom have the same objectives. It does not come from being an individual. It is the BODY that is offered at Pentecost; it is the BODY that will bless the world. Much like a good sports team, real success comes from teamwork, not from a collection of individual super-stars. Thus Paul uses these two verses to show HOW to pursue and complete the Gospel Age sacrifice:

- (1) We must CONSIDER one another. We must interact differently with different individuals in the body to bring out their best. (I Corinthians 9:19-23) This means that we must at times suppress our own natural tendencies and inclinations. (I Corinthians 9:24-27)
- (2) Our Christianity is OUTGOING. We owe it to the body to STIMULATE (KJV = provoke) ONE ANOTHER to faithfulness in character and actions.
- (3) We cannot do either of the above by avoiding each other. A body must interact—even if “the habit of some” is to the contrary.
- (4) The objective of assembly is ENCOURAGEMENT. (NAS) [In English, this word means PUT A HEART INTO.] Paul’s point is plain. Our interaction is to be POSITIVE.
- (5) The end of the age will require this all on an intensive level. Satan will be trying to frustrate completion of the body. The body must “edify itself in love” as a defense.

– 10:26-31 –

These verses are intense and sobering. They are Paul’s addition to the testimonies of Peter (II Peter 2) and of Jude. All three of these Apostles felt the need to warn us of the dangerous fleshly propensities which lead to second death.

Because the 26th verse begins with “For,” we are forced to see Paul’s link with verse 25: Those whose “habit” (KJV = manner) is to forsake the benefits of fellowship, those who think they can “go it alone,” are placing themselves in a position of developing their own willfulness to the point of spiritual destruction. In the KJV, Jude 19 is a remarkable parallel to Hebrews 10:25. “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit.” Paul obviously thinks this threat will be greater NOW, in the age’s end.

– 10:26 –

FOR: This word is saying that assembly will help keep us from a course of willful sin. We knock the rough edges off of each other. We buffer extreme tendencies. “Good fellowship” will keep us mindful of the Scripturalness of our course (or of the violation thereof).

IF WE GO ON: The KJV is much weaker here. The NAS helps us better understand Paul’s warning. He is not speaking of shortcomings, periodic failures, or any of those things which plague all of us. He is telling us about PATTERN—“if we go on,” if we continue, if we don’t acknowledge and correct the erroneous course.

SINNING WILFULLY: Again, the KJV doesn’t express the thought. “Sinning” must have an “...ing” ending. This, about which Paul warns, is a continuum and, IT IS WILFULL. We are AWARE that we are continually, progressively, and consensually deviating from something we have known to be a right course.

AFTER: Paul wishes us to understand that responsibility FOLLOWS something. He will be very explicit. He is saying that his warning is not talking about nominal Christians, “Plane N Christians”—people consecrated to righteousness but to no more.

RECEIVING THE
KNOWLEDGE
OF THE TRUTH:

Paul DOES NOT say, “after receiving the truth.” He ACTUALLY does not even say “after receiving the KNOWLEDGE of the truth!” We may look and say, ‘Oh, yes he does!’ But the force of the lesson here is in the Greek language. Most translators translate the Greek words GNOSIS and EPIGNOSIS the same. They just translate them “knowledge.” But there is a vast difference in these words. GNOSIS is knowledge in the sense of INFORMATION. That is not the word Paul uses here. So he is not saying, “Your responsibility and liability begin once you have the information.”

The Greek here is EPIGNOSIS. Literally it is OVER-KNOWLEDGE—in the sense of something above and beyond information. EPIGNOSIS is knowledge that has taken internal root and has had a transforming influence.

(In II Thessalonians 1:8, Paul uses it to describe those who, in the Kingdom, refuse to ACKNOWLEDGE God—just to learn about Him, because of what they have learned. It is much the idea of Acts 3:23. People will not only have to LISTEN to That Prophet, but will have to internalize the message and actually change in accordance with the information. THEN infraction persisted in will bring second death.

Thus Paul is saying that a course of willful sin after receiving the work of the Holy Spirit within us will be the ticket to extinction. It is an abbreviated statement of Hebrews 6:4-8. (See II Peter 2:20, 21.)

NO MORE
SACRIFICE:

We cannot, after a course of such willfulness, expect re-instatement. Our justification allowed us to offer ourselves as part of the great offering for sin. Once accepted, we either retain that justification or we lose it. Christ dieth no more for us.

– AN ASIDE –

The “Jehovah’s Witnesses” frequently use this verse to prove that Adam is not coming back in the resurrection. Obviously this shows their total ignorance of the meaning of this verse and the sacrifice of Christ behind it. Yes, Adam did willfully sin against the perfection in him. Yes, it did result in the death sentence. THAT, of course, is why Jesus died—to get Adam and his race free from that sentence. What the “Witnesses” miss in this verse is the phrase “no more sacrifice”(KJV) or “no longer...a sacrifice for sins” (NAS). EVERYONE gets the benefits of the sacrifice ONCE—even Adam, FOR WHOM it was actually made. (I Corinthians 15:21) Paul’s point is NOT that Adam (or anyone else) DOES NOT get the benefit. His point is that any one of us gets it ONLY ONCE. Adam is yet to get it.

– 10:27 –

BUT: Instead of the benefits of Christ accruing, losers of justification will experience:

EXPECTATION OF JUDGMENT:

The NAS reads, “a certain terrifying expectation of judgment.” Paul is letting us know what we all have experienced instinctively. When we openly and repeatedly violate our consciences, our best judgment, we experience an inner conviction that it is surely going to cost us something. Eventually our consciences may become “seared” to the point that this inner conviction vanishes. But it always is there initially—a help from God to keep us from a repetition of evil. Paul’s words here suggest that the second death recipients will have been aware of their fate.

The word “JUDGMENT” here is from the Greek word KRISIS—a word usually reserved for the final decision process regarding the church in this age and the world in the next. In other words, Paul is suggesting that the persistent willfulness will make the second death class quite expectant that final judgment has gone against it. To quote the familiar expression, “Its goose is cooked.”

AND: We suggest that this conjunction here is used not as meaning

an addition, but a description. This Greek word (KAI) is as properly translated “even” as it is “and.” The decision relies upon context. “Even” seems the best here. Thus, “even the fury of a fire....”

FIRE WILL
CONSUME:

Paul resorts to quoting Isaiah 26:11 to illustrate the “judgment” he has just predicted. (Jude 23 suggests that it is possible to grab someone out of this fate if done so early enough.)

ADVERSARIES:

Anyone who goes on sinning willfully has, indeed, become an adversary of God. When Paul uses Isaiah 26:11, he amplifies the meaning of this open rebellion of Hebrews 10:26. The Isaiah text indicates that there are two weaknesses in the rebels.

- (1) They have failed to see or appreciate the Lord’s “hand”—His mighty works on behalf of and in the midst of His Church.
- (2) They have an improper reaction to the Lord’s good work in others. This is what we usually call jealousy.

– 10:28 –

In this verse and the next, Paul CONTRASTS death under the Law with that under the Sarah Covenant.

SET ASIDE:

(KJV says, “despised.”) Paul still is commenting on 10:25 and 26. Willful sin comes not from accident or inherited weakness, it comes from lack of respect. The Law required the death of those who had lost regard for the principles of God. Those principles were accepted and respected by the GROUP (the congregation of Israel, represented by two or three witnesses—even as the congregation of saints in 10:25 also is spoken of by Jesus as “two or three.”

(See Matthew 18:20 and Deuteronomy 17:2, 6, 7.)

Paul is referring back to the Law to make the above connection and also because he has been using and continues to use the Law as a type and a contrast to what follows it. In 10:29 he shows the contrast.

– 10:29 –

If the Law is only a “shadow...and not the very image” of the reality, it should be no surprise that punishment for violation is greater in the antitype.

MUCH SEVERER: What is more severe than death? It is second death.

DESERVE: (KJV = “thought worthy.”) Paul makes the point that he wants us to appreciate fully: This fate is deserved. The recipient is worthy. Sympathies are out of place. Anyone having the EPIGNOSIS, the indwelling of light and understanding from begetting by the Holy Spirit, is worthy of extinction when he willfully and persistently charts a course against it.

Paul continues to show what is involved:

TRAMPLED
UNDER FOOT:

In Arab societies to this day, the sign for utter and total disrespect is to show another person the sole of the shoe. To put a foot on an adversary symbolizes total disregard for his worth. Luke 21:24 and Romans 16:20 are two Scriptural examples.

SON OF GOD:

Thus Paul states that this second death class are those who have eventually transformed themselves from extreme light to total disregard and disrespect for the one who had saved them from the condemnation in Adam. Only pride could lead to such insanity. And, as we have seen contextually, it all begins with a lack of feeling the need to be a part of the body.

REGARDED
AS UNCLEAN:

Paul’s remark seems to say that Jesus’ blood is regarded as nothing special—no more clean, pure, holy, or meaningful than any other life. But Paul does not isolate it to the concept of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. Instead he links this blood with THE COVENANT—the result of the sin offering process.

BLOOD OF THE
COVENANT:

Barclay’s translation here is so insightful: “...regarded as a common thing the covenant blood through which he was made fit to enter God’s presence.” We must recall 10:19 and 20. In these verses we were assured that we could be part of the offering for sin—we could enter the Most Holy as acceptable sacrifices. Now, in 10:29, as Barclay so

well states it, we could find nothing special about the arrangement that allowed that privilege.

SANCTIFIED: Note this word carefully. It again (like 10:10) is not speaking of our justification by the blood. It is speaking of our sanctification as part of the blood of the Covenant.

**INSULTED
THE SPIRIT
OF GRACE:**

Again, Barclay is powerful: "...and who has wantonly insulted the Spirit through which God's grace has come to us." The Church is symbolized in Revelation by the Apostle John. His name means "The Grace of Jehovah." We are, indeed, miracles of grace. This is Paul's point when he teaches us of our privilege in the sin offering. Now he exclaims how horrible it is to INSULT that grace after which we are named! How do we "insult" grace? We do it by contradicting its influence in our lives—by "sinning willfully" and persistently (10:26) against its leadings.

– 10:30, 31 –

If we were to read verses 26 through 31 we likely would see not much positive. But here, in verse 30, if we take the time to investigate the source of Paul's quotation (Deuteronomy 32:35, 36), we can learn from it. Paul is quoting from the so-called "Song of Moses"—a judgment message which Moses delivers to the nation of Israel to inculcate sobriety in their dealings with the Lord. Paul quotes the beginning of each of two verses. (The KJV is the least clear. We recommend most other translations.)

Looking at Deuteronomy 32:35, we see a clear condemnation of God's enemies. But in verse 36 (which Paul ALSO quotes), we see God's desire to DELIVER His people. This CONTRAST between those two verses is NOT EVIDENT in Hebrews 10:30. But, in the context of Hebrews 10:24-36 it IS EVIDENT that Paul wants to CONTRAST faithfulness to waywardness. (See Deuteronomy 30:15-20 for a wonderful parallelism which forms the context of Paul's quotation source.)

So, in Deuteronomy 32:36, we see God's intent to VINDICATE His servants, to help them in their weaknesses.

Seeing this information from its source, we can more clearly interpret Paul's intention. Paraphrasing:

- Verse 30 Those who have insulted God's grace and have become his enemies (verse 29) we know have been promised appropriate payment with a vengeance
BUT:
Don't forget, He also said that those who remain His people will vindicated and strengthened.
- Verse 31 We don't want to be the former because it is a terrifying thing (verse 27) to fall without mercy into God's wrath.

– 10:32-39 –

Before concluding the details of this chapter, it will be helpful to get a large-picture perspective of Paul's sermon. There is a 3-part layout encompassing verses 19-39.

The first part (19-25) says:

Now that you know your privilege in being part of the offering for sin in conjunction with your brethren, continue in faith to pursue the privilege and to edify all others who are doing the same.

The second part (26-31) says:

If we become strong-willed individuals instead, we surely will lose our spiritual lives. The Lord will not be mocked.

The third part (32-39) says:

One important way to not fall into the trap of individual will is to look back since the beginnings of our consecrations to see how the Lord has blessed our struggles as a body. These Ebenezers will keep us going until the day which we anticipate with joy.

Seeing this outline will help us understand the placement, content, and details of verses 32-39.

– 10:32 –

This verse opens with “But.” Paul is saying, “Don’t fall into destruction, BUT, INSTEAD, take strengthening inventory of your Christian path up to this point.

FORMER DAYS: All the days before today

IN WHICH: Meditate on the context, the Ebenezers, of those days.

AFTER BEING

ENLIGHTENED: I.e., after receiving the Holy Spirit. Here Paul refers back to 10:26—“after receiving the epignosis.” It is only by the Holy Spirit that we can appreciate and value the peculiarities of our experiences.

ENDURED: This word is central to Paul’s lesson. He knows we never will succeed without endurance. In 10:22 he calls it full assurance of faith. In 10:23 he calls it holding fast without wavering. In 10:35 he will call it confidence. In 10:36 it will be endurance again. 10:39 will call it not shrinking back. Chapter 11 will be devoted ENTIRELY to this central lesson based on the word “faith.”

Here Paul is saying: Look back. You have endured; you now can continue in the same.

CONFLICT OF
SUFFERINGS:

Paul does not sugar-coat. He is not focusing on the “good times” we have had. He is focusing on growth. This verse does not simply say “you endured great sufferings.” We may have. But Paul wants us to see this word CONFLICT. He wants to encourage endurance and growth through STRUGGLE. He wants us to meditate on the past to reassure ourselves of how beneficial to our character growth STRUGGLE is.

– 10:33 –

In this verse we are shown TWO kinds of struggle. Both are called “partly” because neither is complete in itself. This is important. In this entire chapter Paul wants us to see the body, how it is interactive, and how we individually function as part of it. So, first, he points out that we have INDIVIDUALLY been

willing to appear to the public as strange—as a “spectacle.” We have been willing to accept the “reproaches and tribulations” that have resulted. While this was, in a sense, “individual,” there is a “group lesson” associated with it:

- (1) While we individually have been spectacles, it is BECAUSE of our association with others in like belief.
- (2) It is possible for strong individuals to find that being “spectacles” strengthens them as individuals. It develops a pride that divorces them from the need to be a part of a group. This is not what Paul wants; it is the very thing he argues against in 10:25, 26.

Thus Paul’s second point, his second “partly” is our willingness and joy to be “sharers with those who were so treated.” In other words, IT IS THE CAMARADERIE that brings reproach. BOTH struggles are necessary and helpful. Together, there is a completeness. Only one of the two experiences constitutes a “partly.”

Thus, verses 32 and 33 form a formula for endurance: meditate on how the Lord has helped you to grow through conflict as part of a unit.

– 10:34 –

Paul now expands his lesson. There is deep insight in the words of this verse. Hidden between the lines are many messages:

- (1) “Property” is temporal. Those who have it WITHOUT comrades have emptiness.
- (2) Those properly exercised by their struggles value their comrades far above temporal possessions.
- (3) True faith knows that “better possessions” are in the future—not worthy to be compared to what we can have here.

It was a fact in the Apostle’s day that being an outcast from society likely resulted in temporal loss. To some degree this yet is true. But our “sympathy” is not with things, but with saints who have ideas and commitments that transcend the visible world. Perhaps in this verse Paul is suggesting that the unfortunate ones

of 10:26 were, at least in part, deceived by the things of this world. True saints see the body of Christ and its objectives and let temporal concerns take a back seat.

– 10:35, 36 –

These two verses take on splendid power if we focus on two words:

CONFIDENCE

WILL

It is easy to forget that these two words have identified Paul's basic points for this entire chapter.

CONFIDENCE is the root of Paul's conclusion in 10:19. The confidence of which he speaks is the belief that we can be part of the sin offering—that we (our blood; the goat's blood) can actually be taken into the Most Holy for sin. Here in 10:35 Paul is telling us that we never should give up on that belief, that objective, that vision. **THAT** is the confidence that will have great reward—the reward of administering the New Covenant. (Hebrews 2:5)

By his contextual reasoning, we can see that the “Therefore” of this verse refers to the working of the body **TOGETHER**. It works together **NOW** to ensure endurance; it works together later to bless the world for whom it sacrificed. (I Corinthians 15:29, 30)

WILL (verse 36) is the word Paul uses extensively at the beginning of this chapter (verses 7, 9, 10) to show that God's will is not the offering of animals, but of **HUMANS!** And by this will (10:10) we have been included (sanctified) by being offered as the body of Christ.

Is this not exciting? These seemingly innocent verses become anything but innocent! They summarize the chapter. They emphasize the doctrine of the Church's part in the sin offering.

There is a “**BUT**.” That “but” is endurance. We must not only look back (verse 32), but we must continue. We must not forsake the body (verses 24, 25); we must not become individuals, disconnected from the goat class (verses 26, 29). And we must not “throw away” our confidence (verse 35) that somehow, by grace, we are acceptable offerings. **THEN** we will “receive the promise;” we will “bless all of the families of the earth.”

– 10:37 –

Even with what might seem like long-term endurance, it will seem only a little while until our hopes will find fulfillment in Jesus' return.

– 10:38 –

But, until then, he who intends to continue as one of My justified ones will do so by his continuance in FAITH. Anyone who does not, will find that I will leave him in My displeasure over his lack of faith.

– 10:37-38 –

Let's look again at Habakkuk in its non-Septuagint version and in its context.

The first thing that strikes us is that Habakkuk 2:1, 2 is a text about OUR DAY. We must be impressed that Paul, while he is encouraging the entire Church, apparently is especially concerned for Laodicea. In Hebrews 10:25 he had mentioned that his concern was "especially" for those who live at the end of the age. Now he picks a prophecy to make his summary which is distinctly for us at the close of the age. Therefore, BOTH his warnings and his encouragements should lodge in our hearts and minds even more so than they might have for others during the age. When we read outside of the Septuagint we are doubly impressed. Note the details in Habakkuk 2:3, 4 from the NAS (paraphrased):

– HABAKKUK 2:3 –

Hebrews 10:36 = hold on! You need endurance because, even though our vision is Divinely timed, and even though each step of its progress is unfailingly heading toward its goal, it will seem to tarry! Don't give up! Patiently wait for it! It will come as promised; there actually will be no delay at all.

– HABAkkUK 2:4 –

But, take special note: there will be some who are proud—some who internally will have forsaken their justification. The righteous man will not be like them. He will LIVE BY HIS FAITH!

Thus Paul, with one text, summarizes his major points since 10:19: Keep faith (collectively); don't stray from the fellowship with possible extinction consequences; watch especially for these problems at the end of the age.

(See II Peter 3:3, 9; II Peter 2:20; Romans 1:16-18; Galatians 3:9, 11.)

– 10:39 –

In this verse Paul encourages, mentioning the two courses he has discussed: (1) drawing away, and (2) keeping faith. The latter results in preserving the soul.

By this verse he also introduces his next chapter. It is FAITH and FAITHFULNESS that as always been the standard. Paul will show how many have in so many ways been pleasing to the Lord by maintaining faith. This enduring through faith has been a constant topic in Chapter 10. See the varying expressions of it in these verses.

12	=	sat down (i.e., exercised patience)
13	=	waiting
15	=	after (i.e., a period of waiting)
16	=	after
19	=	confidence
22	=	full assurance of faith
23	=	without wavering
23	=	faithful
32	=	endured
35	=	confidence
36	=	endurance
38	=	faith
39	=	faith

It is now SO OBVIOUS why Chapter 11 comes next!

PART VI

FAITH AS OUR ANCHOR

(Chapter 11:1 – 12:13)

The Objectives:

The Ancients Set Standards for Us.

Their Standards Will Give Us the Needed Endurance.

This section of Hebrews is in two distinct parts. Chapter 11 is a story-telling section—all with one key word: FAITH. The first 13 verses of Chapter 12 are instruction for us based on the lessons learned from the ancients.

— 11:1 —

This verse stands alone for the purpose of definition. Translations vary greatly in their attempts to catch the Apostle's meaning.

It should be noted first that Paul has two parts to his definition of faith. Faith, he says, relates to

- (1) HOPES
and to
- (2) THE UNSEEN.

- (1) Anyone can hope. But hopes can be aspirations, visions, wishes, fiction, dreams, preferences, or any number of things which may or may not happen. Paul wants these things eliminated from Christian Hope. Thus, he says that our hopes are REALITY, substance, verity. As we meditate on the definition we truly say, "Everything I hope for is a living REALITY. There is no possibility that it won't come to pass because it is a hope implanted by Him who cannot lie. Therefore, MY FAITH consists of a very REAL thing—not an ethereal whimsy. I cannot tell hope from reality. I have committed my life to it."
- (2) While "hope" relates to things that are REAL, they are things that ARE NOT YET HERE. The UNSEEN, on the other hand, IS HERE. It is just not perceptible by natural means. Thus the second part of Paul's definition relates to EXISTING rather than PROMISED reality. He says we are CONVICTED that things exist which the eye cannot discern. Faith is conviction regarding the unseen, or, more simply, SEEING the UNSEEN. (II Corinthians 4:18)

It all comes to this: We deal in another dimension. We have a "spiritual" sense or discernment not available to the physical senses of the human race. That spiritual sense IS faith. This is what Paul is telling us; faith is an extra sense. It is real, but it is not physical. It is a link with things spiritual. All men have not faith. But even though it is "spiritual," it is not from being spirit-begotten. If it were, the ancients would not have had it. It is born of evidence; yet it is not provable by evidence. It is available to natural human beings; but it is INTUITIVE.

We cannot improve on Paul's definition—although some translations of it deserve improvement. He simply is saying that our Christian endurance and success rest on our ability to function with

- our hopes being undiscernable from reality
and with
- our unshakable conviction that we discern the
unseen.

— 11:2 —

Barclay's version of this verse helps it fit the context better than most other translations:

“It is because of this faith that the heroes
of the past received the approval of God.”

This translation shows clearly several things:

- (a) Having defined faith, the Apostle shows that faith was the single element for success in the past.
- (b) Paul shows that faith makes heroes. The Greek only says “ancients,” but the implied meaning is unmistakable—it was the ancients that we remember and revere: hence, “heroes.”
- (c) It is God's approval that was obtained. This, of course, is what all saints desire. Again, the Greek does not specify God's approval; it specifies only that the ancients “received a testimony.” Barclay is not out of line, however. After all, does any other approval or testimony count?
- (d) Faith brings approval. The ancient worthies had faith before they had God's approval.

Thus in verses 1 and 2 Paul has defined the element that will carry us to success, and he has introduced us to the concept of a cast of heroes whose lives can keep hot the flame of faith in us.

— 11:3 —

Translation can make a difference in our understanding of this verse. Note first that “word” in the Greek is not LOGOS. It is Strong's # 4487, and it has the meaning here of command, statement, or bidding. While we know that the Logos was the active agent in creation, THIS verse is trying to tell us something else.

Thus, knowing the meaning of this word is important. Note also that the Greek is “ages”—not “worlds” or “universe” as many translate it. This accentuates the periods of God’s work from the very beginning, through the creative week, and even into the future which true faith can grasp.

What are the lessons of this verse?

- (a) Bro. Meggison observes (and the Diaglott concurs) that, beginning with this verse, the translation should be IN FIATH, not BY FAITH. There is a notable difference when we contemplate it.
- (b) While faith generally looks forward in time, this verse suggests also that it looks backwards. Thus we accept things in faith before our day as well as in our future.
- (c) Bro. Meggison also suggests that a correct translation regarding “the ages” is that they “have been framed” by God’s command. Our understanding of ages and dispensations must surely appreciate this descriptive wording.
- (d) The last part of the verse (with which translators struggle greatly) seems to teach clearly that a major part of our faith (looking backward) is that substance came from NOTHING. What a remarkable anti-evolution text! Thus, faith accepts that the visible world was not made out of visible material.

Connecting the first part of the verse with the second part so that they make sense is the test of a good translator. The THOUGHT seems to be:

In faith we accept that since ages from the beginning came about **SIMPLY BY COMMAND** (and not merely by manipulating already existing material), we also accept that seen things came from things unseen.

Thus this verse directly relates to Paul’s definition in verse 1: We have a **CONVICTION OF THINGS UNSEEN**. And this is demonstrated by our acceptance of the creation account.

Thus, perhaps a good translation might read:

In faith we understand that the ages came about by proclamation of God, so that the visible world is the result of the unseen.

(Translators which closely approximate this are The Marshall Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, The Concordant Version, and Ferrar Fenton.)

– AN IMPORTANT PREFACE –

It is possible to view this chapter as a series of victories accomplished by faith. This is not true; it is not the Apostle's lesson for us. This chapter is not about WORKS done because of faith. On the contrary, it is about LIVES OF FAITH which result in God's granting of certain results. The difference is enormous. Thus, the incorrect translation is "by faith" so-and-so did such-and-such. The correct translation is "In faith"—in a life of faith—the Lord arranged that thus-and –such happened.

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ABEL

– 11:4 –

The testimony about Abel is that he was "righteous." (Hebrews 11:4; Matthew 23:35; I John 3:12) He apparently was living a life well-pleasing to God. Perhaps that is why he tended sheep. Perhaps the Lord led him into that vocation just so that he would be able to offer a sacrifice with a prophetic meaning. [Romans 8:28] (It is interesting to note [Genesis 9:3] that man did not eat meat in those days. Thus a keeper of flocks did his job apparently only for wool.) It also is interesting to note the sequence in Genesis 4:4: "The LORD had regard for (1) Abel and (2) for his offering." Likewise (Genesis 4:5), the LORD had no regard for (1) Cain and (2) his offering. It was Abel's life of faith that was the kernel of the matter, not his sacrifice. Cain's reaction showed that his faith was lacking. (Read Genesis 4:5-8 and compare Hebrews 4:2.)

This verse shows that the acceptance of Abel's offering WAS GOD'S TESTIMONY that Abel was righteous. Too often we stress the prophetic element—that God's acceptance showed the need for a blood sacrifice. But THIS is not Paul's teaching. Paul wants us to comprehend and appreciate that A LIFE OF FAITH will reap God's approval. This is the entire lesson of Hebrews 11.

Therefore, to paraphrase this verse from the NAS,

In a life filled with faith, Abel was granted to offer a better (a prophetic) sacrifice than did Cain. This in itself was a testimony from God Himself that he was righteous—God testifying it by accepting Abel's gift. And through his life of faith (and the meaning of his sacrifice), he yet sends messages to us long after his death.

ENOCH
– 11:5, 6 –

Before considering the import of this verse as the real lesson of Paul's FAITH HALL OF FAME, it is wise to dispense with the questions which always plague a discussion of Enoch.

- (a) First, Enoch DIED. (Hebrews 11:13; John 3:13; Genesis 5:23) "ALL the days of Enoch were 365 years." Then (Genesis 5:24) "he was not."
- (b) Secondly, Enoch was a prophet. (Jude 14)
- (c) Enoch's prophetic assignment is summarized as being about the Millennium—the day when Jesus and his saints come to judge and cut off those who will not hear that prophet. (Jude 14, 15)
- (d) Also, Enoch's place as a TYPE seems assured in that Jude specifies that he is the eighth generation of man—the seventh after Adam.
- (e) Enoch's name means "disciplined."

What does all of this suggest? Putting it all together suggests that Enoch probably is typical of the human race which will be "disciplined" in the 7th day from Adam. His age (365 years, strongly suggestive of one revolution around the sun of 365 days) possibly denotes the complete cycle of restoring the race in that day—bringing it around to where it was when it started, all under the "sun of righteousness." Then, as the eighth "day" begins, he is "translated" into the "ages to come" so that he will not experience death.

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All of that has a lovely ring to it. But it is not Paul's lesson.

Enoch, like Abel, was RIGHTEOUS. Genesis 5:24 says he "walked with God." Hebrews 11:5 confirms that "he was pleasing to God." Enoch lived a life of faith.

NOTE Paul's emphasis—his purpose for Hebrews 11:6. After saying that Enoch was "pleasing to God" he explains that this phrase means faith: "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Faith and pleasing God are synonymous.

"In faith Enoch was taken up." Again the lesson is that IT IS BECAUSE he had a life of faith that he had this experience of being "taken up." "Taken up" (Strong's

3346) is a word which can be translated any number of ways. Among them is “translated,” “removed,” and “changed.” It is the same Greek in Hebrews 7:12 where the Apostle says “When the priesthood is ‘changed’.” “Removed” is a very suitable meaning.

(Obviously, in the typical application explained above, “translated” or “carried over” is good as it describes the race transported to a new age. But here in the literal lesson from Enoch’s life, “removed” fits the truth and makes understanding easier.)

So, what is Paul’s point? He is saying that Enoch had a wonderful life of faith which God so appreciated that He shortened Enoch’s life so that either

- (a) Enoch would not experience (“see”) death working in him (by getting “old”),
- or
- (b) Enoch would not even have to witness anyone’s dying.

This last point is possible. Enoch’s father lived 962 years. Enoch’s son lived 969 years. Enoch may have lived so short a life that he witnessed no one die!

God “spared” Enoch certain grief because He so appreciated his faith. Enoch “was not” (Genesis 5:24) any more because God “removed” him. All of this (Hebrews 11:5) BECAUSE “he obtained the witness that before his being removed, he was pleasing to God.” (Cf. Job 14:13; Zephaniah 2:3.)

It also is interesting to note that verse 6 repeats the 2-part definition of verse 1:

- He who comes to God (with the desire to please Him) must
- (a) have conviction of the unseen:
“believe that He IS”
 - and
 - (b) have hope as a reality: “believe...that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

NOAH

– 11:7 –

Noah (Genesis 6:9), like Enoch (Genesis 5:24) is said to have “walked with God.” Of Noah it is also said that he was “a righteous man.” Clearly the Apostle maintains his theme: “Without faith it is impossible to please” God. Thus “IN faith” (in a life of faith), Noah was rewarded in “being warned by God about things not yet seen.” This phrase of this verse references two things: (1) It refers back to verse 1. Noah had a conviction regarding what was not seen, thus fulfilling part of faith’s definition. (2) What he had not seen was rain! That he believed in what he had never seen was made manifest by his building an ark. Paul’s comment on this ark is revealing. He says that Noah “in reverence prepared an ark.” There was no grumbling or skepticism—even though he had never seen rain. He built a boat far from water while his neighbors had (from a human observational point of view) every reason to think he had lost his mind. Paul says that this “condemned the world.” His point is that Noah’s faith (by contrast with the disinterest and the ignorant contradiction from others) was condemnatory.

Paul’s summary is that Noah “became an heir of the righteousness (justification) which is by faith.” As we have seen, the sequence is correct and imperative: faith comes FIRST; the justification and blessings follow.

ABRAHAM

– 11:8-10 –

Abraham’s life of faith is manifest throughout the accounts of his life’s experiences. But as his account begins, some meditation on Abraham’s early life is helpful. His father was a heathen (who, by the way, exhibited elements of faith). Yahweh was UNKNOWN to this family. Still, there seems to have been present this “faith gene” without which there is no possibility of having a relationship with the true God. Perhaps to make this very point, Paul begins with Abraham in Ur, part of a family possibly totally ignorant of the true God. Apparently because of Abraham’s living a life IN (ignorant) FAITH, God calls to him. What is more remarkable, Abraham obeys. (The NEB of Romans 10:17 says “Faith is awakened by the message.”) He is offered a promise, but is required to leave his land “not knowing where he was going.” ONLY a man with a strong “faith gene” would be likely to comply.

Allegorically, of course, the Church does much the same. We are called, and we are willing to go in unknown paths, never to receive an inheritance in this lifetime, willing to be aliens among our neighbors while we await the “city of God.”

The familial nature of the “faith gene” seems implied by Paul. We know that Terah and Abraham exhibited it. Paul shows that the next two generations (Isaac and Jacob) did also. They were willing to WAIT for an inheritance that was promised, but never was delivered. Abraham and his descendants were looking for a “city” (a government, an established home) not built by themselves or other men, but designed and built by God. This waiting patiently is an exhibit of the presence of the “faith gene.” Anyone can design and build according to his own will; blessed are those who allow God to do it for them. (Psalm 127:1)

SARAH

— **11:11** —

Sarah also was a daughter of Terah and had the same “faith gene.” God apparently looked for a couple, both of whom pleased Him so that He could reward their faith. “IN (a life of) FAITH, also Sarah, herself, received ability to conceive...” Paul’s point remains consistent in each of his examples. Because of EXISTING faith, we can receive what God has planned for us—whether those things look positive or negative from a human point of view. Paul says Sarah’s blessing came “since she considered Him faithful who had promised.”

THE ABRAHAM-SARAH RESULT

— **11:12** —

In this verse Paul brings us back to the very kernel of his entire Hebrews sermon: the Abrahamic Promise. Thus this verse begins:

“Therefore”—because of the faith of THESE
TWO former heathens (both of whom were
too old to expect a fulfillment, but fully
believed one was coming)

“Therefore” comes the two great salvations:

The Church and Great Company

(stars of heaven)

and

The Ancient Worthies and the World

(the sand of the sea shore)

(Genesis 22:17).

INTERMEDIATE SUMMARY

– 11:13-16 –

Paraphrasing these verses before looking at any details is helpful.

- (13) All those we have mentioned died without ever losing faith. They never received what was promised to them, but they never doubted that they would eventually receive it; so they welcomed in faith what was coming at some distant time.

They confessed that they were strangers and sojourners in the land.

- (14) People who admit this make it quite clear that they are awaiting a permanent homeland (therefore, a resurrection).

- (15) We know they were not longing for the homeland they left because they simply could have gone back to it!

- (16) What they wanted was something better than what they had left. (That is why they left it!) What they wanted is what they had been promised: a heaven-provided home. Because of this, God is not ashamed to be known as their God because He has, indeed, prepared a government for them that will give them their permanent homeland.

– 11:13 –

Several items in this verse are of interest.

- (1) The phrase “strangers on the earth” is a very poor translation. It obviously is favored by churchianity because they believe these ancients are going somewhere else. The Greek for “earth” is “ge”—from which we get words like geology, geometry, geography, etc. Its usual meaning is, indeed, earth (the planet). But that is not its only meaning, and it frequently is not the right meaning. The Diaglott uses

“land.” We prefer this not only because it reflects the true meaning in this context (they were strangers in the land that was promised to them), but also because the Apostle uses the same Greek word in 11:9 where it is translated “land of promise”—not “earth of promise”!

- (2) “...died in faith” is important. Paul is stressing their holding their confidence steadfast unto the end—a theme he stresses for us earlier in Hebrews. (3:6, 12, 14; 6:11; 10:23, 35, 36, 39)
- (3) A nice cross-reference to this verse is John 8:56, confirming that Abraham “saw” Jesus’ “day” and was glad.
- (4) It is a little difficult on the surface to confirm that all five of the ancients thus far mentioned “confessed they were strangers and sojourners in the land.” The thought seems to be that they knew they were temporary and, therefore, awaited (in faith) a resurrection which would make things permanent. With ABEL, it seems that his “confession” was as a prophet by the meaning of his offering which was typical of permanence by blood. With NOAH, we again have his typical journey (I Peter 3:21) which saved the new government which will grant permanence. ENOCH, of course, as a prophet saw the “new city” (the permanent government) showing the coming of the Lord and his saints (Jude 14, 15). With ABRAHAM, SARAH, ISAAC, and JACOB, it is much easier to see their temporariness in their own land and their looking forward to God’s keeping His promises.

– 11:14 –

Paul’s point is well taken. If we confess temporariness, we long for permanence.

– 11:15 –

This statement seems to apply mostly to Abraham. But it does extend to the others. In a certain sense, all who seek the future have abandoned the present. Hopefully we do not return to it.

The allegory of the Church is so evident in 11:13 – 16. We all see our hopes in the distance. We all are strangers among mankind. We all seek a heavenly-provided government to come—trying to establish it by our own efforts. We all could (but hopefully won’t) return to what we have abandoned—all because we desire what

is BETTER and is HEAVEN-PROVIDED. Thus God does own us and is preparing a “city” for us.

– 11:16 –

This is Paul’s returning to his point in 11:10.

ABRAHAM (AGAIN)

– 11:17-19 –

The passage again begins “IN FAITH”—in, and as a part of, a life dominated by faith. God has no interest in testing to find the presence of faith, but rather to ascertain and demonstrate the depth of faith in an individual. In Genesis 22, which begins with the statement that God would test Abraham, we find that the testing resulted in God’s swearing to the validity of His promise. It is almost as if God were saying, “I wanted YOU to know how much you trust me and that such trust results in immense blessings—humbling blessings! Who could expect God to SWEAR to him?”

Referring to the same event, James (2:21) states that Abraham was thus justified by his works. It was not the works that justified him. But the works SHOWED him his justification by God’s reaction. What is our conclusion? While it is true that God will test our sincerity, it also is obvious that He knows it before He tests it. Therefore, the testings may be more for our sakes than for His! He may do these tests in large part to reward our existing faith by showing us its power and its results. We are thus further strengthened.

This verse reminds us also of Isaac’s faith. He did not have to submit to this test. He did. In so doing he richly deserves to be the type of Jesus and his Church. (Galatians 4:28)

The story of Abraham’s faith in these verses is both inspiring and instructive to us as to how we should reason. Verse 19 says, “He considered...” This is Strong’s # 3049. It means to reason it out, to conclude, to take an inventory. It shows that Abraham’s faith, while immensely strong, also was the basis of a sound mind—of incredibly sound reasoning. Here are the ingredients of Abraham’s reasonings:

Verse 17 - He had been promised that his promised seed would bless the world.

- Verse 18 - It was Isaac who was promised to be the father of Abraham's descendants.
- Verse 19 - Abraham THUS REASONED that God even was able to raise men from the dead. Otherwise He would not have asked Abraham to do this!
- Verse 17 - THUS he was readily willing to offer Isaac in sacrifice.
- Verse 19 - Abraham's total willingness was counted as the deed. Paul says that Abraham (as good as) received Isaac back from the dead.

Then Paul adds, "as a type." (Margin: literally, "in a parable.") We know this parable or allegory. It pictures God's sacrifice and His receiving His Son back from the dead to bless the world.

ISAAC — 11:20 —

This verse begins a 3-verse sequence which covers four generations of the faith seed. If we revert to verse 17, five generations are covered. The import of this is that the promise to Abraham seems as strong in each generation as it was to Abraham, and God allows each generation to prophesy based on that promise.

Isaac lived a life of faith. It is interesting to note, however, that in this verse and the following two, Paul does not mention what seems to us to be the faith highlights in the lives of these men. This is important. Paul is not stressing their faith in a particular incident, but he is stressing the results of their lives of faith.

It would seem appropriate to say that Isaac showed great faith in allowing himself to be sacrificed. But, instead, Paul's point is that, because Isaac lived a life in faith, God allows him to prophesy the future as represented in his two sons.

Furthermore, there is a potent lesson in how this happened. The appropriate blessing and prophecies came about by DECEPTION. This is to show us that a life of faith is so overruled that, regardless of our proper or improper courses and decisions, God will make it all work for good according to His plans.
(Romans 8:28)

The “things to come” which Isaac prophesied are shown in Genesis 27. Verses 28 and 29 are the prophecy regarding the younger Jacob (even though Isaac thought it was for Esau). Clearly there is a double application here. The prophecy applies to the literal descendants, the nation of Israel, who would dominate the Arab descendants of their uncle, Esau. Verses 39 and 40, the prophecy for Esau, show the inferior lot of Abraham’s Arab descendants. (See NAS as better than KJV.)

The antitypical application is, of course, even more important. The blessing for Jacob applies to Christ’s Church; that to Esau applies to natural Israel and to Christendom.

Isaac has thus been blessed by prophesying further information regarding the promised seed of Abraham. Is this not among the greatest blessings available to all who live lives “in faith”?

JACOB **– 11:21 –**

This verse is about Jacob as he relates not to his son Joseph, but to Jacob’s grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim. It may have been so placed because of the similarity of the better blessing for the younger (Ephraim) and the inferior blessing for the older (Manasseh) as in verse 20.

Some things remain common. It is because of a life in faith that Jacob is allowed to be a prophet regarding the parts of Abraham’s seed. We have found this to be a common thread in each of the Ancient Worthies mentioned.

Information regarding the typical meanings of Manasseh versus Ephraim is just about non-existent. However, Paul’s juxtaposition, the name meanings, and the similarities of the circumstances of the blessings all suggest strongly that Manasseh, the first-born, who receives the lesser blessing, is a type of natural Israel; Ephraim, the younger, who receives the greater blessing, is a type of the spiritual seed. Thus Jacob, as his father, Isaac, is privileged by his life in faith to give further prophetic detail concerning the seed of Abraham.

The account of this blessing is in Genesis 48. Detailed consideration should result in some rich blessings. The primary lesson, of course, is that the spiritual seed will bless the earthly seed.

A difficulty in Hebrews 11:21 is interpreting its last statement: “...and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.” As far as can be determined, this is a reference to Genesis 47:31. If so, two things must be treated.

- (1) The word “staff” in Hebrews 11:21 comes from the Septuagint. Most writers think it refers to a bedpost which Genesis 47:31 implies. It, therefore, seems merely a translation problem.
- (2) Genesis 47:31 does not refer to the incident when Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. It refers to the time when Jacob made Joseph promise to take his bones back to the promised land. It is, however, likely that the two incidents were not far apart in time.

Thus, Paul seems to refer to two things at the end of Jacob’s life:

- (1) Because of his life of faith he was permitted to be a prophet who enhances our appreciation of the two parts of the promised seed, and
- (2) Jacob was permitted to give a final witness to his faith that God would, indeed, resurrect him and give him the promised inheritance.

Thus, the verse might (paraphrasing) be more correctly translated something like this:

In his life of faith, Jacob, as he was approaching death was able to do two things:

- (a) Prophetically he blessed each of Joseph’s sons
- and
- (b) on his final bed he worshipped to God’s faithfulness in eventually giving him the life and land promised.

JOSEPH

– 11:22 –

Here we have great similarities to verse 21. In each case we are at the end of a faith-life. This testifies that faith was ABIDING throughout the lives of these men all the way to their last breaths.

With Joseph, ANY NUMBER of wonderful faith examples could have been mentioned by Paul. But, as becomes clearer with each passing entry, Paul is not giving an account of DEEDS OF FAITH, but of the results of lives of faith.

Joseph, as his father, is blessed by being made a prophet regarding the coming exodus. This is a wonderful blessing as it, like previous prophecies, shows more about the faithfulness of God in the myriad steps needed to fulfill the Abrahamic Promise. Joseph’s faith knew that the promised land would become theirs. He

knew there would be a resurrection. Whether he mistakenly thought he'd need his old bones, or whether they were merely symbolic of his resurrection faith seems immaterial. The important point is that verse 1 applies to him. His hopes were REALITY to him. He trusted the God he could not see.

MOSES' PARENTS

– 11:23 –

This verse clearly is not about Moses! It is about his parents who, by authority of this verse, had led lives “in faith.”

One of the traits of faith is the love for God over the fear of man. (Acts 5:29) It is interesting to note, however, that Moses' mother technically obeyed Pharaoh. (Exodus 1:22; 2:3) In the words of Joseph (Genesis 50:20), what Pharaoh meant for evil, “God meant...for good in order to bring about this present result to preserve many people alive.”

The means God uses to accomplish His ends vary widely. The implication of this verse is that Moses was such an extraordinarily handsome child that it added stimulus to the idea of saving him. There is, however, more to this than appearance. The Exodus 2:2 marginal reading for “beautiful” says that the word literally means “good.” Acts 7:20 says that he was “lovely to God.” Because of the tenor of Paul's lessons in the chapter, it seems likely that Moses' mother was given the prophetic power to see the power of character that would manifest itself in this child. Therefore, she could readily carry out the actions which ultimately would result in the deliverance of Israel. Thus, in context, a life of faith resulted in God's allowing the person to become a prophet.

(It seems unlikely that the 3-month reference is coincidental, but its meaning yet remains a mystery.)

MOSES

– 11:24-26 –

Moses, though he was reared in the courts of Pharaoh, was cared for and instructed by his mother. There can be no question that she implanted in him the hope of Israel and the knowledge of Israel's God. Thus, even before acting upon it, Moses lived a faith life. Its result is here summarized. When opportunity presented itself, he claimed his birthright and sided with his people. It resulted in his sharing their ill-treatment which, in faith, he counted as well worth the

eventual (permanent) reward over the “passing (temporary) pleasures” of his station in Egypt which verse 25 simply characterizes as “sin.” The account by Stephen in Acts 7:20 (& following) is very helpful. Acts 7:25 makes it very clear that Moses understood at that early date when he slew the Egyptian that he would be Israel’s deliverer. This substantiates the interpretation of Hebrews 11:23 that his mother understood Moses’ eventual place in history, and passed it down to him.

Hebrews 11:26 also shows that Moses understood and accepted the concept that “Messiah” would eventually fulfill the Abrahamic promise. THIS seems again to be Paul’s principal point regarding all of these Ancient Worthies. They each, in some way, were permitted to prophesy regarding the details of and their faith in the promises of God as summarized in the Covenant with Abraham.

The final words of 11:26, “Looking to the reward,” echo one of Paul’s definitions of faith in 11:1. The reward to Moses WAS REALITY. Faith is the realness of our hopes.

– 11:27 –

This verse seemingly applies to Moses’ exile in Midian. “In faith” he was able to accept this isolation assignment. Note that he had not left Egypt out of fear of the Pharaoh. Note also that his ability to “endure” the dramatically contrasting life of 40 years of wilderness was, again echoing verse 1, because he could SEE “Him who is unseen.” Faith is the “conviction of things not seen.”

It is not unlikely that the three 40-year parts of Moses’ life in part picture Israel’s 3-age history. The first 40 years (also pictured by the reign of Saul) represent the in-power era of the Jewish Age. The second 40 years (also pictured by David’s reign) represent the Gospel Age of rejection while Christianity would dominate. Moses’ Midian sojourn is much like Israel’s “double” of disfavor. While “enduring” it, they do not lose hope in the eventual fulfillment of the promises. The third 40-year period (also shown in Solomon’s reign) would represent the time of deliverance and the inauguration of the New Law Covenant in the Millennial Age before passing into the promised land of the ages to come.

– 11:28-29 –

It is perhaps important to note these two verses as a unit. Perhaps Paul uses these two events specifically because they represent the TWO PARTS of the Seed

of Abraham. Verse 28 delivers the firstborn (The Stars of Heaven). Verse 29 delivers the nation (The Sand of the Sea). Consistent with Paul's previous examples, these two events make Moses a prophet who, by these allegories, clarifies the interpretation of the Abrahamic Covenant.

– 11:28 –

The meaning again must be stressed. It is not that keeping the Passover was an act of faith (although it surely was); but it is that because of Moses' life of faith he was allowed to conduct this prophetic activity. Paul stresses the "sprinkling of blood" because it reminds us of his discourse in Chapter 9, and it point prophetically to the "Lamb" of whom Moses was a type. Then, Paul adds his focus of the import of the event: "so that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them."

It was GOD Who destroyed the firstborn of Egypt who represent the second-death class during the Gospel Age. (Reprint 5870) It was THIS fate that Paul had warned against in 6:4-8 and 10:26-31. He now summarizes in a few words the sure protection against this fate: FAITH IN THE BLOOD—which guarantees that "He Who destroyed the firstborn might not touch them."

ISRAEL

– 11:29 –

The verse says, "In faith THEY..." There is no question that Moses led them. Yet Paul seems to shift gear here and refer to the faith of Israel. While we know that their faith failed them in the wilderness (4:2), this verse implies that Israel as a family did have a faith maintained during their servitude which was rewarded by God in their Red Sea deliverance. This may be true particularly because, in this one incident, they do picture the entire, faithful world of mankind as it is carried into the eighth day.

Paul's wording is delightfully descriptive—especially in that it again brings remembrance of verse 1. "They passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land." Again, faith becomes REALITY. The actual situation was that it was the sea. The faith-perceived reality was that it was dry land.

"The Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned." Paul doesn't say it, but the implication is sure for the antitype: those without true faith will perish at the close of the Millennium.

JERICHO
– 11:30-31 –

These two verses describe events as the people enter the promised land. It really is just one historical event, but it involves two Ancient Worthies, Joshua and Rahab. After these verses, while Paul mentions other names, the detailed accounts of Ancient Worthies are ended. As with all Scripture, we tend to ask why. Why are these two little stories chosen to end this portrait gallery?

The answer probably is that these accounts picture the final fulfillments of the Abrahamic Promise for the world. The falling walls of the old order will open the way for the New Covenant's functioning so that people will inherit the land. The actions of Rahab likely show the resulting conversion of unbelievers and the destruction of those who "will not hear that prophet." (Acts 3:23)

JOSHUA
– 11:30 –

Joshua is not mentioned. However, the walls of Jericho did nothing in faith! It was the faith of Joshua that led to his being honored as God's agent in this action and in his being a type of our Lord who shared the same name.

This verse raises a cautionary flag. Many brethren have adopted a meaning for this event which was not Bro. Russell's interpretation. Many brethren apply the seven days and trumpets to the stages of the Church in the Gospel Age. However, (Reprint 5344), Bro. Russell shows that these seven days represent the 7000 years of the seventh creative day in which God's messages seemed to have minimal effect. Once the great seventh Millennium arrives, however, under the direction of the great antitypical Joshua, the accumulated messages of God since Adam's fall (in this context, we might say since Abel—11:4), all will cause the old order to crash.

This text relates strongly to Jesus' statement that sufficient faith will be able to say to this mountain, "Be thou removed," and it will be. The faith of the Church in its constant prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," will see the mountain of Satan removed, the walls of Jericho fall—but not until the seventh day.

RAHAB
– 11:31 –

Paul's final cameo biography relates strongly to part of the promise to Abraham. Genesis 12:3 states, "And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse..." This then ends with the famous part of the promise. Rahab blessed Abraham's children; the Jericho citizenry did not. She was blessed; they were destroyed. She aptly pictures all the heathen in the Millennium who will be converted and who will help in the fall of the ways of the old order. The others aptly picture those who will not hear That Prophet. The verse says Rahab lived "in faith." She, like Abraham before her, grew up in a heathen land. But both possessed that "faith gene" that responded to God when He offered them opportunities. (See Joshua 2:9-11.) This will be the lot of the vast majority of humanity when the Millennial Age offers them the stimuli that awaken their faith. Rahab welcomed the incoming rulers "in peace." Since the whole world awaits the manifestation of the new rulers, they will do so likewise. (Romans 8:19)

Rahab's harlotry demonstrates another wonderful truth. The whole world has been blinded and manipulated by the drunken harlotry of Babylon and similar imposter religions. The people knew no better. They were encouraged to mix religion with politics, economics, and schemes of all sorts. But harlotry was Rahab's past, not her future. As the world will reform, Rahab did also. She married into Israel and became part of the genealogy of the antitypical Joshua.

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– 11:32-40 –

Hebrews 11 changes at this point. In verse 32, Paul lets us know that there are multitudes of these faithful ancients. Instead of detailing their experiences, however, he breaks them down into two groups. In verses 33 and 34, he shows that some faith-lives result in visible triumphs and victories. In verses 35-38, he shows that some faith-lives result in apparent failure or disaster.

This CONTRAST is so very important to our faith structure. Paul is trying to tell us that living our lives "in faith" is what counts—NOT THE VISIBLE RESULTS! We can be just as faithful and have us "being destitute." Others being just as faithful might "put foreign armies to flight." Neither is a sign of success! Living a life "in faith" is the success. The current results belong to God Who will bring

glory out of every circumstance. (Romans 8:28) If we do what is “right,” as Isaac did when (he thought) he gave the prime blessing to his firstborn, God can (by deception if need be!) overrule our “right” action to make it truly right. The opposite also is true. This is Paul’s point in Hebrews 11—It is faith, not right or wrong, not works, not results—It is a LIFE IN FAITH that will keep us in our relationship with God and ultimately give us the hope that is unseen and eternal.

– 11:33, 34 –

These verses pose no difficulty. We can easily assign the names of ancients whose faith-lives resulted in these incredible victories.

– 11:35-38 –

In these verses, a few items are worthy of extra attention. Like verses 33 and 34, names can be assigned to most of these experiences. Unlike those verses, these lives experienced what humans can only view as tragedies.

The first example in verse 35 needs careful attention. “Women received their dead by resurrection.” (NAS) The KJV obscures the Greek meaning here. This is not saying that women received their dead back to life again. That, of course, happened. (See I Kings 17; II Kings 4; Mark 5; Luke 7; John 11.) But these were AWAKENINGS, not resurrections. This text (in the Greek) specifies resurrection—“ANASTASIS.” Acts 26:23 states without equivocation that Jesus was the FIRST to experience ANASTASIS. (Again, the KJV fails to make this clear.) Thus these women did not gain their loved ones back from death in actuality.

So, what is Paul’s point regarding these women? He is saying that their total faith in resurrection allowed them in confidence to send their husbands, sons, and brothers out to battle—actually losing them, but IN FAITH receiving them back in the distant future “by resurrection.” In other words, they, like Abraham, accounted that God was able to raise their dead back to life again. But this didn’t meet the natural eye. To the natural eye, these women all experienced tragedies. They lost their loved ones.

Verse 35 brings to our attention that lovely doctrinal truth that, because of their faith, all of these Ancient Worthies will receive a “better” resurrection. We know from Psalm 45 that this means that they will be “princes in all the earth”—teachers of mankind, and co-administrators of Kingdom regulations in the earth.

Verse 38 defines true “worthiness.” It defines faith as something which exalts one far above the worldly—not visibly, of course, but in God’s estimation and in ours. The remainder of the verse shows that faith will not necessarily improve one’s lot in life! Yet, we also must remember (lest success discourage us) that faith might improve our lot in life (verses 33, 34).

– **11:39, 40** –

The Apostle uses these two verses to bring the subject back to us—those who have the privilege of being part of the great sin offering. His lesson is simple: even though these great faith giants “obtained a testimony” from God through their faith-lives, they have not received, they CANNOT receive, the fruition of what has been promised to them UNTIL the sin offering is complete—UNTIL we have received “something better” than they will receive; i.e., the FIRST RESURRECTION. Without that manifestation of the completion of the sin offering (10:13-18), these ancients will not receive the promised perfection of the New Covenant.

It is interesting to note the difference between receiving promises and realizing the fruitage of those promises. Compare verses 9, 13, 17, 33, and 39. Apparently a faith-life is rewarded by BEING PROMISED things from God. Occasionally (if it doesn’t violate God’s plans) the fruitage of those promises is realized in this lifetime. Thus, in 11:11, we see that Sarah realized the fruitage of the promise that she would have a child. But as verses 13 and 39 show, most of the great promises made because of their faith-lives have fulfillments delayed until the Kingdom.

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As Chapter 11 ends, we have a shift, NOT in subject, but in focus. Chapter 11 is there to give examples and to teach lessons. Chapter 12:1-13 is there to encourage application in us who are to the administrators of the promises.

– 12:1-3 –

APPLICATION of the lessons of Chapter 11 is the point of Hebrews 12:1-13. Thus, verse 1 begins with “Therefore.” Paul begins by saying, BECAUSE we have such sterling examples of faith, BECAUSE they surround us—that is, no matter which direction our lives take, there is no circumstance not covered by their examples—we may “ALSO” (NAS), as they did, set aside whatever might challenge our faith’s objectives.

The “also” (kai) is in the Greek. But different translators place it in different places in the sentence. We feel the NAS placement makes most sense.

The ancients did lay aside considerations which might have altered their courses. The NAS calls these “encumbrances.” The KJV calls them “weights.” The Strong’s definition, among other possibilities, suggests a “bulging load.” This seems appropriate since some weights or encumbrances are a natural part of life. Some things cannot be totally set aside. But excesses can. A “bulging load” would keep us from passing through narrow openings and from following narrow paths. Like the camel which wishes to pass through the “needle’s eye,” we must unload all that would keep us from smooth passage through restricted areas.

Paul adds that we also lay aside “the sin which so easily entangles us.” The thought is similar to the “bulging load,” but now instead of dealing with things and circumstances, besetting sin deals with thought processes—the reasonings of the fleshly mind. He may have in mind his sermon in 10:25, 26 where he points out that individualism, or the habit of relying on existence separate from the body, is a reliable way of heading toward extinction. Sin, for a New Creature, simply is straying from the precepts and ideals of the Divine Will.

In I Corinthians 9:24-27 Paul explains how he deals with his flesh in order to run successfully in the Christian race-course. In Hebrews 12:1 he clearly makes reference to the same concept, yet in a much more abbreviated remark. It is interesting to note (or even to document) that Hebrews is FULL of examples of shortened versions of the Apostle’s sermons in other epistles. There is such a wealth of these examples that they serve as an independent corroboration that Paul is, indeed, the author of this great treatise.

– 12:2 –

In verse 2, Paul teaches that success will depend upon our “looking to” Jesus. This is important. Chapter 11 had suggested (as does 12:1) that we “look to” the examples of the past. Why the sudden change in 12:2?

The reason is good. Faith (and justification from it) comes in two distinct varieties. Pre-Christ faith (and pre-consecration faith) is “plane N” faith on the Chart of the Ages. It is to “friendship” or “peace” with God. (James 2:23; Romans 5:1) But here Paul is introducing “plane M” faith (and its justification to life). He points out that THIS faith (the Greek calls it THE faith; the KJV and Barclay call it OUR faith) has Jesus as its LEADER and PERFECTOR. (Barclay uses Jesus as the BEGINNING and END of our faith.) The KJV and NAS use “author” to describe Jesus’ role. This seems an inferior translation. It is the same word translated “Captain” in 2:10. But Paul’s point is strong: While the ingredients and examples of faith are strong and present in the ancients, Jesus exalts faith and its privileges to an entirely new level. He becomes the PERFECT example of faith for those offering themselves to help do away with sin.

Paul then details three things about Jesus’ faith:

- (1) The reason behind its strength;
- (2) Its mental attitude toward contradiction;
- (3) Its result.

These three are essential to us in our quest for success. If a perfect man relied upon them, how much more must we who fight the old nature!

- (1) The first of these three is VISION:

“For the joy set before him.”

Nothing in our existence is so strengthening as a vision. In 11:1, Paul said one of faith’s two ingredients was the reality in our minds of what we hope for. This reality, if it is stronger than our current experiences, will lead us to success.

While the ancients had a vision of the kingdom, they did not have a vision of being part of the seed that would do the blessing. They were “looking” for that seed. Thus our hope and vision vastly exceeds theirs.

This hope allowed Jesus to “endure.” It also helped him to have the second element of his exemplary faith—his mental attitude toward contradiction.

- (2) The Diaglott best describes Jesus’ mental ability to deal with the contradiction of sinners:

“DISREGARDING THE SHAME.”

No human can well endure the constant, wearing degradation of being told he is

wrong, incompetent, or (the worst) shameful. Even the perfect, the spirit-begotten, the informed Jesus would be wearied by being accused constantly of shaming the God he so perfectly served. We need, with his help (7:25), even more to be able to keep from caving under such pressures. The joy set before us will be the motivation that will allow us to DISREGARD the shame instead of feeling its contradictions so intensely. We need this mental attitude that Jesus had. We need to set aside, as if non-existent, the challenges to our vision.

- (3) The verse (12:2) finally gives us the RESULT of such vision and such disregard for human resistance. We, like Jesus, will be allowed to “sit” at the right hand of the throne of God. (Revelation 3:21) As we saw in 10:12, 13, Jesus “sat” during the Gospel Age, awaiting the time when a completed sin offering would allow him to administer the New Covenant. But sitting for us will not be waiting, but representative of the rest we will enjoy in experiencing the actuality of the “joy set before us.” In 10:12, 13, the rest of confidence also is strongly a part of Jesus’ sitting.

– 12:3 –

In 12:3 Paul summarizes what we have just discussed. We, in a much more vital way than the ancients, must develop faith-characters that will allow the completion of the body. Thus we particularly look to Jesus, considering everything about him as the LEADER of our faith, a higher-level faith, so that we will never suffer a discouragement such as will derail us. (Matthew 10:24-26) In verses 4-13 Paul will discuss this DISCIPLINE that faith will cherish.

– 12:4 –

This verse is here in order to stress the lifetime commitment we have made—even as Jesus had made. It also is here to stress that our commitment and our faith all

are for the purpose of BLOOD—the blood of the Covenant about which Paul had preached so strongly in Chapter 9. We are the Lord’s Goat of Leviticus 16. Our “striving against sin” (against our minds’ straying from our consecrated purpose) must go on faithfully until the last drop of the goat’s blood is accounted for. Thus this verse connects with the close of verse 3. We cannot weary or lose heart. We must continue until the blood of the Covenant all is provided.

– **12:5-11** –

We know Paul well enough to know that his thoughts, while complex and detailed, are not helter-skelter, but organized and logical. Thus this group of verses, on the surface all about “discipline,” is very much linked to the discussion about faith and its application. The BIG POINT the Apostle is making here is that discipline is to ripen our faith and, if our faith is strong and maturing, it will welcome and understand discipline. Discipline makes us successful disciples. Discipline is faith applied to control our development.

– **12:5, 6** –

As this verse begins, it clearly is a corrective admonition for the Hebrew brethren of Paul’s day. It LINKS strongly to verse 4. Paul is saying,

- Verse 4 - Not only have you not yet lived a life to complete your part of the sin offering, but

- Verse 5 - You also have forgotten that dying is not the objective. A life of disciplining the New Creature for its future assignment is the objective. That is what “striving against sin” (verse 4) is all about. It is about DISCIPLINING THE NEW MIND.

With that point made, Paul calls upon Proverbs 3:11, 12 to make his points. (Compare also Revelation 3:19 and I Corinthians 11:32.) Among other things, Paul tells us that these verses in Proverbs prophetically are about us as sons. He says these words are “addressed to you as sons.”

The 4 points are:

- (1) Take discipline from the Lord with great and sober regard.
- (2) Don't give up in the midst of a lesson.
- (3) (Verse 6) The Lord's discipline is a PROOF to us of His love.
- (4) When He "receives" us as sons (i.e., when we are spirit-begotten to "plane M") he will not neglect our New Creature education.

– 12:7 –

The NAS is very poor here. Most other translations are god. The Diaglott, e.g., says, "If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons."

Thus Paul picks up on the closing words of verse 6 to show our part in the process. Verse 6 had said God will scourge every son He receives. Verse 7 says, if we accept the discipline, God will continue to deal with us. This is an important lesson. The slip from 144,000 to Great Company or from Great Company to death seems directly related to our willingness to ENDURE God's leadings. Paul then says, virtually, What good father wouldn't discipline his children?

– 12:8 –

"BUT," he continues, "since ALL God's sons are partakers of His discipline, if you find yourself WITHOUT IT, you can conclude:

- (1) Either you never became a son (you are a tare), or
- (2) You have lost your place in the family.

– 12:9 –

Here Paul tries to give rational perspective. He reasons that we all gave in to the discipline from our natural fathers because there seemed rational cause for and love behind their actions. Does it, the, seem not so much more important and rational to subject ourselves to the Father of our New Creatures who can give us eternal life?

– 12:10 –

Our earthly fathers had imperfect judgment in their discipline and only limited time for its application. God, on the other hand, applies discipline perfectly for our eternal good, and, IF WE SUBMIT, the discipline will MAKE US LIKE HIM!

– 12:11 –

Here Paul tells us what we know instinctively and from experience. Take discipline for its RESULTS, not for its enjoyment! He promises it will not be enjoyable! But the results, if we submit, will be righteous and peaceful. What a wonderful combination!

– 12:12, 13 –

These two verses conclude this entire section of faith and its application (11:1 – 12:13). The “therefore” with which verse 12 begins probably refers back to 12:5. “You have forgotten” (the benefits of a life of faithful submission to discipline). Therefore, reform and do the following:”

The “following” (the content of verses 12 and 13) may appear in some translations to mean what we should do to help others. However, considering the context, it is more likely that Paul is telling each of us what we must do with self in order to give in to the disciplines of the Lord. The NEB Bible seems to catch this best:

“Come, then; stiffen your drooping arms
and shaking knees, and keep your steps
from wavering. Then the disabled limb
will not be put out of joint, but regain
its former powers.”

These words re-state Paul’s points in a homey way. He is saying to forget the self-pity, disregard the fears, and set a determination to endure. When we do these three things, all spiritual disability will be gone. Faith will have conquered. Discipline will have succeeded.

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PART VII

ADMONITIONS
ON THE
SERIOUS NATURE
OF OUR
COMMITMENT

The Objective:

Having seen our inheritance
and the faith which can sustain us
to our success,
we must be made extremely sober
in the application of the Spirit
in our daily lives.

– 12:14-17 –

These few verses admonish SANCTIFICATION. They lead us to the great contrast shown in verses 18-29 which are there to inculcate sobriety and realization of the immense honor and responsibility on our shoulders.

– 12:14 –

The first word is PURSUE (NAS). How much meaning there is in this verb! First, it is a word that implies effort but does not guarantee success. Secondly, it is a word that has OBJECTIVE. We only pursue something because catching it has a great benefit.

The thing being pursued is PEACE—peace (as far as possible) WITH ALL MEN! Clearly, it will not be attained in this life. But the pursuit (with some subsequent success) has incredible reward. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9) This is the great benefit in this pursuit.

Peace is God’s objective, and, therefore ours. It is Jesus’ habitual greeting to his disciples (e.g., Revelation 1:4; John 20:19, 21, 26, etc.) Paul characterizes our Father as “the God of Peace.” (Hebrews 13:20) Peace is Jesus’ legacy to us in the flesh. (John 14:27) The Apostle suggests that edification of each other is subsequent to our doing those things which lead to peace. (Romans 14:19) None of this suggests “peace at any price.” This is manifest in that God and Jesus both secure peace ultimately only at great cost—much correction, upheaval, and destruction being required before peace can be considered. But the peace pursuit of this verse is an attitude of soul—a peacefulness of spirit, an innermost desire to use peace whenever possible.

Peace sanctifies. Hence, Paul continues his thought with “that sanctification (or holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Thus, even the Great Multitude will need this sanctification. Paul is speaking of that consecrated attitude which sets aside the thought processes of the natural man in favor of the reasoning which comes from God’s Word. Without our abandoning the thinking of the flesh and our adoption of a spiritual mind, we will not “see the Lord.” I.e., we will end up in second death. The next three verses will elaborate on this concept.

– 12:15-17 –

These verses seem to make warning of a three-step process toward destruction.

- (1) If we fall back from God's favor,
 - (2) The fleshly evils (particularly bitterness) will spring up
and
 - (3) the spirit will give place to the profane.
- Thus, like Esau, we will lose an inheritance we cannot renew.

We must connect these verses to verse 14. Paul is showing that our inattention to peace and sanctification will result in a fall from favor and result in a downhill course.

The Diaglott seems the superior translation of these verses:

- (15) looking carefully lest any one fall back from the favor of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up may disturb you, and through it many be poisoned;
- (16) lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright.
- (17) For you know that when afterwards, he wished to inherit the blessing, he was refused; for he found no place for a change of mind, though he sought it earnestly with tears.

– 12:15 –

“See to it that no one...” This wording raises a question. Is Paul telling us to look after each other or to “See to it” within ourselves individually? The latter probably is the thought since the end of the verse suggests that bitterness in one will defile the group. Besides, the peace and sanctification of verse 14 cannot be accomplished in us by others, but only by self with Divine help.

To “come short of the grace of God,” or to “fall back from the favor of God” comes from lack of humility (sanctification). God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. What is the result? The roots of our human nature take to sprouting. Bitterness (resentfulness about having to conform to God's ways) begins to grow to become a disturbance, and to spread its influence to what has been dormant in others.

– 12:17 –

This sounds like Paul’s repeating the lesson of 6:6. Once the inheritance is gone, it is not possible to retrieve it—regardless of the tears of protest and disappointment.

– 12:18-29 –

For the remainder of the Chapter, Paul is showing, by contrast, that our responsibility is not comparable to the making of the first Covenant—as momentous and earthshaking as that was! Note that verse 18 opens by saying:

YOU HAVE NOT COME TO THIS,
but (verse 32)
YOU HAVE COME RATHER TO THIS.

As he has done throughout Hebrews, Paul wants to impress the power of the antitype over the type.

The outline of these verses is this.

- 18-21 Events at Sinai before the Law Covenant
- 22-24 The vision during the Gospel Age before the New Covenant
- 25 The admonition based on the contrast
- 26-29 The prophecy of the old order’s termination and, therefore, the relative unimportance of temporal things.

– 12:18-21 –

It is difficult to tell whether Paul wishes us to examine each detail of these verses, or whether he simply is giving a colorful scenario to remind us of the memorable, earth-shaking events at Sinai. The latter seems to be more likely. He seems simply to be saying, “If you think Sinai was fearful and worthy of the collective memory of Israel over the centuries, consider, rather, how much more sobering is the antitype!”

Nevertheless, a few details in these verses need some discussion.

– 12:18 –

The best manuscripts seem to indicate that “mountain” is not part of the original text. It is, however, strongly implied by the contrast Paul makes of this verse to verse 22. This verse should apparently read something like:

“For you have not come to a palpable and blazing fire...”

– 12:19 –

The general lesson here is that the people could not endure the events which preceded the Law, and begged Moses to intervene. In the end of the Gospel Age, similar conditions should prevail. Even during the age, the “Christian” people in general have habitually wanted the clergy to intervene and mediate spiritual matters for them because they seemed too much for the common man.

– 12:20, 21 –

The Diaglott makes more sense of these verses than do many other translations. It reads:

(for they could not endure the injunction, “If even a beast should touch the mountain it should be stoned.” And so terrible was the scene that Moses said, ‘I exceedingly fear and tremble.’)

This makes two valuable points.

- (1) The people could not endure or understand the reasoning that even animals must be killed if they approached the mountain. Likewise, the world in the Gospel Age cannot understand the necessary and detailed SEPARATION (sanctification) of all things holy from all things profane.
- (2) The responsibilities, charges, and seriousness of the Gospel Age, along with its sometimes frightening earthly historic/prophetic events, are enough even to make the

flesh of the saints tremble. It is a good attitude to have lest we make the sacred commonplace due to our confidence in the promises.

– **12:22-24** –

These verses are Paul’s immediate contrast to verses 18 - 21. It is type versus antitype. Before considering the detailed content, it is very important for us to understand which particular part of the type Paul is using. A reading of Exodus chapters 19 and 20 is imperative. We are dealing with events BEFORE Israel receives the Law Covenant. Therefore, in antitype, we are dealing with events BEFORE the world (via Israel) receives the New Covenant. The type was three days. The antitype is the (parts of) three days (5th, 6th, and 7th) during which THE CHRIST is being developed—i.e., the Gospel Age. It is important to understand this because the description in verses 22 - 24 is a description of the Church’s VISION—what it is looking forward to, just as Israel was (in those 3 days) looking forward to a Law from God. Verses 22 – 24 are inclusive, therefore, of what IS during the Gospel Age as well as what WILL BE during the peaceable Kingdom.

When we contemplate the events of three literal days (verses 18 – 21) and compare it to over 2000 years in the antitypical “three days,” we are forced to make great accommodations in our thinking. For instance, while the earth-shaking virtually filled the three literal days, it is relegated primarily in the antitype to the close of the Gospel Age. All of this must be kept in mind as we consider Paul’s contrast.

We will, unlike with verses 18 – 21, attempt to analyze each item in these verses. They cry out for explanation. They do not seem to be in any particular order, but they do seem to summarize well the elements of our VISION. They are here, among other reasons, to STRESS that what WE are “come to” is so far greater than what Israel came to, that our responsibilities, honors, dangers, and joys all are, likewise, far above those of the past.

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Before analyzing the list, it will be helpful to note that translators differ greatly in their ways of handling the end of verse 22 and the opening of verse 23. Some (probably inaccurately) suggest THREE items:

- (1) Angels
- (2) A general assembly
- (3) The church of the firstborn.

Others suggest that “general assembly” applies to the angels. (Moffat, Rotherham, NIV, New World, NAB, Diaglott) Yet others suggest that “general

assembly” applies to the Church. Among these are Bro. Russell, Barclay, the NEB, Young’s, and Fenton. Some are ambiguous.

Leaning toward Bro. Russell, Young’s, etc., seems most comfortable and results in some pleasant thoughts. Leaning toward the Diaglott, Rotherham, etc., gives other equally tenable thoughts.

While we are not equipped to feel certain regarding Greek grammatical construction, IT SEEMS (while reading interlinear translations) that the Diaglott might have an edge on accuracy. IF we can rely on the use of “and” (“kai” in Greek) as a conjunction which clearly separates the parts of the list, then the Diaglott is correct. We must note, however, that scholars like Fenton, Barclay, and Young would not be ignorant of this observation, and yet they chose to ignore it. But, just for information, the list in the Greek reads thusly:

But you have approached Zion, a mountain,
AND a city of the Living God, heavenly Jerusalem,
AND myriads of angels, an entire assemblage,
AND a congregation of first-borns, having been
enrolled in heaven,
AND God, Judge of all,
AND spirits of just men having been perfected,
AND Jesus, Mediator of a new covenant,
AND blood of sprinkling, speaking better things
than that of Abel.

– **12:22** –

The “But” with which this verse begins is the contrast to verse 18. We have not come to the type (as memorable and colorful as it was), BUT to the antitype—the item of substance.

MOUNT ZION -- This represents the Kingdom. (Revelation 14:1) The etymology of Zion seems best to be “sunny.” How appropriate! It finally will be daylight. And our Lord is the SUN of righteousness who will accomplish the healing in this sunny mountain (Kingdom).

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD -- City represents government. This one comes down from God because it is His gift to man. (Revelation 21:2) He is the LIVING God—all others to be proven to be dead, worthless, apostate, and liars. And this city has a name: The Heavenly Jerusalem. Jerusalem means City of Peace. It is, interestingly, a plural word—probably so designated so that it includes the thought of both phases of the Kingdom, earthly and heavenly. But it is the heavenly which governs.

TO MYRIADS OF ANGELS IN FESTIVE ASSEMBLY -- Paul has dealt with the import and honors of angels in the earlier chapters of Hebrews. He stressed how important they are in the lives of saints. (1:14) The Revelator, picturing events as the Gospel Age opens (5:11), and describing the glorious results as it closes, shows “myriads and myriads” of angels surrounding God’s throne proclaiming Jesus’ worthiness to receive the reins of the Kingdom. With John’s description, the term “festal assembly” seems well-placed to describe the reveling of the hosts of angels. (A number of commentators and translators think “festal” is the meaning, not “general.”)

– **12:23** –

TO A GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CONGREGATION OF FIRSTBORN -- or, as Young renders it: “to the company and assembly of the firstborn.” Fenton says: “To the full assembly and congregation of the firstborn.” Barclay colorfully states it: “firstborn sons of God’s family registered in heaven in worshipping assembly.” The NEB states: “the full concourse and assembly of the firstborn.”

Placing “assembly” with angels probably is correct. But we must rejoice with the thought of these translators as summed up by Bro. Russell as looking forward to that great convention in the sky!

When using “firstborns” in any comparison with Jewish types, the emphasis always is on those whom God has favored with special inheritance and with the honor of being the first-delivered as well as the instruments of deliverance for the rest of the nation.

The question arises, of course, as to whether or not “church of the firstborn” includes the Great Company class. If we view these verses as a picture of the VISION COMPLETE, rather than during the Age, probably it is best to do what most prophecy does—it IGNORES the Great Multitude. If we view these verses as descriptive also of the whole age, it is wise to include the Great Company who certainly were Levites—those exchanged for and represented in the firstborn—those under jeopardy during this nighttime. The complete picture is favorable because the Ancient Worthies are not yet “made perfect.” The progressive view, however, cannot be dismissed since Paul is contrasting it (in verses 18 – 21) with the days BEFORE the giving of the Law. In other words, the whole Great Company question just complicates what is otherwise a powerful passage!

GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL -- Why God is relegated to the middle of this list is perplexing! In what great sense (see verse 25), He is the center of this entire argument. Israel in the type did not want to see or hear Him—even though He

was the One with Whom the Covenant was to be made. But perhaps this is Paul's point. While Israel was not face to face with Him, we are! Thus God follows immediately the Church in this list. This makes so much more sobering our position versus that of natural Israel. And Paul's description ("The Judge of All") focuses our attention on how precarious our standing is. We are under judgment. It is now or never.

THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT -- This almost certainly is a reference to the Ancient Worthies. In 11:40 Paul had just used the same description ("made perfect") for this class. The words, "just men" (justified men) certainly applies to them. In 11:4, Abel, the first Ancient Worthy mentioned is called "righteous" (just). The same claim is made for Noah (11:7). The implication for the rest of the list is the same.

As Bro. Russell notes, this passage could not refer to any of the spiritual class since they will not be made perfect as men.

The only word of difficulty is "spirits." This is Strong's # 4151 and, between the KJV and NAS, is variously translated (singular and plural):

breath
ghost
life
mind
spirit
spiritual
wind.

This is such a generic word (even more so in the Old Testament) that it is no stretch to re-translate Paul's words here to read:

"The lives of justified men made perfect."

We have come face to face with their lives as examples. The world will do so likewise in the Mediation. In 9:13 Paul had mentioned these Old Testament saints (red heifer) as one-third of his summary of what makes the New Covenant work. In Chapter 11, Paul virtually uses the entire chapter to remind us of the "lives" of these just ones as standards for faith; and Bro. Russell's point about the red heifer is that the "lives" of these ancients always will serve as standards.

Thus, in this list (12:22 - 24), Paul merely is summarizing all of the antitypes he has dealt with in the Book of Hebrews:

1. Old Covenant versus New;
2. Old Jerusalem versus New;
3. Angels administering versus the administration of saints;
4. God as Judge regardless of dispensation;
5. Typical Red Heifer versus perfected, justified Ancients;

6. Jesus versus Moses as Mediator;
7. The Sin-Offering blood of reconciliation versus Abel's blood calling for vengeance.

How wonderful that Paul could summarize his entire epistle in the midst of making another point!

– 12:24 –

JESUS, MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT -- In 12:18-21 Paul had explained the making of the Old Covenant by Moses. Now he shows Jesus as Mediator of the New Covenant. As we saw above, it is part of Paul's summary of the whole Book. But it also is an imperative, inseparable, and central part of the VISION summarized by these verses. The Lamb is the center of the whole picture.

BLOOD OF SPRINKLING -- This is the best translation. As we saw in 9:19 – 23, Covenant ratification depends on the blood of the sin-offering. According to I Peter 1:2 (KJV – also the best translation of the phrase), God's foreknowledge decided to sanctify the Church by the work of the spirit for two objectives (one now, one in the mediation):

- (1) unto obedience
- (2) unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ—i.e., the ratification of the New Covenant.

This is our purpose! And its point is RECONCILIATION. Thus it “speaks BETTER than the blood of Abel” which calls for VENGEANCE. (Matthew 23:35; Genesis 4:10)

– 12:25 –

Verses 22 – 24 gave us the vision. Verse 25 gives us the lesson inculcated by the comparison between the events preceding the giving of the Old Covenant (12:18 – 21) and the New (12:22 – 24).

“See to it that you do not refuse Him Who is speaking.” This lesson, too, comes from earlier in the Book of Hebrews. (E.g., 3:12; 4:1, 11; 6:6; 10:23, etc.) The lesson of this verse is much the lesson of all of Hebrews:

We are partakers of the most serious,

most joyous, most significant calling
of history. Let nothing draw away
our attention and obedience.

Now Paul again contrasts the “then” of Sinai with the “now” preceding the New Covenant. (Review again Exodus 19 and 20.)

Israel refused to take seriously enough
the circumstances of their surroundings
and turned to other gods (golden calf)
before Moses returned with the Law.
In refusing God, they fell into the earth
which opened to swallow them.

Paul’s contrast:

If they received swift and severe
punishment in only a typical situation,
how much more (second death) should
we expect if we ignore, negate, or leave
the message so much greater?

God has spoken to us in these last three days (1:1, 2), not by angels, not in types,
but clearly through His Son and with understanding via His Holy Spirit. There is,
as Paul shows, no comparison with the three days at Sinai. Be sober! Continue in
the Faith! Let us “see to it” that we “do not refuse Him Who is speaking.”

There is one more subtle comparison in verse 25. It states that God “warned
them ON earth;” then it says that we are warned FROM heaven. Paul seems to be
contrasting the Jews’ merely human relationship with God (“them ON earth”) to
the Christian’s spiritual relationship with God (“FROM heaven”). I.e., our
warning comes through a different channel, so to speak—from “heaven” (the
spiritual, religious, non-physical, and higher covenant relationship) -- something
of considerably greater seriousness and gravity.

– 12:26 –

Paul continues his contrasts, but this time with reference to the prophecy of
Haggai 2:5 – 9. This prophecy is remarkably like Paul’s argument in 12: 18 – 25.
Both are contrasts. Both compare the making of the Law Covenant time to the
time when the New Covenant will come into effect. Thus Paul easily incorporates
the prophecy into his argument. He says, in essence:

Just as the earth shook before receipt of the Law, God has promised a new shaking (before the New Law); but (verse 25), that old shaking was just of the literal earth. The new shaking will be the symbolic earth; but additionally, it will be the shaking of the heavens (verse 25)—the spiritual equilibrium of all in spiritual covenant with God.

– **12:27** –

Then Paul focuses in on a part of Haggai’s words, the phrase, “Yet once more.” Paul is speaking of FINALITY—the “ONCE MORE” and ONLY once more. He is stressing that, because the New Covenant WILL work as the Old could not, God only needs to shake up the order of things this “once more.” After this final shaking, everything will be splendid. That, of course, is the point of Haggai’s words.

As Paul says, all things shakable, unstable, unworthy of PERMANANCE will be eradicated. He uses the expression, “as of created things.” He is not referring to things which God created; he is referring to things which man created, whether in the symbolic “heavens...earth...sea...dry land and...all the nations.” The physical and spiritual good things created by God will not be shaken. Thus his conclusion: “...in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Compare II Peter 3:10 – 13.)

– **12:28, 29** –

These verses give Paul’s final admonition on the matter. They echo Peter’s conclusions on the same topic. (II Peter 3:11 – 18). As the matter of fact, Peter’s words cite this teaching of Paul. (II Peter 3:15)

Paul asks us to focus on our vision because God will consume all dross. Our vision is among the unshakable things. Paul suggests that an attitude of gratitude will keep us performing acceptable service—a service which cannot take holy things for granted or lightly, but with reverence and awe. (Compare comments on 12:20.)

– 13:1-17 –

From here to the end of the Book we have two things which are so common in Paul's letters. When he is ready to close, he commonly begins a "laundry list" of miscellaneous items he wants to mention but does not develop. Then, typically, he makes mention of himself and/or specific brethren to be remembered. Thus, despite "higher criticism" to the contrary, Hebrews again takes on the hallmark of Paul as its author.

This "laundry list" is not to be dismissed as unrelated and detached items. To the contrary, while these greatly varied items seen helter-skelter and in no particular order, they are listed because they are little rules for the Christian life which will help the disciple fulfill the seriousness of his covenant which seriousness Paul has been stressing. When Peter said, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness of conduct and Godliness," he was in one phrase incorporating the ideas which Paul here enumerates. Paul is trying to end his letter with practicalities after many pages of theory. Meditating on these practicalities will bring fruitage to the ideological ideas which have filled the previous lessons of Hebrews.

– 13:1 –

It is quite possible that this verse states the principle upon which the next several verses expand. Much of the following context relates to the importance of THE BODY OF CHRIST as a unit, not just our individual places in it. Thus, Paul begins with the general principle of Christian unity: "Let brotherly love continue." (Or, NAS, "Let love of the brethren continue.")

Paul already has lectured on the dangers of individualism. (10:25 and following, 12:15) He now lectures on a few practices designed to ensure cohesion.

– 13:2 –

Hospitality is a social grace. We owe it especially to the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10) Paul suggests that it reaps rewards. While literal angels blessed and changed lives during hospitality from the ancients, Paul is suggesting that God can send messages to or from us through strangers to whom we have been friendly. Perhaps He sends prospective body members our way. Our attitudes toward them either will attract or repel them. We might gain insight and growth from our contact with people new to us who think and express differently from

us. Remembering Rebekah with Eliezar at the well, we might be convinced that messengers who are strangers will make or break our opportunities for the future dependent on our attitudes of hospitality.

– 13:3 –

This verse continues with another body-conscious admonition. Prisoners need not be in jail. They may be the housebound, or even the attitude-bound—those whose personalities tend to isolate them from general fellowship. Some are prisoners in handicapped bodies; others are in bondage to families not in the Lord who will not allow their consecrated relatives much freedom for fellowship with saints. How does one deal with such isolated brethren? Paul stimulates our imaginations by saying, “Pretend you are in the same situation. What would help you?”

Paul also wants our body-consciousness to help us keep in mind and in prayer those who suffer ill treatment (physical, mental, or social) because of their stands for the Lord. Again, his suggestion will help us contrive ways to help them. We need ask ourselves, “How could I be helped if I were in the same situation?”

The verse ends with Paul’s continuing theme: We are all one; we cannot stand alone; the Lord helps us in part by letting us help one another. Being in the body means that we cannot ignore its members. (See also I Corinthians 12:25, 26; Matthew 25:36 in principle.)

– 13:4 –

The body (and its individual members) must represent and practice morality. Paul does not exclude human desires from a Christian’s life. He simply defines limits. It almost also is as if he is being prophetic (as in I Timothy 4:3), knowing that misguided religious zealots will complicate the Christian’s life by improper limits on human activities. But he has no tolerance for breaking the moral code. His apostolic authority speaks plainly: God, Himself, will judge improprieties (partly because they reflect on Him).

– 13:5, 6 –

The NAS aptly translates the opening of these verses as “Let your character...” It seems a most appropriate translation since “love of money” is something ingrained which, if it exists, must be rooted out of our very beings.

This is a character trait which very much affects the body and our relationship to it. Among other things, a love of money will cause an individual to treat others in whichever way will insure the protection or acquisition of assets. It is a very anti-social character trait—even if the person is generous with his abundance.

It is important to stress that Biblical teachings do not frown on possessions or acquisitions, even as they do not frown on wine—only on drunkenness. And that is the point. Money is not the evil; love of it is the evil—a drunkenness for it. Again, another distinction is important. Appreciation for it is appropriate. The attitude of thankfulness is one of the objectives of sanctification. But thankfulness for assets is not the love of them. Paul (here and in I Timothy 6:10) is speaking of greed and pursuit. (See also Ephesians 5:3 and I Timothy 5:8.) Therefore, he contrasts with CONTENTMENT. Love of money apparently can be somewhat discerned and defined within self by asking, “Is what I have sufficient? Am I, and can I be, CONTENT with things the way they are, knowing that God has determined and approved of them and can change them at His discretion?” (I Timothy 6:5, 6)

Then Paul defines our TRUE WEALTH by quoting Deuteronomy 31:6, 8: “I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you.” Can money or temporal provision ever give assurance like that?

The end of verse 5 thus brings things back to our group-consciousness. Money never will make a cohesive group; nor will the lack of it. But if our confidence (faith) in the Lord’s provision is secure, our interrelationships with others also are secure because the Lord’s presence and help can secure the most difficult of relationships. Thus Paul’s ecstatic proclamation in verse 6 as he quotes Psalm 118:6. We must note that this quotation is not primarily about money, but about human relationships—which the mislead think can be fixed by funds!

– 13:7-9 –

Verses 7-9 form a unit discussing the eternal, unchangeable nature of truth and the fact that we receive it in part through human instrumentalities. Unfortunately, it also is through the “humanness” of those instrumentalities that we can lose it. Thus these verses again stress the fellowship of saints.

– 13:7 –

Paul probably here is speaking of the Apostles although the lesson seemingly is applicable to all to whom the Lord gives the privilege of teaching. The lesson is clear. Despite those who stupidly protest, “You are following a man!” the Lord makes it plain that He uses human instrumentalities to convey His Word. (Acts 8:31; I Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:14)

Thus, when Paul says, “Remember those who led you,” he is inculcating a tradition of appreciation for the body members who, through the centuries, have established “the Word of God to you.” This again mitigates against individualism and encourages respect, appreciation, and love for the ecclesia arrangement which God established. While we all are individuals, greatly loved as such by Jesus and God, WE DO NOT STAND ALONE! We have been called TO CONFORM—not to stand out! (Romans 8:29)

Paul continues the lesson: We are to IMITATE THE FAITH of those who faithfully taught us. When Bro. Isaac Newton was acclaimed for his vision, he humbly replied that he saw much because he stood on the shoulders of giants. This is why we see much. We must acknowledge it, appreciate it, and build upon it.

Paul suggests a difficult standard. He says, “considering the result of their lives,” we all know and feel deeply within us that we have witnessed great lives of faith. Those lives were witnesses of and testimonials to the TRUTHS which inspired and sustained them. (Philippians 3:17) Others, who may have for a time enjoyed truths, failed to be anchored by them and are thus not examples for imitation. (Hebrews 12:15; 10:26-29; 6:4-8) Paul wants us, in part, to measure teachers of the past by their long-term witnesses in their character-lives. Peter passed the test; Judas did not (although it was not evident until the end and no one suspected his infidelity before that time).

– 13:8 –

While this verse provides a lovely, isolated quotation worthy of meditation, it stands in context as commentary on verses 7 and 9. Verse 7 taught us about CONSISTENCY in truth and behavior. Jesus is the perfect standard. By this verse, Paul, among other things, is warning against itching ears and a general lack of contentment with things learned. Again we must see a distinction. Contentment does not imply lack of excitement! A character pleasing to God will find continual exultation in old truths. It will not want—yea, it will abhor the concept of replacing what is good. Paul is warning against new gospels!

(II Corinthians 11:3, 4) It seems logical, even, that he is warning against contradictions to what he has just taught throughout the chapters of Hebrews—the very essence of the teachings of salvation: the offering for sin and our part with him in that offering and in the New Covenant which it will ratify.

– 13:9 –

Verse 8 just has inculcated constancy. Verse 9 is a “therefore.” Paul is saying that we must be anchored—not tossed about by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:14 - 16—a text which again stresses the body.)

The words which Paul uses, “varied and strange teachings” (NAS), are quite colorful. The concordance suggests “motley” and “foreign.” “Motley,” of course, means “of different colors like a clown’s suit; made up of units not alike.” “Foreign” suggests unrelated and distant from what is being considered. Bro. Peter Kolliman used to gesticulate expressively as he would say, “That’s a red herring!” Perhaps Paul had the same idea in II Timothy 2:14.

Paul’s warning has rung true throughout the centuries. The simple constancy of the Gospel has been interrupted and confused by multiple strange teachings foisted on the brotherhood by those found ultimately not worthy of imitation. (verse 7) Paul uses a contemporary example by bringing up arguments about food. (Romans 14:1-4, 13-23; I Corinthians 8:1; Colossians 2:16, 17) He points out that the subject became the “occupation” of some—to no benefit. It must be spiritual matters (“the heart”) that take our efforts; and that will come about “by grace,” not by fruitless rules about temporal concerns.

– 13:10-13 –

This is a very difficult passage. Interpreting verse 10 and its connections to what precedes and follows is the difficulty. Examining the context of verses 9 - 13 before considering detail is helpful. The primary thoughts seem to be:

- Verse 9 - Building the heart with the help of God’s grace is our objective. Some have been side-tracked into being occupiers with concerns over temporal practices such as which foods to eat.
- Verse 10 - But if we want to consider foods, let us

consider SPIRITUAL FOOD. We feed on the ransom sacrifice—something Jewish priests could not do.

- Verse 11 - Just as the type showed the sin-offering bodies destroyed outside the camp so that the blood could become the offering, (thus the antitype shows that we sacrifice our flesh so that we can be part of the sin offering.)
- Verse 12 - Thus Jesus, so that he could sanctify his people (the Lord's goat class) sacrificed his flesh outside the gate.
- Verse 13 - Thus it only is appropriate that we eat (or appropriate the merits) of this sacrifice, and then join him outside the camp, bearing the same reproach.

– 13:10 –

The altar is the brazen (copper) altar. In the Leviticus 16 picture (The Day of Atonement), the Jewish priests were not permitted to eat of the sacrifices on it. We, however, must eat of it in order to receive our justification to join our Lord in sacrifice. Just as a Jew could not eat humans nor drink the blood of any creature, there is the “spiritual food” contrast in the lives of saints” “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” (John 6:53) Thus this verse is saying that the typical lives of the typical priests did not allow them to have part in the TRUE (antitypical) sin offering. We, on the other hand, CAN. And this information (as an extension of verse 9) is spiritual food—something that strengthens the heart by grace (and which makes occupation with temporal food only an unpleasant distraction for us).

– 13:11 –

This verse begins with “For” (= because). It may not be easy initially to see the connection of this verse to verse 10. Verse 11 is a rehearsal of the type so that verses 12 and 13 can explain the antitype.

Here is the connection of verse 11 to verse 10:

We CAN eat of the ransom on the altar BECAUSE we are going to be one of those animals offered for sin; and, if we don't first eat of the bullock's merit, we won't qualify to be the Lord's goat and to offer our humanity outside the camp. (Flesh perishes so that blood can be offered.)

We also must note in verse 11 the import of the words which Paul previously has used.

- (a) The BLOOD of these animals IS THE BLOOD OF THE SIN OFFERING (which seals the Covenant).
- (b) The words ANIMALS and BODIES are plural. There were TWO animals whose bloods mingled to constitute the offering for sin. (Paul will, in verses 12 and 13, continue to show that these two are Jesus and his Church.)

– 13:12 –

The verse begins with “Therefore.” Paul now is explaining the antitype of verse 11. He explains first the antitypical bullock, Jesus. Jesus is, according to this verse, to SANCTIFY someone through his blood. Note carefully, THIS PHRASE IN NOT ABOUT THE SIN OFFERING! It is about sanctification! WHO gets sanctified? The Greek specifies “THE people.” This is not Israel. This is not the world. This is HIS PEOPLE, the Church. This was Paul's point in verse 10. We can EAT toward justification and sanctification via his sacrifice. This “sanctify” in 13:12 IS EXACTLY THE EQUIVALENT of 10:14—which is entirely about the Church.

– 13:13 –

Paul here details our lives in the flesh as the antitypical Lord's goat. Outside the camp represents a life lived outside what society accepts as normal, rational, and correct. Jesus did this. (12:2; 13:12) We also must do it. (12:3, 4) Even Moses, who cannot reap the same rewards, did it. (11:25, 26) The tribe of Levi (which pictured us) was expected to do it. (Deuteronomy 10:8, 9)

But here, the point is this: BECAUSE Jesus' blood sanctifies his people; BECAUSE, therefore, the Lord's goat class CAN and MUST eat of the altar; BECAUSE the Lord's goat class is thus justified and sanctified and can actually become the second part of the sin-offering; THEREFORE, we MUST, as did Jesus, offer to have our justified humanity consumed so that its life (blood) can be given as an offering for sin.

Reproach is the normal expectation for all who see things invisible to the rest of the population. People heap reproach on nearly everything and everyone they do not understand. Reproach is the normal human reaction to anything which seems to question or contradict their traditional understandings and values. Reproach is what Paul called "contradiction of sinners" in 12:3.

– 13:14 –

This verse is a response to and a reason for living "outside the camp" and for "bearing his reproach." It, in one sense, says, "Thank goodness the present arrangement is not permanent!" In another sense it is saying, "It is because we know that is coming that we can endure." In this latter sense, we become like Jesus; for the JOY SET BEFORE US we endure the reproach—even (with Divine help) disregard it!

The wording of this verse also puts us in the company of other faith examples. The Ancients lived as aliens because they, too, saw the future perfect government. (11:9, 10, 16) This verse also refers to 12:22. We have "come to" (we have come face to face with) the (to us) reality of the New Covenant promises that make our daily lives so set apart from what the world perceives as reality. We thus also fulfill one of the 11:1 definitions of faith: the things we hope for are a reality to us. (II Corinthians 5:1-9; Ephesians 2:19)

– 13:15 –

This verse likely is an answer to verse 9. Instead of instability in our hopes and convictions, instead of concerns regarding temporal trifles, we will offer PRAISE to God for our confidences in our course and its experiences, knowing that it is all to help us fulfill our sin-offering participation. It is because we are IN HIM that we can offer this praise THROUGH HIM. Paul again is stressing the BODY of Christ as the fulfillment of this picture.

It is both interesting and imperative to note that the attitude of thankfulness we have is manifested by WORDS. It is important that our lives show thankfulness; but here it is shown that our lips also must confess it. (II Corinthians 2:14-17)

The expression “sacrifice of praise” raises some interest. “Sacrifice” is a rare word in the New Testament. It is quite likely, then, that Paul still has in mind the Tabernacle and its significance. In the Leviticus 16 picture (with which Paul is dealing), the most likely correspondency to a “sacrifice of praise” was the offering of incense on the Golden Altar before taking the blood into the Most Holy for the sin-offering. Revelation 8:3, 4 gives the Gospel Age correspondency. The body of Christ, and all of its members individually, will be dynamos of praise in this life!

– 13:16 –

Paul now uses “sacrifices” in more tangible terms. What he appears to be doing in verses 15 and 16 is to show that the Gospel Age priesthood does not offer up literal animal and grain sacrifices as was done under the Law. Instead, we offer (in the words of I Peter 2:5) “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Hebrews 10:5 was explicit in showing that God did not want the typical sacrifices. But Peter shows that our “spiritual” sacrifices are acceptable to God (when we are part of the Body of Christ). Thus, while our TRUE sacrifice is the ultimate perfect humanity we would have, the conduct of our current lives in Christ is the equivalent of the daily sacrifices of the typical priesthood. Verse 15 showed PRAISE and THANKSGIVING to be part of this. Verse 16 shows the practical ingredients: doing good and sharing—primarily to the saints, but, as opportunity affords, to others also. (Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:10)

– 13:17 –

This verse appears to be an expansion of 13:7. It deals with current (rather than past) leaders in the Church.

The word “obey” sticks in the craws of many. But this only serves as a distraction. Consider an equivalent in I Corinthians 16:16 where Paul admonishes to “be in subjection” to those who help in the work of the Lord. The concept in both places is that there always are those who initiate labors and projects and, if we wish to be helpful, we enter their labors in a spirit of cooperation and cordial helpfulness—not in a “move over, I’ll take care of it” attitude.

The ecclesia is a COOPERATIVE effort. Group dynamics require the compromise of certain individual rights and preferences. This is not a compromise of principle, but of convenience and preference. Some seem nearly incapable of making and living this distinction. But Paul here, in 13:17, is inculcating the necessary order in the ecclesia he has taught throughout his epistles. The ecclesia arrangement, largely explained only by Paul, teaches the immense responsibilities on the shoulders of the elected elders of the Church. Here Paul reminds us that it is those very elders (appointed by the congregation) who will carry the burden of responsibility for the care and the welfare of the brethren. He admonishes that the saints behave in the ecclesia in a way that does not add to that burden. He further adds that any grief which the congregation adds to the elders will result in loss of benefit to the individuals of the church. He admonishes JOY in the relationship!

It is with this admonition that Paul ends the Teaching portion of the Book of Hebrews.

EPILOGUE

13:18 – End

– 13:18-25 –

These verses bear close resemblance to the closing verses of all of Paul's epistles. It seems Paul's habit to conclude all of his epistles with miscellaneous greetings, information, etc. (Peter does similarly in I Peter 5:12-14. John does this to a lesser extent in II John 12, 13 and III John 13, 14.)

See:

Romans 16:21-27
I Corinthians 16
II Corinthians 13:11-14
Galatians 6:11-18
Ephesians 6:21-24
Philippians 4:21-23
Colossians 4:7-18
I Thessalonians 5:25-28
II Thessalonians 3:17, 18
I Timothy 6:20, 21
II Timothy 4:9-22
Titus 3:12-15
Philemon 22-25

It is noteworthy that these all contain in their last few verses the prayer that "Grace be with you all." No other Apostle does this except that John uses it at the close of Revelation, long after Paul's death. It is Paul's signature phrase.

These verses (13:18-25) pose several problems which seem to defy conclusive solution at this time. Fortunately this does not affect nor detract from the doctrinal content of this great epistle.

Rather than attempting to solve or to suggest preferred answers, we simply note a few problems and varied answers for these concluding verses.

– 13:18 –

Paul very much is accepting of his circumstances, wanting only to be certain that his witness is glorifying to God. His request for prayers to this end on his behalf shows his own belief in and reliance on the interactions of the body of Christ. (Exodus 17:12)

– 13:19 –

If II Timothy 4:6-13 applies to and is an expression of Paul’s mind before writing Hebrews, it is difficult to explain that he here seems to expect a release. Perhaps he knew his course was ended but did not know this precluded his release.

– 13:20-21 –

This is Paul’s concluding benediction. It is noble in its content, its simplicity, and in its summary of what the Book of Hebrews has taught.

“The God of Peace” is a phrase which recalls the lesson of 12:14. “Brought up from the dead” recalls 4:14 and its import for our calling. “Great Shepherd of the sheep” brings to mind 12:2 with its listing of things we, as sheep, should follow in. “Through the blood of the eternal covenant” draws our minds to the sermon of Chapter 9.

Our being equipped by God (2:4) is reflected in Paul’s prayer that He “equip you in every good thing to do His will.” “His will” brings to mind the incomparable honor of 10:10. “Working that which is pleasing in His sight” reminds us that, with His help, we can become His garden of delights. (6:7) And, finally, Paul reminds us that this all comes because of, in, and through Jesus Christ—the subject of this entire treatise (1:2)—to whom, as we are now so much better informed, belongs “the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

– 13:22 –

Some have suggested that the previous “Amen” marks the end of Paul’s efforts and that the words of this verse and those following are these of Paul’s amanuensis—(II Timothy 4:11)—probably Luke (although some suggest Timothy, despite the resulting strangeness of verse 23). However, a comparison of Paul’s closing remarks in all of his epistles (listed above under 13:18-25) suggests that the miscellaneous items following his great benediction probably also are Paul’s. The “Grace be with you all” signature, common to all of Paul’s writings, occurs in verse 25.

Thus, the URGING of this verse seems to be Paul’s. On the surface it seems incredulous that he could call this epistle “brief.” But the thought seems to be: “There is so much more I have wanted to write, but don’t let my lack of more

information let you think that I count this exhortation of diminished importance!”

– **13:23** –

The meaning of this verse is lost somewhere in the obscurities of history. There is no record elsewhere that Timothy had been imprisoned. However, Paul’s words in II Timothy 1:6-8 strongly suggest that Timothy may be in danger of imprisonment if he comes to Paul. Let these words in 13:23 suggest, perhaps, that Timothy is ELSEWHERE (not in Rome). It appears that “if he comes soon” (to Rome?), Paul will accompany him out of the city. (This, of course, also raises the same question raised by verse 19.)

– **13:24** –

Paul’s reliable efforts to “greet” the brethren are yet echoed in our day. Remembering each other and passing on word of those remembrances is a constant source of strength and joy. In this case, Paul divides his greetings for “leaders and all the saints.” Perhaps this is because of the point he made in 13:17. Perhaps it also is an echo of his own weight of responsibilities when he remarked (II Corinthians 11:28) that a great part of his joy and burden was the “care of all the churches.” He surely wanted the elders to know of his concerns and sympathies.

– **13:25** –

Except to admonish that we think on the meaning of the words Paul uses (not only here, but at the close of all of his letters), what better way is there than to close our efforts at understanding what Peter called “some things hard to understand” (II Peter 3:16) than with the words:

GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL.

APPENDIX

A MODERN PARAPHRASE of the content and concepts of

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

PLEASE NOTE: The following is not a translation. It is a paraphrase or expansion of the Apostle's letter. Its intent is not accuracy of translation but, rather, to provide an "easy-reading experience" to allow comprehension without struggle. The words of the Apostle, together with interpretive phrases and connective tissue, are combined to give both the content and concepts which the Apostle seems to have had in mind. Reading this paraphrase hopefully will allow an easy and smooth flow of thoughts which convey to us the lessons of this great doctrinal epistle. Should this attempt prove to convey thoughts not intended by Paul, it is because of our great inabilities to do better.

INTRODUCTION

- 1:1 While God has used prophets in the past to instruct Israel with types, allegories, covenants, and symbolisms,
- 1:2 He has, in these last three “days” of His rest period, sent us His son as the final and most authoritative messenger.
Thus the heir of the world and the framer of the ages now is our instructor in things pertaining to God.
- 1:3 This One is the radiant display of God’s character and the exact copy of God’s own immortal substance.
He is maintainer of the universe.
He speaks and it happens!
By one advent he accomplished what the Law never could do—he offered the one offering which expunges sins.
He now awaits the results, having had the assurance of the validity of his sacrifice demonstrated by God’s favor in exalting him.

PART I

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

- 1:4 Jesus is not in the same class as the angelic hosts.
He is as much above them as are the prophecies concerning him above any about angels.
- 1:5 Consider the Scriptural testimonies about this:
- Psalm 2:7 shows that God brought Jesus to the birth as the firstborn of a New Creation.
 - II Samuel 7:14 confirms this New Creature exaltation following Jesus' sin-offering sufferings.
- 1:6
- And God, referring to the second advent when Jesus returns to this habitable world, says, in Psalm 97:7, that God commands all of the angelic hosts (even those who had fallen) to WORSHIP Jesus.
- 1:7
- Psalm 104:4 shows that angels can administer the great forces of nature in God's service;
- 1:8 But consider the CONTRAST in Scriptural description of the Son.
(Angles WORK; but the Son RULES):
- Psalm 45:6, 7 shows Jesus with the authority of a functioning King and Judge. It also shows that this is an INHERITED right, a "sceptered" right—not a usurped rule, and not an after-thought.
- 1:9 Psalm 45 also makes other points about him.
- He has a perfectly balanced character which not only loves right but hates wrong.
 - Anointings are for priests and kings only. He is both, and his office will express the GLADNESS he has and which he will dispense.
 - He will have COMPANIONS (his church) in spreading gladness. He will be their respected HEAD.

1:10

The Psalms continue in their testimonies about Jesus:

- Psalm 102:25, 26 demonstrates Jesus' administrative work in the past as well as the future:

- The societal and religious foundations of Israel were established by him—

1:11

- But these were only to be temporary; Jesus, who framed them, on the contrary, is ABIDING and PERMANENT, always here to direct their replacements. For instance, the clothing (justification) under the Law now is due for a replacement.

1:12

- He is setting the authority (mantle) of the Law aside in storage so that an age of grace may intervene. (The mantle of works will return in the kingdom.)

- But Jesus, himself, never changes!

1:13

Psalm 110:1 comments on this also.

Since Jesus will administer that hoped-for kingdom, it is he who is instructed by God to WAIT for it:

“SIT...until.”

But while he waits:

1:14

the angels are given a work to do.
They are guarding the experiences of those who will participate with Jesus in his work of saving the world.

2:1

Is there, then, any greater reason that we should be soberly constant?

2:2

Consider: If the Law was given and administered through angels (who now are our appointed servants), and the Law allowed no deviations,

2:3

how shall we, chosen to be heirs and administrators of a greater salvation, not be liable for any neglect?

- It is not as if we are not well-informed of our honor.
 Jesus first explained it to us; others who were with him confirmed
 the facts to us;
- 2:4 and God, Himself, bore visible and internal witness of our
 acceptance to this highest of callings by providing signs, wonders,
 demonstrations of power, and the gifts of the spirit!
- 2:5 And why?
 Because He is not placing the Kingdom under the control of the
 angels, but under His son and the saints.
This is our subject!
- 2:6 God testified this all in advance in the 8th Psalm.
 In it, God has David first questioning why God bothers with man,
 then explaining God's intent for man:
- Why have You remembered Adam?
 Why are You concerned about his
 descendants?
- 2:7 It is because you made man to be just below the spirit beings;
 You have given him the glory and honor of perfection;
 You have designed him as lord over the earthly works of Thy hands.
- 2:8 You have decided that he will be controller of all in the earth.
 Do we see how inclusive this is?
 Nothing on earth is to be out of man's control!
 BUT, as we all plainly see, this is NOT YET the case.
- 2:9 What IS the case is that we do see the provision made to make
 David's prophecy happen:
- We see Jesus,
 like Adam, also made a little lower
 than the spirit beings,
 and, like Adam,
 (so that he could buy him),
 also crowned with glory and honor
 as a perfect man.
 This was all done to Jesus SO THAT
 HE COULD SUFFER DEATH
 as a sacrifice.

2:10 But God had not intended for Jesus to be the only sacrificer and the only spirit-begotten human.
God (for Whom and through Whom all of this is being done) thought it proper to perfect the leader or head of this special salvation before perfecting followers.

2:11 Thus Jesus sanctifies the saints and, collectively, they all are then God's sons.
Thus, Jesus, in prophecy, appropriately calls his followers "brethren."

2:12 Note this in Psalm 22:22. Jesus says:

I will tell those who will be my brethren
all about Thy wonderful Name;
Among those called-out ones,
I will sing Thy praise.

2:13 Then, in Isaiah 8:17 and 18, Jesus prophetically makes two statements which show

- (1) his patience in waiting for the development of his brethren, and
- (2), his excitement that he will not be an only child.

He says:

- (1) "I will even look eagerly for Him" (or, as the Septuagint renders it, "I will put my trust in Him").
In other words, Jesus will "sit at (God's) right hand" with perfect expectation.
- (2) Then, after waiting, he will be able joyously to exclaim, "Behold, I and the other children of God which He has provided to help me!"

2:14 Because these were not initially children of God, but rather condemned sons of Adam, needing release from their condemnation and alienation from God, Jesus became a man to ransom these ahead of time from their death sentence. Thus the power of the devil, instituted in Eden, is powerless now over those who are God's sons not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

2:15 These have been delivered from life-long slavery under the fear of death and its consequences, which kept them from having a sonship relationship to God.

- 2:16 NOTE: for this honor of administering the Kingdom He does not enlist angels, but He enlists the promised seed of Abraham.
- 2:17 BECAUSE Jesus, too, is part of the seed of Abraham, he was obligated through experience to become, like the rest of the seed, merciful and faithful. Thus he will be able to be an effective High Priest for God's purposes in the eradication of the sins of mankind.
- 2:18 Because of the temptations he experienced even as a perfect human, he also is able to come to the aid of those of us now who are tested as part of the promised seed.

PART II
JESUS IS FAR SUPERIOR TO MOSES
AND HIS LAW “HOUSE”

3:1 Because of all of this which we have shown, you, (my “brethren” of the high calling, made holy by the sacrifice of our head), please give much consideration to information about Jesus, the one SENT FORTH to be our High Priest in our professed calling.

3:2 Consider his FAITHFULNESS. It sets an example. As is only appropriate, he is faithful to the One Who made him. This is one reason Moses is an appropriate type of our Lord. Moses was ever faithful in his services to God’s house—of which he was a part.

3:3 But Jesus is worthy of much more glory than Moses. Jesus was not just a servant in God’s house; he was the BUILDER of the house!

3:4 God, Who builds all things, selected Jesus as the builder of His covenant-houses.

3:5 Consider this with care: FAITHFULNESS is the key in all covenant relationships with God.

- 3:6
- (1) Moses was faithful in his particular relationship. He was IN the house of the Law Covenant and served it well. This was important because the whole arrangement was typical of later things.
 - (2) Now, Christ also is faithful OVER God’s house, not as servant, but as HEIR, in its new capacity as a grace covenant in which WE (as Christians) find ourselves.
 - (3) Remaining in this “house” is, of course, reliant also on FAITHFULNESS. We cannot succeed without holding onto our confidence in Him and boldly confessing our hopes until death.

3:7 This faithfulness which we must maintain, but which the “house” of Israel DID NOT maintain, is shown by the Holy Spirit in Psalm 95:7-11. Note the Psalmist’s message:

Today, (meaning our day),
If you hear His voice, (if we are
“the called”),

- 3:8 Do not harden your hearts (like Israel did)
As when Israel quarreled and grumbled with Me,
As when they kept pushing Me in the wilderness.
- 3:9 That is where Israel's fathers tried Me by testing Me.
(This is the opposite of correct!
I should try them by testing them!)
And they did this despite seeing My works on their behalf for the whole 40 years!
- 3:10 It should not be thought strange that I was angry with and loathed that generation.
I told them that they were always going astray in their hearts,
And that they never learned my ways.
- 3:11 Thus, resulting from my just anger,
I swore they would not enter the rest
I will provide—neither the typical rest in the land, nor the antitype of rest in Christ.
- 3:12 Let us learn from this 95th Psalm, brethren, so that in any of us no inner rebellions arise.
- 3:13 We need each other to keep putting “heart” into each other day after day throughout the Gospel Age, so that subtle resistance to God does not attack us.
- 3:14 We have been ingrafted into the Anointed, into the Messiah class. We will not remain in it unless we maintain our original vision and commitment until we die.
- 3:15 All during this age, let the Psalmist's words ring in our minds:
If you are the called of the Gospel Age,
Don't let any lack of responsiveness to God appear in your hearts
as it did in Israel who provoked Him!
- 3:16 Remember the history:
- Who was it, despite hearing God, dared to answer Him back?
- Indeed, all of them were triumphantly led out of Egypt under the great Moses!
And yet, were they not those who

challenged God?

- 3:17 - Didn't God lead them faithfully for 40 years?
Yet, didn't they anger Him for the whole time?
- They fell dead in the wilderness because
of their own disbelief, not because God
abandoned them!
- 3:18 - And did they not, therefore, fail to gain
the promised land?
Joshua and Caleb, because of their faithfulness,
gained it, but the disobedient did not!
- 3:19 - That is what we want to remember:
UNBELIEF will cost us our rest,
present and future.

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- 4:1 Thinking on their behavior should alarm us!
We have a greater rest promised.
Not one of us should want to be accounted by God to be
unworthy of it.
- 4:2 Both Israel and we began our relationship with God by having the
Gospel preached to us.
The difference, hopefully, is that, while they didn't unite
information with FAITH, we will have the blessing to have the
information change our characters.
- 4:3 We Christians, who have believed enough to commit to full
consecration, have begun in that way of rest because, as God said,
"I was angry with Israel's faith-failures and was thus determined
that they would lose the opportunity of resting with Me in My plans
and purposes."
- God began His rest in 4126 B.C. and, although He has had so long
to wait to enjoy others' entering it, He was not willing to
compromise with Israel on the matter.
- 4:4 Thus this whole "rest-confidently-in-Messiah" concept was God's
intention when He recorded in Genesis 2:2 that "God rested on the
7th day from all His works."

- 4:5 But He also forcibly says of Israel: “THEY shall NOT enter this rest state.”
- 4:6 Clearly, then, He INTENDED for someone to enter His rest WITH Him, but it was NOT Israel who, despite having the Gospel preached to them through Abraham their father, FAILED through disobedience to enter the rest He wanted to give them.
- 4:7 Thus, MANY YEARS AFTER Israel’s failure, God STILL is prophesying through David that He would FIX another day’s opportunity for someone else to enter that rest. So, David wrote of “TODAY” (the Gospel Age) and said, “If you hear the High Calling in this new day, do not get hard hearts (as Israel did).”
- 4:8 Now, if going into the Promised Land with Joshua were the rest which God meant, God never would (through David in Psalm 95) have prophesied about another day coming AFTER that.
- 4:9 Thus we can be secure in our belief that we now can enter that rest
4:10 because , if we have indeed, accepted our calling, we, like God, have given up our own doings—resting in Jesus whose doings are God’s.
- 4:11 Consequently, we must struggle to maintain that on-going condition of resting in faith, and not be reprobate, as was Israel.
- 4:12 What is there that will keep us from so falling?
THE WORD OF GOD!
It is effectively ALIVE and WORKING in us if we let it!
No two-edged knife can separate our flesh from our new minds.
Yet Divine WORDS do!
We must have our motivations separated from our fleshly actions—our inner life from the directions our flesh might want to move us.
When our thoughts and intentions face the WORD, discernment about the proper course becomes clear.
- 4:13 We cannot mock God.
It is clear to Him how we react to His Word and Will.

PART III

JESUS REPLACES ALL FORMER PRIESTHOODS

4:14 We can, indeed, enter the rest, have our spirits separated from our flesh, and stand in God's approval BECAUSE we have, not just a high priest, but a GREAT High Priest—one who is not just IN heaven, but who has passed through the lower heavens to a position next to God Himself.
This is Jesus, the very Son of God, for whom and in whom we want desperately to hold onto our vision and commitment as part of his new priesthood.

4:15 And we need not be alone in our determination, because we have a High Priest whose New Creature development was, like ours, tested among sinners, yet without yielding to sin, and who, therefore, is totally sympathetic to us.

4:16 We can know that HE IS THERE FOR US!
He gives us continual access to God's grace as we need it.

5:1 There was a similarity in the choosing of the Aaronic priesthood. They were taken out from among their fellows to represent them before God and to offer the necessary sacrifices on their behalf.

5:2 Because of this, the Aaronic priesthood could deal gently with their fallen compatriots, having been part of the same problems.

5:3 This was evident in that the High Priest not only had to offer sacrifices for the shortcomings of the people, but also for himself.

5:4 Note carefully: he did not take this priesthood honor for himself.
Aaron and his successors were CALLED OUT by God for their assignment.

5:5 Let's notice the similarity in Jesus. He did not just decide he would be the antitypical High Priest. God decided it.
Recall the prophecy of Psalm 2:7 where God says,
"Thou art my son,
Today (when you are raised from the dead),
I have brought you to the birth."

Thus his glorification is the date of the confirmation of his becoming High Priest of the Gospel Age, at God's direction.

- 5:6 But in Psalm 110:4 we find additional information:
(a) This is the first truly "forever" priesthood.
(b) While his antitypical Aaronic function yet exists, he also transcends it in being a priest of the Melchizedek order.
- 5:7 Consider this about Jesus:
We saw that he offered his flesh as a sin offering—the antitypical function of Aaron.
We saw his concern in the Garden the night before he was to enter the great antitypical Most Holy.
He had that wonderful, fearful concern about whether he had carried out everything well so that his new creature would be born to carry on the work.
God heard him because of his great piety, and He reassured him.
- 5:8 You can see that he learned the COST OF OBEDIENCE!
Even though he was God's Son, he had to learn that lesson in order to be an effective priest—and he had the humility to do it!
- 5:9 Because of that, he was born as a New Creature and now has become the SOURCE of eternal salvation for us—if we obey him.
- 5:10 He now is far above the antitypical Aaronic function.
He was called to be more than that.
Thus God has given him the designation of "Melchizedek."
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- 5:11 I have so much that I could tell you about the meanings of this Melchizedek priesthood—difficult things.
I cannot tell you, however, because you have allowed a dullness of hearing spiritual things to overcome you.
I am greatly concerned about this and want to digress long enough to try to persuade you to reform.
- 5:12 Having been Christians as long as you have, you should be able not only to learn difficult things, you should be TEACHING them to others.
Yet this is not the case with you.
In fact, I am sorry to say, you need to go back AGAIN to learn the fundamentals of your faith.
You cannot build on poor foundations, and your foundations are weak. You still classify as babes.

- 5:13 I worry if you are content with baby food.
Among other things, it suggests that you know little about your justification.
- 5:14 The appreciation, the inner hunger, for justification as a character trait rather than as a doctrine, comes about only for maturing Christians.
We must APPLY truth in our daily lives so that our New Creature sensitivities are acute to discern good and evil—NOT just around us, but, most importantly, INSIDE us.

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- 6:1 Let me suggest to you a list of fundamental items in which you are stuck—things you haven't solidified in your minds about Christianity versus Judaism, and which, consequently, keep you from growth and maturity. I want to have you learn them solidly and progress to deeper things, not constantly arguing simple matters.
- (a) First, consider the contrast of “dead works” under the Law versus the new Age of Faith toward God. You must leave behind the old age of thinking that your works justify you and enter a new age of confidence that it is your faith that will bring you into and keep you in a true relationship with God.
- 6:2
- (b) Next, establish firmly in your minds that John's baptism now is invalid; only Baptism into Christ's death has merit.
 - (c) Closely related is the realization that the impartation of gifts of the spirit by the laying-on of Apostolic hands is reliant on the proper baptism. BUT, of more import is that these impartations are “partial”—not permanent, and, therefore, of limited worth. Character is what counts!
 - (d) Next, be certain you understand resurrection. The new age has clarified that more than one resurrection exists. I also have pointed out elsewhere that none has yet occurred (except

in the case of Jesus)—and won't, until the last trumpet.

- (e) As with resurrection, the subject of final judgment must be clear to you. As Jews you knew of only one final judgment. Now you must realize that while the world's judgment is future, OURS IS NOW!

6:3 Advancing beyond these things to maturity, we will do so, if God permits us to, because of our faith.

6:4 If we do not, I must give you somber warning!
If you think you can accept the incredible growth opportunities from God lightly, ending up with rejecting them, and THEN expect re-instatement, YOU DO NOT even understand the fundamentals of salvation.
You must not treat the weightiest of matters with casual disrespect.
Therefore:

- (a) IF you have understood the concepts of Divine things enough to cause you to pursue them further,

AND

- (b) IF you have received the gift of justification to the point of consecration,

AND

- (c) IF you have, therefore, been begotten of the Holy Spirit,

AND

6:5 (d) IF, as a result, the Scriptures have opened up to you, giving you insight and appreciation,

AND

- (e) IF, thereby, the vision of the Kingdom has become YOUR vision and daily motivation,

6:6 THEN, if you fall away, if you reject these blessings, it becomes IMPOSSIBLE to reinstate you into a relationship with God or a hope for life.

You have, at spirit-begetting, received the benefit of the ransom;
it will go to no one more than once!
To expect Christ to die on your behalf again is to place the value of
his death before the public as worthless. You shame him!

- 6:7 Let me explain it with an example.
We consider that God has blessed a garden which brings forth
nourishing vegetation after it has used the rain and tillage
abundantly supplied it; but
- 6:8 consider our attitude toward the same land if the only fruitage
is thorns and thistles.
It almost becomes the source of a new curse word!
And what do we do? We burn it!
We are God's garden. His reactions will be similar.
- 6:9 Dearly beloved brethren, I want to let you know of my confidence
in you and in your ability to rise above such a dangerous course.
Though I am severely lecturing you because of my love for you, I am
convinced that the ways of life which accompany the promises of
salvation will be found in you. These include:
- 6:10 (a) Your work for God by lovingly ministering
to His saints.
(God remembers all you have done as well as
what you are doing that glorifies His name.)
- 6:11 (b) Your constancy—the diligence we want to see
in each of you which never slackens in being
completely assured of the reality of your hopes.
- 6:12 (c) Your overcoming of any dullness of hearing or
action.
Find those whose lives reflect this overcoming,
and IMITATE them.

Note how it is their faith that spurs them on, and their patience that
makes them inheritors of the promises.

Look at Abraham:

- 6:13 Let me show you how his maintained faith helped him inherit the
most wonderful promises, so that we may imitate him as a prime
example.
After many years of Abraham's believing, God restated to him the
promise.
Then, God (imagine!) swore to him to confirm it!

If you will think back in history, he was there to meet Abraham when Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the Kings. It was there that he gave Abraham a blessing—clearly making him greater than him to whom the promise was sworn!
(Note that Genesis 14:18 includes the subsequently symbolically-important items of bread and wine as part of the blessing!)

7:2 Abraham obviously was awed, giving Melchizedek a tenth of all he had won in battle—and this, long before there was a law mentioning tithes.

I want you to consider the translation of Melchizedek's name and title because it helps us to understand his function in the Divine plan of things.

His name means KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

His title, King of Salem, means KING OF PEACE.

(Surely this suggests an identity to you!)

7:3 Unlike men, but rather like the Son of God, Melchizedek is without human parentage and, therefore, genealogy.
We cannot date the beginning of his days; nor does his life have an end.

This, of course, is the imperative point: he never ceases from his favored priesthood. It is perpetual.

7:4 Let me further stress his greatness above the Law priesthood simply showing it by saying that Abraham paid quality tithes to him.

7:5 Reason on this: the Levitical priesthood received tithes from their brethren—but they all were descendants of Abraham who had PAID tithes to Melchizedek.

7:6 So, Melchizedek, who neither is descendant nor progenitor of them all, must have been so much greater than the Law priesthood: He received tithes from their father, and he had the superiority needed to bless Abraham, who was heir to God's promises!

7:7 There can be no dispute!
The one who blesses always is greater than the one who is blessed.

7:8 It is true that both the Levites and Melchizedek were receivers of tithes. Note, however, that the Levitical priesthood received them and died.
Yet Melchizedek received them and lives on!

7:9 What is more, Levi paid tithes even though he also received them,

- 7:10 because Levi was represented in Abraham when Abraham met Melchizedek.
- 7:11 I wish to convey to you four points concerning the Melchizedek priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.
- (1) The Levitical priesthood, and the Law based on it, could not bring perfection. Therefore there is need for a new Priesthood—that of Melchizedek, and not of Aaron.
- 7:12 And, when there is a change of priesthood, there necessarily also is a change of law.
- 7:13 That the law changes is clear, because the one who is Melchizedek does not come from Levi or Aaron and cannot, therefore, officiate at the Jewish altar under the Jewish Law.
- 7:14 (2) Jesus clearly is not a priest of the Aaronic order because he was of the tribe of Judah—a tribe which, according to Moses, could not be of that priesthood.
- 7:15 Note also that this new Melchizedek priesthood is different
7:16 because it does not require the standards set for priests under the Law;
it requires all of the power inherent in an indestructible life!
- 7:17 THAT is why God says that he is “a priest FOREVER.”
- 7:18 (3) So, the Law is being set aside because of its incapacities which render it useless in the long term for perfecting.
- 7:19 What currently is replacing it is not the New Law which will have the needed power, but the HOPE of that New Law—and THAT is what has brought us into a relationship with God so that we will be participants in the administration of it.
- 7:20 (4) And that HOPE (the promise to Abraham which is to result in a new priesthood and law) was, remember, confirmed by God’s oath.
- 7:21 The Levitical priests became such without an oath.

Melchizedek (who will administer the Abrahamic promise) was made a priest by an oath.

You remember Psalm 110:4,

“The LORD has sworn, and will not change:
Thou art a priest for ever.”

- 7:22 This also makes the Law replacement (The New and Better Covenant) oath bound in its priest, Jesus.
- 7:23 In the old order, there were many priests because death prevented their continuance.
- 7:24 In the new order, because Melchizedek is eternal, the priest holds his priesthood perpetually.
- 7:25 This is of great advantage for us.
Jesus is present as our Saviour throughout the entire Gospel Age—constantly living to make intercession for every member of his body—and his new order of priesthood.
- 7:26 We need a High Priest (under the present distress of the Narrow Way) who has no flaws and who is exalted high enough that he actually can accomplish what needs to be done—
- 7:27 someone who, unlike the Levitical priests, does not have to offer up repeated sacrifices for himself and the people.
Jesus did this once when he offered himself at Jordan and his body at Pentecost.
- 7:28 The Law provided only an inadequate (but typical) priesthood; but God, by OATH—an oath stated after the Law—provided His Son, a perfect priest forever!

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- 8:1 In case you have become lost in my detail, let me stress my main point: The Jewish priesthood was there to be a TYPE rather than a success. Thus we have this great antitypical priest seated at the right hand of the Majesty’s throne in the heavens!
- 8:2 He is serving the sanctuary, even the true, antitypical, tabernacle—the functions of atonement—which God constructed, not man.

- 8:3 Just as the typical priests were to offer gifts of devotion and sacrifices of atonement, Jesus, also, as antitype, has even more important offerings.
- 8:4 He did not do this as a man. He couldn't. He was of the wrong tribe to do so under the Law.
- 8:5 The Levitical priests did such things in the flesh; but that all was for the purpose of typical examples and shadows.
Do you remember the Law?
In Exodus 25:40 God told Moses that he was to be exacting
BECAUSE it was to be a pattern or type!

PART IV

JESUS AS THE BASIS OF THE NEW COVENANT

- 8:6 Things have changed. Now we have reached the Gospel Age, and the pattern or type has been replaced by the reality. And Jesus' ministry of preparing a New Covenant far more important and excellent than that of the Levitical priesthood. It is he, typed by Moses, who is mediator of a better Covenant, one which has been legislated with promises of the better things it will accomplish.
- 8:7 Remember: the reason there is a need for this second covenant is because the first one had faults. It only was typical and incapable of removing sin.
- 8:8 Consequently Israel's sins remain, as is evident in the prophecy of Jeremiah 31 which promises a better covenant for them in order to remove those sins. It says:
Behold! Days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—
- 8:9 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—
for they did not continue in My covenant.
Should I have remained as a Husband unto them?
I ceased walking with them!
- 8:10 But, this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:
After the days of not walking with them (says the Lord),
I will put my laws INTO THEIR MINDS!
and I will write them UPON THEIR HEARTS!
And I will be their God, and they shall, in the fullest sense, be my people.
- 8:11 And they shall not have to teach everyone his fellow citizen or everyone his brother by asking, "Do you know the Lord?"
Because ALL shall know Me—from the least to the greatest of them,
because

8:12 I will be merciful to their iniquities, and,
I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE.
(Clearly, then, they yet are in their sins under the old covenant.)

8:13 Thus we can see the obsolete nature of the Old Covenant.
When God said He would make a New one, His very statement
predicted that the Old one would become obsolete!
But NOW, as the Gospel Age opens, the Law is senile;
those who stay under it are living in the past.
It is ready to disappear—
NOW for those in Christ; LATER, for those under it who have to
wait for its replacement.

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9:1 I want with you to compare covenants, and how their being put into
service compares.
The first (Old or Law) Covenant had its rules by which the covenant
was renewed annually through the tabernacle services.

9:2 That tabernacle, if you recall, had two rooms; in the first or outer
room (called “The Holy”) there was the lamp stand, the table with
the sacred bread, and the golden altar of incense.

9:3 Then, behind the second veil, there was a second room which we
call “The Most Holy.”

9:4 In it was the Ark of the Covenant, entirely covered in gold.
In the Ark was a golden vessel of Manna, the rod which blossomed
for Aaron, and the two tablets of the Law.

9:5 Over the Ark were the two Cherubim of glory overshadowing the
Mercy Seat.

I will not go into specifics about the meanings of all of these things
because my point has to do with the specific service which annually
re-instituted the Law Covenant:

9:6 Once the tabernacle was dedicated, it functioned continually with
the myriad services which involved only “The Holy.”

- 9:7 BUT—
and here is my point of focus—it was only during ONE SERVICE A YEAR that the high priest offered in the “Most Holy.”
It was the Day of Atonement, the day of the Sin Offering, when the priest brought two offerings of blood into this room, one for himself, one to offset the un-willful sins of the people in order to renew the Law Covenant for another year.
- 9:8 One reason the Holy Spirit instituted this type was to obscure for Israel that the TRUE Most Holy would eventually be accessible to TRUE Sin Offerings.
However, while the first or typical tabernacle was yet functioning, there was no concept for Israel about this need for something greater.
- 9:9 It all was symbolic of the Gospel Age!
Consequently, the Israelites went on and on offering gifts and sacrifices, without accomplishing anything that made the priests feel as though their work was ever-efficacious.
- 9:10 These typical tabernacle services really only related to the mundane sphere of food, drink, cleansings, and rules for the physical life until a time would come in the Gospel Age that the antitypical services truly would mean something significant.
- 9:11 Once the Gospel Age came, it all changed!
The greater, antitypical, not-made-with-hands, tabernacle appeared (the functions of real atonement), with Christ appearing as its High Priest.
He is the priest of good things to come (the New Covenant) via the real sacrifices of this antitypical “tabernacle” of atonement services.
- 9:12 And just as the priest and the tabernacle now are antitypes, so is the BLOOD.
The sacrifices for the sin offering no longer are from bulls and goats, but rather from those who are part of the antitypical priest.

Antitypically he entered the “Most Holy” with a once-for-all sin offering in two parts at Jordan and Pentecost and, thereby, obtained eternal deliverance (to be testified in due time).
- 9:13 Now, under the Law there were three things designed to keep the nation in covenant relationship.
There were the sin offering’s two parts, and

there was the application of the red-heifer ashes which reminded them throughout the year of their shortcomings of which the sin offering took care.

9:14 Antotypically, the same three elements apply for the functioning of the New Covenant.

First, the blood of Jesus as the antitypical bullock was offered as THE PERFECT OFFSET to God.

Secondly, this allowed OUR consciences to participate as the blood of the antitypical goat—no longer serving the dead works of the Law, as Jews, but rather the services of God’s antitypical tabernacle as Christians.

9:15 Therefore, and thirdly, (BECAUSE THESE TWO PARTS OF THE SIN OFFERING ARE PROVIDED), he is Mediator of the New Covenant (the antitypical Red Heifer Age) under which Israel will be delivered from their sins accumulated under the Old Covenant, so that they will be able to receive the promised eternal-life inheritance.

It took death to provide this ultimate release from the Old Covenant for them.

9:16 This is why there is a wait for the New Covenant. For where a covenant exists, the death of that which ratifies it is necessary to be produced.

9:17 A covenant is firm over dead victims since it never is valid while that which ratifies it is alive.

9:18 That is why the old (typical) covenant likewise was not in force before the application of the blood.

9:19 Surely you remember the account: After every commandment of the Law had been recited by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves and of the goats with water and scarlet wool, and the book itself, and sprinkled all the people.

9:20 Then (and here again is my point), he was specific to say (as recorded in Exodus 24:8), “Behold the BLOOD of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.”

9:21 Additionally, to emphasize the importance of the blood, he also applied it to the tabernacle and its vessels once it was constructed, as it was the mechanism for annual renewal of the Covenant.

- 9:22 According to the Law, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.
- 9:23 What is the import?
It was necessary for the types of spiritual things to be cleansed with the typical sin offerings, but the spiritual things, themselves, need BETTER SIN OFFERINGS—human, not animal!
- 9:24 Thus Jesus (the antitypical bullock) did not enter the literal tabernacle—a mere type; but he entered heaven itself as the first part of the sin offering to appear in God’s presence to present blood for his body (us): and,
- 9:25 as we have said previously, THIS High Priest will not need to repeat the offerings because, unlike the typical priests who offered the blood of OTHERS (the animals),
- 9:26 this High Priest, at the conjunction of Jewish and Gospel Ages, was sent to put away sin with the one offering of Himself (at Jordan and Pentecost) as the true sin offering.
This antitypical offering needs no repeated suffering and death!
Now you can see the comparison:
- 9:27 Just as the men of the typical priesthood were appointed to “die” once annually as represented in the blood of animals, and, after this God judged Israel ready for another year of covenant relationship,
- 9:28 thus also, the Christ, having been offered ONCE as the antitypical sin offering to bear the sins of the many, will appear again at the end of the age—THIS TIME TO GIVE SALVATION, (under a New Covenant)—not to make sin offerings!
And the whole creation (not just Israel) eagerly awaits this manifestation!

PART V

THE REAL SIN OFFERING

- 10:1 All of this is necessary because the Law could never perfect anyone by its endlessly repeated sacrifices.
It merely was a shadow of the good things to come.
(And, certainly, not a detailed image of them!)
- 10:2 If the worshippers under the Law had, indeed, had their sins erased and had clean consciences, wouldn't they have ceased making offerings for sins?
- 10:3 However, their annual sin offerings were a constant reminder that they remained in their sins.
- 10:4 Why? Because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
AND WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?
- 10:5 It leaves us with Jesus' coming into the world, fully aware of the problem, and saying (as prophesied in Psalm 40:6-8):
- I know the typical offerings are not what You desire.
But I am grateful that you have figuratively pierced my ears (as a sign of my willing servitude to be a real, a human, sacrifice)
—even as Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 15:17.
- 10:6 In the sin offerings, and even the burnt-offerings that showed their acceptance, I know You had no pleasure.
- 10:7 That is why I said, “I HAVE COME”—
I have come to this place specifically to do what really is Your Will, O God—to give the human sacrifice that is Your Will and pleasure.
This all was prophesied of Me in the Book before Psalm 40 was written.
It was in allegories, types, and prophecies.
I am now here to accomplish it!
- 10:8 Note the remarkable meaning in this Psalm.
It clearly shows that God had no pleasure in the offerings of the Law (which He instituted)!
Then Jesus gets to the important point.

After saying that God did not want the typical sacrifices, Jesus says,

10:9 “Behold,” (Take special note!)
 “I have come to do something that is Your Will.”

Thus, in Jesus’ sacrificing, the old sacrifices, the old Covenant, the TYPE, has been TAKEN AWAY so that the ANTITYPE, the true sin offering resulting in the New Covenant, can be established.

THAT is “God’s Will”—human sacrifices that will take away sin!

10:10 Now, I want you to consider carefully, IT IS THIS SAME WILL (for efficacious human sacrifice) that has ALLOWED US TO BE SET ASIDE as part of the sacrifice BY BEING OFFERED AS PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST—this ONCE-FOR-ALL sin offering!

10:11 Let me comment on “once-for-all.” In the Law, every priest had the same repetitive Day-of-Atonement sacrifices which, as we have shown, never can take away sins.

10:12 Yet Jesus, having offered ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS FOR ALL TIME (Jordan and Pentecost), in the words of Psalm 110:1,

 “SAT DOWN AT THE
 RIGHT HAND OF GOD.”

10:13 Why? Because he knew that THIS sacrifice was efficacious and needed no repetition, so that all he need do was to wait through the Gospel Age, as the Psalmist says,

 “UNTIL THE TIME FOR HIS ENEMIES
 TO BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL.”

10:14 Why the wait?
 Because he knew, though the offering was accepted, and though (by being part of it) his body members were sanctified, it would take the whole age to complete the transaction.

10:15 When the Holy Spirit dictated through Jeremiah (31:33, 34), it witnessed to this “wait” by saying, “AFTER.” Please note:

10:16 “This is the Covenant that I will make with them
 AFTER those days, says the Lord.
 I will put my laws upon their heart
 and upon their mind I will write them.

- 10:17 “And their sins and their lawless deeds
I will remember no more.”
- 10:18 Don't miss the point:
If their sins are forgiven, clearly it shows the sin offering will THEN
be over! (It then will be “AFTER those days” of waiting.”)
- 10:19 Based on this sublime intelligence, brethren, we have a conscience-
confidence to be considered the goat-part of the sin offering and,
based on the blood of the antitypical bullock (Jesus), we expect to
enter the Most Holy!
- 10:20 This is something new and living, not old and typical.
Jesus inaugurated it for us through the veil.
What I mean, of course, is that flesh does not enter the antitypical
Most Holy.
His sacrificed flesh (a human sacrifice) opened the way.
- 10:21 Now we have this GREAT High Priest over God's Sarah-Covenant
house. He is our way
- 10:22 to draw near, based on:
 (1) our true hearts,
 (2) our fully-assured faith,
 (3) our clear consciences based on his blood,
 (4) and our understanding via the water of the
 cleansing truths on this subject
 that our flesh is justified.
- 10:23 With all of this, let us HOLD FAST what we have confessed
regarding our hope.
We have no cause to waver because He Who made the promise is
FAITHFUL.
- 10:24 What we do need to do additionally is to take special note of each
other, to know how to stimulate in each other both love and good
deeds.
- 10:25 This requires being together and not withdrawing from
congregating as is the habit of some.
Our gatherings encourage each other, and this will be more and
more imperative as we see the great day drawing on.
- 10:26 Make no mistake about the seriousness of this!
If we get to the point where we sin willfully and continue to do so
once we have received the inner acknowledgement of the truth, we
will lose our justification and our lives.

- 10:27 The only thing we would have remaining is that inner terror of the sentence that is certain, and a fear of the destruction that will come as Isaiah prophesied in 26:11.
- 10:28 We are above and beyond the Law, but we cannot forget that even that typical arrangement provided for death without mercy for anyone who set it aside.
All that was needed were two or three witnesses.
- 10:29 You only can contemplate that the punishment for him who desecrates God's Son will deservedly be far more severe!
To regard his sacrifice as common or unclean; to ignore the very BLOOD which is to seal the Covenant for the world and which is the basis of our sanctified lives, to insult the very Holy Spirit which has stooped to serve us—do you think this is a small thing?
- 10:30 You recall Moses' words in Deuteronomy 32:35 and 36.
He pointed out that God will take vengeance on His enemies, but (if we remain faithful), He will vindicate us!
- 10:31 We do not want to be among those who experience the terror of His vengeance. He is a LIVING God!
- 10:32 Instead, let us practice those things which keep us faithful.
Let us build Ebenezers—looking back to our experiences after our enlightenment came, when we were able to endure the conflicts of sufferings (which conflicts built strength!).
- 10:33 We have had two kinds of struggle, the two parts together building us individually and collectively.
First, we each have become individually strange in the eyes of the public, experiencing reproaches and tribulations therefrom.
Secondly, we willingly have identified with and supported the rest of those in the body as they shared these experiences.
- 10:34 You knew and accepted the fact that your identification with this persecuted body of believers would cost you in temporal things, and you accepted with joy that your comrades were far more valuable than your tangible wealth.
You knew and had faith that your brethren are the greatest possession—and a possession that is eternal with eternal rewards.
- 10:35 This camaraderie of saints (in the pursuit of being a faithful sin offering) is the basis of our confidence which we must never discard because
- 10:36 we need the long-term future endurance which this camaraderie supplies.

Thus when we, collectively, will have fulfilled this “Will of God” for human sacrifice, we also will (collectively) receive the resulting promise (that we will “bless all the families of the earth”).

- 10:37 Habakkuk 2:3 and 4 express well what I am trying to teach: Even with what might seem like long-term endurance, it will be only a little while until our hopes will find fulfillment in Jesus’ return.
- 10:38 Until then, he who intends to continue as one of My justified ones will do so by his CONTINUANCE IN FAITH. Anyone who does not, will find that I will leave him in My displeasure over his lack of faith.
- 10:39 We, the body of Christ, are NOT those who shrink back, resulting in destruction! We are those who will have our beings preserved BECAUSE we will continue in the exercise of faith—which I now wish to expand upon for your benefit:

PART VI

FAITH AS OUR ANCHOR

- 11:1 Faith includes two parts to its definition—
1. If we have faith, the things for which we hope, though they are yet future, are compelling reality to us.
 2. If we have faith, we have a total conviction of the existence of things which are not visible to us.

11:2 It is because of this kind of faith-attitude that the heroes of the past were approved by God, and we can learn from them.

11:3 If we live a life in faith, we can accept even things from before our time, thus understanding that the ages came about by the proclamation of God so that the visible was made from the invisible.

CONSIDER HOW THE INVISIBLE DIRECTED THE LIVES OF
THE ANCIENTS:

11:4 style="text-align: center;">**ABEL**

In a life of faith, Abel was granted to offer a better (a prophetic) sacrifice than did Cain. This in itself was a testimony from God Himself that Abel was righteous because of his faith—God testifying it by providing for and accepting Abel's gift. And through his life of faith (and the meaning of his sacrifice), Abel yet sends messages to us long after his death. (He thus is a prophet.)

11:5 style="text-align: center;">**ENOCK**

Because of his life in faith, Enoch (also allowed to be a prophet) was removed and no longer found. God found Enoch's faith-life so pleasing that He kindly removed him, so that he no longer had to witness death.

11:6 This is one of my points: God found Enoch's faith pleasing; but **WITHOUT** faith, it is not possible to please God. As I said in my definition of faith, we must have faith in the invisible God. We

must both believe that He exists, and that He rewards those seeking Him. (That is how hope is reality!)

11:7

NOAH

Because of his faith, Noah was warned by God ahead of time about something not yet ever seen. Believing the invisible God about things not yet in existence, Noah, with a reverent, unskeptical attitude, went forward with the ark's preparation. This saved him and his family, made him a prophet, and (by contrast) condemned the faithlessness of the world around him. His faith, before and after the ark announcement, justified him and resulted in God's viewing him as righteous (and made his life prophetic).

11:8

ABRAHAM

Abraham had faith before he knew the true God so that when he was called, he was willing to obey and plunge into the unknown—leaving home for a promised inheritance, but not even knowing where it was!

11:9

In this exemplary life of faith, he was willing to live as an alien all of his life, even though he was in the land that was promised to be his! Even his son Isaac and grandson Jacob manifested the same faith-willingness, patiently dwelling in the temporariness of tents.

11:10

Why was Abraham (and why were his descendants) willing to do this? Because of FAITH that a government and home of permanence would have to be designed and built by God, not by themselves. (All three generations became prophetic.)

1:11

SARAH

Because of her strong existing faith-life, Sarah was blessed by God with the ability to conceive past the biological time so to do. God rewarded her belief that God would fulfill His promise.

THE ABRAHAM-SARAH RESULT

11:12 Consider the results. Because of the faith-lives of this couple, the entire Abrahamic Promise will come to fruition—regardless of the old-age prohibitions of the flesh! The stars of heaven (the Church), and the sands of the seashore (the world) will be their prophetic descendants!

AN INTERMEDIATE SUMMARY

11:13 All those we have mentioned died without every losing faith. They never received what was promised to them, but they never doubted that they eventually would receive it; so they welcomed in faith what was coming at some distant time.

They confessed that they were strangers and wanderers in the land that was to be theirs.

11:14 People who admit to such an existence make it quite clear that they are awaiting a permanent homeland (and, therefore, a resurrection).

11:15 We know they were not longing for the homeland they had left, because they simply could have gone back to it!

11:16 What they wanted and awaited was something better than what they had abandoned. (That is why they left it!) What they wanted is what they had been promised: a heavenly-provided home. Because of this, because of their patient faith that they would receive it, God is not ashamed to be known as their God. He has, indeed, prepared a government for them that will give them their permanent homeland.

11:17

ABRAHAM (AGAIN)

In a life dominated by faith, Abraham, when his faith was tested, proved to himself the strength of that faith in offering Isaac—knowing full well that it was through Isaac that all the promises to him would have fulfillment.

11:18

Abraham believed God Who had promised that Abraham's descendants would come through Isaac.

11:19

Because of this, Abraham's faith had reasoned it out that God was able to raise men from the dead—otherwise, God would not have asked Abraham to do this. When Isaac was spared, Abraham virtually received him back from the dead—

a parable, allegory, and type.

11:20

ISAAC

Each succeeding generation demonstrated this faith-life. Because of Isaac's faith-life, God allowed him prophetically to bless the futures and meanings of the lives of Jacob and Esau.

11:21

JACOB

Because of Jacob's faith-life, God allowed him, as he was approaching death, to do two things:

- (1) Jacob prophetically blessed each of Joseph's sons (Manasseh and Ephraim),

and

- (2) he worshipped on his final bed to God's faithfulness in eventually giving him the life and land promised (by Jacob's requesting that his bones be returned there).

11:22

JOSEPH

Because of Joseph's life in faith, God allowed Joseph's final prophetic desire to be uttered. He showed that his hope in God (like Jacob's) was REALITY by prophesying the exodus of Israel's children, wanting his own bones also returned to the promised land to await the fulfillment of the promises.

11:24

MOSES

Moses led a life in faith which became manifest in his maturity when he claimed his heritage.

11:25

It mattered not to him that this would bring the same ill-treatment for him that God's chosen people were enduring. Their promises were, in faith, so far superior to the pleasures offered by Egypt's sinful society.

11:26

Moses had faith in the promise of a Messiah, which then only brought reproach. But to Moses, the treasures in Egypt were not comparable to the rewards God had promised through Abraham. He believed in things unseen.

11:27

In his continuing life of faith, Moses left Egypt for Midian—but not because he had any fear of Pharaoh. Moses waited and accepted the isolation because he saw “Him Who is unseen.” His faith was his conviction of the unseen.

11:28

Because his faith-life continued, Moses was allowed to conduct the prophetic activity of the Passover, sprinkling the lamb's blood, thus exempting Israel from the angel who killed the first-born.

11:29

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

During their slavery, Israel maintained a faith in a deliverer, and they were rewarded by their passing through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. The faithless Egyptians were drowned when they attempted to cross. (Thus, even Israel became collectively a prophet.)

11:30

JOSHUA

Because of the faith-life of Joshua, Israel saw the walls of Jericho fall on the seventh day of encircling that city. (Joshua, thus likewise, became a pictorial prophet.)

11:31

RAHAB

Like Abraham, Rahab lived in faith before knowing the true God. She welcomed God's people in peace, and God spared her from perishing with the city.

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11:32

How can I continue telling you of examples? Time does not permit me to go into the faith stories of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. But their faith-lives fall into two categories:

11:33

First we have those whose faith-lives have visible victories resulting:

- They conquered kingdoms.
- They performed open acts of righteous valor.
- They were openly rewarded as recipients of great promises.
- They shut the mouths of lions.

11:34

- They quenched the power of fire.
- They were delivered from slaughter by the sword.
- They were made strong beyond their natural human weaknesses.
- They became mighty in battle.
- They made foreign armies flee.

11:35

Secondly, and just as importantly, we have those whose faith-lives seem to have resulted in loss, failure, and disaster:

- Women sent their men out to serve the Lord only to receive them back only by the hope of resurrection.
- Many were tortured, not compromising for relief, with their only deliverance and reward to come in a better resurrection.
- Others experienced the trials of mockings and scourgings—even chains and imprisonment.

11:37

- These faithful were stoned;
- They were sawn in two;
- They were subjected to temptations.
- Some were executed with the sword;
- Some wandered dressed in sheepskins and goatskins in destitution.
- They were afflicted and ill-treated.

11:38

These were people of whom the world was not worthy; yet they were condemned to wander in the deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

11:39

And, even though their faith justified them and brought them approval in God's sight, they lived their lives receiving nothing of the blessings they were promised.

11:40

Why is this true? It is because God has given us, His saints, the unspeakable privilege of being part of the sin offering—and without the completion of that sin offering, these faithful ancients cannot be made perfect by the New Covenant.

- 12:1 Because of these lessons, because we mentally are enveloped by a vast cloud of martyrs, let us, as they did, set aside both the bulging load of things and circumstances as well as the corrupt thought processes which tangle our progress.
Instead, let us, as they did, seek that endurance we need for our life-long race.
- 12:2 While we profit from their examples, we must have a new focus—a focus on Jesus who is the true LEADER and PERFECTOR of THIS faith wherein we now stand.
He saw the vision of joy ahead of him, and it allowed him the endurance needed all the way through crucifixion; it allowed him to disregard the shame attributed to him; and it resulted in his now sitting at the right hand of God’s throne.
- 12:3 Therefore, so that you never will grow weary, so that you never experience that fainting feeling in your souls, focus your consideration on how Jesus was able to put up with the hostilities shown to him by a sinful world.
- 12:4 You must endure until your part of the blood of which we have spoken is shed. Keep striving against that sin for the elimination of which you have offered yourselves.
- 12:5 Only DISCIPLINE will succeed.
Never forget that exhortation about discipline in Proverbs 3:11 & 12. Prophetically it is about YOU, about the sons of God:
- (a) My Son, take discipline from the Lord with great and sober regard.
 - (b) Don’t give up in the middle of a lesson.
- 12:6
- (c) The Lord’s discipline is a PROOF to us of His love.
 - (d) When He receives us as sons (when we are spirit-begotten), He will not neglect our New Creature training!
- 12:7 If you will endure God’s discipline, He will continue to deal with you as sons. Fathers are supposed to discipline their children!
- 12:8 Since all of God’s sons are partakers of His discipline, if you find yourselves WITHOUT IT, you can conclude:
- (a) Either you never became a son (you are a tare),
- or
- (b) You have lost your place in the family.

- 12:9 Please reason on this for development of endurance and Christian character: Our natural fathers disciplined us, and we gave in to it because there seemed rational cause and love behind their actions. Does it, then, seem not so much more imperative and rational to subject ourselves to the Father of our New Creatures Who can give us eternal life?
- 12:10 After all, our earthly fathers had imperfect judgment in their discipline and only limited time for its application. God, on the other hand, applies discipline PERFECTLY for our ETERNAL good; and, IF WE SUBMIT, the discipline will MAKE US LIKE HIM!
- 12:11 We all know from experience that discipline is difficult. We accept it for its results, not its enjoyment! If we will incorporate its lessons, we have that wonderful resulting fruitage of righteousness and peace!
- 12:12 So, dear brethren, let faith and discipline conquer. Stiffen your drooping arms and shaking knees.
- 12:13 Keep your steps from wavering! Then that which is an injured limb, instead of becoming disabled, will regain its former powers.

PART VII
ADMONITIONS ON THE APPLICATION
OF OUR LESSONS

- 12:14 Our sanctification necessitates objectives without which we will not see God:

 Chase peace! Try for it with all men!
- 12:15 If our sanctification process ever repels God’s grace in this attempt, the human bitterness (still rooted in our flesh) will flare up giving growth to the weed of trouble which will spread among us!
- 12:16 The spiritual will give place to the profane.
 Thus, some may become like Esau, who for only one meal sold his birthright!
- 12:17 Remember, from there, there is no road back!
 Later, when Esau wanted his inheritance blessing, he was refused. He learned that there was no recourse, though he sought it with tears!
- 12:18 We must be sober about such things.
 We are not dealing only with the types surrounding the three days prior to the giving of the Law Covenant!
 We are not facing merely a typical display of fire, darkness, gloom, and wind.
- 12:19 Israel heard a trumpet and a voice which so frightened them that they begged to be exempted from the direct contact with it all.
- 12:20 They could not comprehend such peculiar requirements like the stoning of beasts to death if they even approached the holy mountain.
- 12:21 Even Moses was so troubled by the sight that he admitted his own fear and trembling.
- 12:22 We have come, instead, to the magnificent reality and to understanding.
 We have come to the antitypical “three days” prior to the giving of the New Covenant.
 We see the prospective Kingdom of God (Mount Zion); we see its new government (the “city” designed by the Living God); we know its name (Jerusalem, City of Peace) and its governing location (in heaven itself)!

We see the day when myriads of angels will rejoice in one festive assembly.

- 12:23 We see those, the CALLED OUT FIRSTBORN, enrolled in heaven as the new governors.
We are privileged to understand something of God, the final judge of all; and we see also (as we have just reviewed) the exemplary lives of those justified ancients, soon to be made perfect princes in all the earth.
- 12:24 We have come, not to Moses, but to Jesus, Mediator of the New Covenant; and we see the sin-offering blood which will ratify that Covenant. This blood speaks of RECONCILIATION—so much better than the vengeance for which Abel’s blood called!
- 12:25 Understanding all of this, we must see to it that we do not refuse anything from Him Who is now speaking.
When part of Israel refused to hear Him, the earth swallowed them up!
Can we think that now, if we refuse Him Who has been speaking to us spiritually, we can fare better?
- 12:26 Haggai 2:5-9 compares the Sinai shaking with the pre-Kingdom shaking, saying:

I will again shake things--
not only earthly things,
but religious things also.
- 12:27 When Haggai wrote “again,” he was not speaking of the mere tremblings such as were seen at Sinai, but he was speaking of all things of man’s devising—all of which are shakable and temporary. When God finishes this shaking, only His permanent things will remain.
- 12:28 What is the conclusion? It is this:
We are (if faithful and disciplined) to be heirs of a permanent, unshakable Kingdom.
By our willing sanctification we will demonstrate gratitude for this hope, and we will be able to maintain our acceptable, sacrificial service to Him with an appropriate attitude of reverence and awe.
- 12:29 Never forget that God will consume all dross and obliterate all contrary to His purposes.

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As I close this epistle, let me enumerate some thoughts for you regarding the practical application of all I have written.

- 13:1 Allow love of the brethren to be a perpetual standard.
- 13:2 Also perpetual should be your attitude and practice of hospitality—even to strangers.
Some have learned that God has used strangers as messengers.
- 13:3 Keep in mind those of the body who are, by one or another circumstance, restrained in their service.
Pretend you have the same restraints.
This will help you to know how to be helpful to them.
Likewise with those who are experiencing ill-treatment.
After all, since you also are in the body, you, too, can expect similar treatment!
- 13:4 Know God’s moral requirements!
He will judge those who defile morality.
Yet also know that avenues for human desires which have met God’s approval (such as marriage) are honorable—even though the same behaviors outside of God’s parameters are not!
- 13:5 Be certain that your character contains no greed for money (which, inevitably, affects your relationship with others).
To the contrary, develop that part of your character which reflects contentment, satisfaction, and gratitude for what you have received.
After all, God has promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8)
- 13:6 We, with Psalm 118:6, can, therefore exclaim,
“The Lord is my helper;
I will have no fear!
What can man do to me?”
- 13:7 There is something which your minds must never forget:
Those who have led you into and along the path of God’s Word of truth.
God uses such men to teach the Church and expects us to ponder their faith-lives, and to imitate them.
- 13:8 Jesus is their standard, and his unchangeableness is reflected in their generation, ours, and all faithful ones to come.

- 13:9 Therefore, do not seek novelty, only to be swept away by colorful but inconsistent and alien teachings. Some, thus, have occupied their concerns with such things as foods and fruitless rules about temporal matters. What is good, rather, is to have the spirit of grace strengthen our hearts!
- 13:10 Let us, rather, be focused on food for the heart: You know that the Atonement Day priests were not permitted to eat the sacrifices (thus showing that their typical services excluded them from participation in the antitype). However, we can eat of Jesus' sacrifice (thus showing that we are benefiting as participants).
- 13:11 Thus, also, as the type showed that the bodies of the sacrificed animals had to be destroyed outside the camp so that their blood could be offered for sin,
- 13:12 in the same way (in the antitype) we see that
- (a) Jesus offered his humanity (and was considered an outcast from society) so that his blood could sanctify us, his people, so that we (having "eaten" of his merit) also can sacrifice;
 - (b) and, thus, we, following him, also can live as outcasts in order that our lives (blood) can become part of the offering.
- 13:13
- 13:14 Thus this life is not a thing of permanent import for us; we are awaiting the permanence of the government that will result from the sacrifice.
- 13:15 Since, then, we are the body of the great antitypical priest, let us, on a continual basis, offer up antitypical sacrifices of sweet savor such as praise. Thus the fruitage of our lips will confess thankfulness to His name.
- 13:16 And, further, let us give sacrifice which pleases God in the form of doing good and sharing.
- 13:17 For the profitableness of your ecclesia experience, acknowledge, respect, and conform to the ecclesia arrangement. Cooperate with and be submissive to the efforts of your leaders to watch over the progress of your New Creatures. It is your leaders who will have to give account for their intentions and efforts on your behalf.

Help them so that this will be a joyful experience for them and for you.

Do not add grief to their sincere efforts; it can only result in your own loss.

EPILOGUE

- 13:18 Brethren, pray for us.
Our conscience is good, but we want also to conduct ourselves to be an honorable witness in all things.
- 13:19 Thus I urge your prayers all the more so that as soon as the Lord sees our witness here completed, I might be restored to you .
- 13:20 Now, may the God of Peace Who brought up from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord, Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant,
- 13:21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ—to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 13:22 Brethren, I urge you, in harmony with my benediction, to listen to the words of my exhortation in this epistle even though it is brief. While I could have elaborated much, my brevity does not indicate lack of import.
- 13:23 You will want to know that our brother, Timothy, has been released and, if he comes soon, I shall see you with him.
- 13:24 Greet the elders and all the saints. The brethren here in Italy send their greetings to you also.
- 13:25 GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL.

