

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

LESSON ONE

by Milt Langston

A. Relate the setting when the book was written... describe the pomp and ceremony of an evening sacrifice in Jerusalem.

1. Consider the Jewish Xian living in Jerusalem who might chance to witness from afar this ceremony with all its prestige and ceremony.

2. Or Consider the Jew who might be looking into the teachings of Jesus Christ. What did he think? Look at what was in store for him if he dares become a Xian!

a. He will be persecuted...

b. His parents will hold a funeral service for him outside the city gates as they disown him...

3. Hebrews addresses both these problems...

B. Notice the Greek background: They had an influence upon the Jews and the thinking of this time.

1. Plato and other Greek philosophers had long taught that all known to man was a shadow, or a pattern, or copy of a real world. Truth existed and all man knows is a imperfect representation of the truth.

2. Hebrews seems to be saying to this thinking: "All your lives you've been trying to get from the shadows to the truth. That is exactly what Jesus Christ can enable you to do..."

C. Notice also the Hebrew background:

1. The Jews had a great fear and respect for God...

a. They would not even write down His name out of respect for Him....this is why Matthew calls the kingdom the "kingdom of heaven" and not the "kingdom of God" as Luke and Mark do.

b. God said to Moses: "Man shall not see me and live..."

1) After Jacob wrestled with God he said, "I have seen God face to face, and Yet my life was spared" (Gen. 32:30).

2) When Samson's father realized that he and his wife had entertained an angel of God they were terrified.

c. Only once a year did a high priest enter into God's presence, and then not without blood for atonement...he was not to linger there "Lest he put Israel to terror..."

2. The Jews viewed their relationship with God through a covenant...so Israel did have access to God, but only if she kept the law!

a. To sin sat up a barrier which stopped the way to God.

b. The sacrifice of atonement was meant to open the way to God through the barrier, but it's yearly observance became only a reminder of the barrier which existed blocking man's way to God.

D. Hebrews shows Jesus as the perfect priest with the perfect sacrifice.

1. To the Greeks He provides a way out of the shadows to get to the truth.

2. To the Jews Jesus is the perfect sacrifice and the perfect priest to give the Jew access to God's presence.

E. To whom was the epistle written?

1. They had been Christians long enough that they ought to be teachers now (5:12).

2. They had been Christians long enough to suffer persecution (10:32-34).

3. They were established enough to have elders (13:7,17).

F. Who wrote the book?

1. Paul?

2. Luke?

3. Apollos?

4. Barnabas...he is known as the "son of exhortation." This epistle calls itself "a word of exhortation" (13:22).

G. OUTLINE:

HEBREWS

I JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:-2:18).

A. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MAJESTY AS THE SON OF GOD (1:1-2:4).

1. HE IS GOD'S LAST WORD TO MAN (1:1-3).

2. HE IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (1:4-14).

3. FIRST WARNING: DRIFTING FROM GOD'S WORD (2:1-4). "The Peril of Neglect."

B. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MINISTRY AS THE SON OF MAN (2:5-18).

1. JESUS RECOVERED MAN'S LOST DESTINY (2:5-9).

2. MAN'S DESTINY IS RECOVERED BY CHRIST'S INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION (2:10-18).

II. JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. PREEMINENT TO THE MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

a. HE IS SUPERIOR TO MOSES (3:1-6).

b. WARNING #2: DOUBTING CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY AND POWER (3:7-4:13). "The Peril of

1) Unbelief."

2. SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (4:14-7:28).

a. HE IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST (4:14-5:10).

b. WARNING #3: BECOMING DULL TOWARDS THE WORD OF GOD (5:11-6:20). "The Peril of

1) Disobedience."

c. HE IS A ROYAL PRIEST LIKE MELCHIZEDEK (7:1-28).

B. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT] (8:1-13).

1. NEW COVENANT IS BETTER BECAUSE JESUS IS A BETTER PRIEST SERVING IN A BETTER PLACE (8:1-6).

2. NEW COVENANT IS BETTER WITH BETTER PROMISES (8:6-8).

3. NEW COVENANT IS BETTER BECAUSE IS IS DIFFERENT (8:9-12).

4. NEW COVENANT MAKES THE OLD OBSOLETE (8:13).

C. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SANCTUARY (9:1-28).

1. THE INFERIOR OLD COVENANT SANCTUARY (9:1-10).
2. THE SUPERIOR HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (9:11-28).

D. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SACRIFICE (10:1-18).

1. HE IS THE ONLY TRUE SACRIFICE FOR SINS (10:1-10).
2. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:11-18).

III. JESUS PROVIDES A SUPERIOR PATH (10:19-13:25).

A. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

1. THE EXHORTATION TO CONFIDENCE OF FAITH (10:19-25).
2. WARNING #4: DESPISING THE WORD THAT CREATES FAITH (10:26-31). "The Peril of
 - a. Rejection."
3. THE APPEAL TO CONFIDENCE OF FAITH (10:32-39).

B. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

1. THREE WORDS WHICH HELP EXPLAIN FAITH (11:1-2).
 - a. FAITH IS SUBSTANCE TO A BELIEVER.
 - b. FAITH IS EVIDENCE.
 - c. FAITH IS A WITNESS FROM GOD.

2. FAITH IS SEEING WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN (11:3).

C. EXAMPLES OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

1. SAVING FAITH IN THE PRE-DELUVIAN AGE (11:4-7).

- a. **ABLE...WORSHIPPING BY FAITH (11:4).**
- b. **ENOCH...WALKING BY FAITH (11:5-6).**
- c. **NOAH...WORKING BY FAITH (11:7).**

2. SAVING FAITH IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE (11:8-22).

- a. **ABRAHAM...WAITING BY FAITH (11:8-10).**
- b. **ABRAHAM...ENABLED BY FAITH (11:11-12).**
- c. **THE PATRIARCHS...SEEING BY FAITH (11:13-16).**
- d. **ABRAHAM...FAITH TESTED (11:17-19).**
- e. **ISAAC...BLESSING BY FAITH (11:20).**
- f. **JACOB...FAITH TO THE FINISH (11:21).**
- g. **JOSEPH...CONFIDENCE OF FAITH (11:22).**

3. SAVING FAITH IN THE PATRIOTIC AGE (11:23-31).

- a. **MOSES...WAGING WAR BY FAITH (11:23-29).**
- b. **JOSHUA & RAHAB...WINNING BY FAITH (11:30-31).**

4. SAVING FAITH BY VARIOUS HEROS (11:32-40).

D. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).

- 1. **THE ORIGINATOR OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-4).**
- 2. **THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD IN SAVING FAITH (12:5-13).**

E. MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21).

- 1. WARNING #5: DEFYING THE WORD NULIFYING SAVING FAITH (12:14-29). "The Peril of**
 - a. Refusal."**
- 2. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN LOVING CHURCHES (13:1).**
- 3. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN HOSPITALITY (13:2-3).**
- 4. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN PURE MARRIAGES (13:4).**
- 5. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CONTENTED CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S POWER (13:5-8).**
- 6. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A SACRIFICIAL SPIRIT (13:9-16).**
- 7. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN AN OBEDIENT MENTALITY (13:17-19).**
- 8. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN GLORY PRODUCED FOR GOD (13:20-21).**

F. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS (13:22-25).

HEBREWS

GOD HAS SPOKEN THROUGH HIS SON

(1:1-4)

LESSON TWO

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

A. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MAJESTY AS THE SON OF GOD (1:1-2:4).

- What are some restaurants, vacation spots, books, movies, or other areas of interest that you consider the best of their kind?

- What situations might tempt a Christian to turn his or her back on Christ?

1. HE IS GOD'S LAST WORD TO MAN (1:1-4). THE SON IS LIKE THE FATHER.

A missionary to Africa years ago was setting and writing a letter. A small native boy sat watching him. He didn't know about writing or reading, and asked the missionary what he was doing. The missionary replied, "I am writing..." Realizing that the little boy did not understand he said, "I'm committing my thoughts to paper." The little boy said, "Oh, you mean you are placing your thoughts in prison?" "No," the missionary said, "I'm setting them free."

a. JESUS EXPOUNDS THE MIND OF GOD (READ 1:1-2A).

- How did God speak to people in the past?

(1:1)_____

- What was God's means for speaking to mankind in "these last days"?

(1:2)_____

God had spoken through prophets in the past like Jonah, Jeremiah, David, Daniel and even Moses. But there remained so much to be said. Communicating is such a tricky thing. The Prophets of old did not understand all that was being said (**READ 1 PETER 1:10-12**). Jesus was able to speak with authority (Matt. 7:28-29). He also spoke with perfect understanding.

- Is Jesus a prophet?

- What is the danger of viewing Him as only a spokesman?

- What do you know about the "antichrist"? How would you describe an "antichrist" type person today? _____

- How is Jesus superior to the prophets?

b. JESUS EXECUTES THE WILL OF GOD (READ 1:2b-3).

- What unique honors or activities did God the Father delegate to Jesus? (1:2) _____

- What works did Jesus do that only God could do? (1:2-3, 10) _____

In the person of Jesus, God found a perfect vehicle of expression. He translated Deity into humanity. John says it this way: "The Word became flesh..." Let's not run over these first three verses too quickly. Dayton Keesee calls these three verses the **PREPARATORY PROPOSITION!** That's his way of saying these three verses are the thesis to the whole book. Notice what has been said about Jesus:

- a. He is the Divine Son, "appointee heir of all things."
- b. He is the Divine Builder, "through whom He made the universe."
- c. He is the Divine Glory, "the radiance of God's glory."
- d. He is the Divine Personality, "the exact representation of His being."
- e. He is the Divine Power, "sustaining all things by his powerful word."
- f. He is the Divine Savior, "provided purification for sins."
- g. He is the Divine Authority, "sat..at the right hand of the Majesty."

Isaiah, Moses, John and others have seen glimpses of God heavenly glory. Jesus made it known so that you and I could see and recognize it if we really want to! There are more who will never see it than those who will recognize it. We like to think of the lightening and thunder of His majesty, yet when Jesus revealed it to us, he revealed it as trust and faith. He is the radiance of God's Glory explained to us through faith in God's power. He is God's power demonstrated by faith. He is God's savior demonstrated by submission to God's will. Jesus was heir of all things and maker of all things, yet he did not own a thing upon this earth. He was buried in a borrowed tomb, yet he demonstrated to us the glory and essence of God in a way we can understand it. With enough power in himself to say, "Light be!" which would cause light to become created at His beck and call; Jesus existed upon the earth in human form. Jesus was everything you and I could be if we would not sin. If you and I were as submitted to the will of God as Jesus was, the power of God would rest upon us. Now because Jesus executes the perfect will of God, He has made Himself available to you and I to bring us to the perfect will of the Father.

b. **HE EXPRESSES THE HEART OF GOD (READ 1:3).**

- What does Jesus show us about the nature of God?
(1:3) _____

- What astonishing feat is attributed to the Word of Christ?
(1:3) _____

- What was Jesus' primary ministry on earth?
(1:3) _____

Jesus is the representation of God's Person, Power and Glory, and He is the destroyer of man's sins! Notice the contrast. Everything we are not but were created to be Christ is, but He is also the redeemer of man. He expresses the heart of God. He is not only the creator, but He is also the Redeemer of what was very good.

God has stated that our own righteousness are, in His sight, as filthy rags, so what must our sins be to Him? But the Lord Jesus has made purification for our sins by dying on a cross.

Some people would like to keep Jesus a little baby in the arms of Mary or in a manger. Others would like to keep Him as a helpless sufferer on a crucifix. God never does. God sits Him down in Glory at the right hand of Majesty. There is a childhood to be lived. There is a cross to bear, but God's hearts desire for you and for me is that we too sit down in Glory in heaven.

Notice God's expression of the Sonship of Christ to us as revealed in Hebrews 1:1-3: He reveals God to us, as the One who has created the entire fabric of the material universe and is its rightful Heir, and is the One who not only died for us but who is now enthroned in heaven.

C. LOOK AGAIN AT 1:1-4 (READ 1:1-4). EIGHT CLAIMS CONCERNING THE SON:

- He is heir of all things (1:2b)—“whom he appointed heir of all things.”
- He is creator of all things (1:2c)—“through whom also he created the world.”
- He is the effulgence of God's glory (1:3a)—“He is the radiance of God's glory.”
- He is the image of God's substance (1:3b)—“and the exact imprint of His nature.”
- He upholds all things by His powerful word (1:3c)—“he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”
- He made purification for sins (1:3d)—“After making purification for sins.”
- He sat down on the throne of God (1:3e)—“He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
- He inherited a name more excellent than the angels (1:4)—“having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”

HEBREWS

HE IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

(1:5-2:4)

LESSON THREE

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

A. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MAJESTY AS THE SON OF GOD (1:1-2:4).

1. He is God's Last Word to Man (1:1-4).
2. He is Superior to Angels (1:4-14).

2. JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (1:4-14).

a. HIS EXCELLENT NAME (READ 1:4-5).

- Who is Jesus? (1:2-4) _____
- What does Christ's exalted status in heaven say about His similarity to angels? (1:4) _____

Only Jesus has been given the name, SON OF GOD. We only know the names of two maybe three angels: Michael, Gabriel and "Palmoni" if we go to the Hebrew in Dan. 8:13. Michael means "Who is like God?" Gabriel means "man of God." Michael is mighty as God's commander in chief, but Jesus is almighty as God's only Son. Gabriel was mighty as God's messenger to man concerning the birth of Jesus, but Jesus is the message, the word, the Son of God! Jesus is not as an angel of God. He is God! In the flesh He is God's Son!

- How is Jesus distinguished from God? (1:5) _____

b. HIS EARTHLY FAME (READ 1:6-7).

- What is the relationship of Jesus and the angels?
(1:6)_____

- To what extent do the angels honor the Son?
(1:6)_____

The Hebrew writer quotes Deut 32:43 and Ps. 104:4. There is some debate as to where the "again" belongs in the Deut. quote. It could refer to when Jesus was born, or it could refer to when He comes again depending on where the "again" goes, but regardless...angels praise God, and Jesus is superior to angels! He is praised by man and by angels!

- What are angels like?
(1:7)_____

c. **HIS ETERNAL CLAIM** (READ 1:8-14).

- What name or title applies to Jesus, the Son?
(1:8)_____

In vs. 8-9 which is a quote of Ps. 45:6-7 God states that Jesus is an eternal King. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew writer shows this messianic prophecy to be fulfilled. So much for Jesus ruling later on for a thousand years. This states that Jesus is king right now! What angel rules as King?

- What is Jesus' nature? (1:10-12)_____

In vs. 10-12 which is a quote of Ps. 102:25-27 God declares Jesus to be the eternal creator of the heavens and earth. They will pass away, but the creator will not be moved! What angel has created the earth?

- What will happen to the enemies of Christ?
(1:12)_____

In vs. 13 which is a quote of Ps. 110:1 God declares that Jesus shall rule! What angel rules?

- What do angels do?
(1:14)_____

Finally that it has been firmly established that Jesus' place is far above angels, their place is summarized: They are ministering servants ministering to those who will be saved. They are servants of salvation like we are. Jesus is the savior! Jesus is therefore superior!

GET IT

- What difference does it make to you that Jesus is "heir of all things" and that the Father made the universe through Him?

 - What are some ways we can honor Christ?

 - What steps can you take to remind yourself that Jesus is the Son of God and worth following?
3. **FIRST WARNING: DRIFTING AWAY FROM GOD'S WORD (READ 2:1-4). MAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD AND THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS WORD!**

QUESTIONS:

- In school, in what class was it hardest to pay attention?

- When your parents leave you alone, who are you "subject to"?

- What are some warnings you are glad you heeded?

- What are some warnings you wish you had heeded?

One of man's basic problems is his tendency for majoring in minors or passing by the preeminent for the insignificant. This section addresses this problem. The section begins with a "therefore" which means that based upon what has just been established this is the conclusion. It has just been proved that Jesus is God's powerful, glorious, wonderful Son who is superior to angels. Since Jesus is God's unique Son, it is imperative

that we accept, at its full face value, the salvation He has procured for us or in this case the gospel concerning it.

Why does a person drift from the word of salvation? Only because he has not accepted that salvation as the truth. This section is a warning against passing up salvation for something inferior. As Jesus said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?"

a. **WE MUST APPROPRIATE THE GOSPEL (READ 2:1-3a).**

We must appropriate the Gospel by paying good heed to it. It is possible to "drift away" from the truth. The word for "drift away" means to float passively past, a picture of indolence and criminal neglect. Just look at the enormous privileges which have been set forth already. Jesus is everything we are not as God's Son in the flesh, yet He extends to us salvation from what we are and help to become what He is. To do nothing about these new privileges in Christ, to float indolently past them, is to incur God's wrath. This section is a warning!

If I were to tell you that every door in Jal was booby-trapped with bombs which would kill you, but that I could teach you how to disarm the bombs, how would you listen to my instruction? If you were learning how to be a bomb defuser, how would you listen to instruction? When our lives depend upon it indolence and carelessness would be the height of folly.

- What did the writer of Hebrews want his readers to pay attention to?
(2:1)_____

- What danger awaits Christians who carelessly forget the truth?
(2:1)_____

We are here talking about matters of far greater significance than just life and death. We are talking about eternal life in either heaven or hell. We deserve hell, but listen careful, Jesus can give you eternal life in glory.

The Jews listened carefully to the law of Moses. If you read your Bible carefully you will find that the death penalty could be given for violation of each and every one of the ten commandments. You could even receive the death penalty for numerous other offenses like profaning God's altar or the tabernacle vessels, or for uttering false prophecy, for witchcraft, for bestiality, for incest, for homosexuality, or for just rebelling against constituted authority. The Jews knew well that God's judgment against their past sins had always come... If God punished men who drifted from the law with such severe punishments, what do you suppose He will do to us if we drift away from the gospel?

- What happened to those who violated the "message spoken by angels" (that is, the Mosaic Law)?
(2:2)_____

-
- Who played a major role in delivering the Mosaic Law?
(2:2)_____

- What does it mean to drift away?
-

We have become tolerant of unfaithfulness in the church....is that a sign of our overall drifting? If the Jews were held accountable for unfaithfulness to that which was only a shadow of salvation, will God not hold us accountable for allowing drifting today from the salvation to which the law was pointing. How can we expect to escape if we neglect the fully lighted salvation brought to earth by God's Son.

- In verse 1 we read, "pay more careful attention....to," and in verse 3 we are told not to "ignore."
What is it

that we are to focus our lives on?_____

- Is this the focus of your life? If not, what is?
 - What is the answer to the rhetorical question in verse 3?
-

We must accept the salvation of Jesus. We must accept it by being loyal to Jesus and His church where it dwells. To neglect salvation is to neglect the church which is the body of Christ.

b. WE MUST APPRECIATE THE GOSPEL (READ 2:3b-4).

- Who revealed the message of "great salvation" to the world? How?
(2:3)_____

Salvation was revealed by Jesus. He brought it to fruition from what the Old Testament taught. It was Jesus who gave us the heart of the law. He fulfilled the requirements and showed us how to become righteous through faith in His work.

- Who confirmed the salvation that Jesus announced? How? (2:3-4)_____

This salvation was confirmed by the witness of the first disciples of Jesus. **READ 1 JOHN 1:1-2.** For three and one-half years these disciples ate and drank with Jesus. They walked and talked with Jesus.

- What did God do to validate the gospel message? (2:4)_____

This salvation was also confirmed by God Himself "by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

So the Hebrew writer brings the Hebrews to a crossroads of faith...Because of who Jesus is and what He has done, and because of the truths embodied in Himself, there is no escape for those who neglect salvation through Him.

QUESTIONS:

- What leads people to start drifting?
 - a. Not looking at God's word.
 - b. Self-sufficiency
 - c. Trusting in others instead of God.
 - d. Putting other things first.
 - e. Evil companionship.
 - f. Faction between brothers.
- What is the key to solving all these areas of difficulty? "Pay more careful attention..."

GET IT

- Why do you think the Hebrew Christians were in greater danger if they ignored "such a great salvation" than those who violated Old Testament law?
- How do we as modern Christians fail to pay careful attention to what God tells us?
- How can we help ourselves pay closer attention to God's Word?
- What are some ways you can nurture your attention span toward God this week?

HEBREWS

HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MINISTRY AS THE SON OF MAN

(2:5-18)

LESSON FOUR

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

A. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MAJESTY AS THE SON OF GOD (1:1-2:4).

B. HE IS SUPERIOR IN HIS MINISTRY AS THE SON OF MAN (2:5-18).

"To read it is to breathe the atmosphere of heaven itself. To study it is to partake of strong spiritual meat. To abide in its teachings is to be led from immaturity to maturity in the knowledge of Christian truth and of Christ Himself. It is to `go on unto perfection.'"[1]

The Epistle to the Hebrews reigns unchallenged as the best New Testament commentary on the Old Testament and its relationship to Jesus Christ. It makes clear that the sacrifices and other priestly activities were but shadows pointing forward to Christ, the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, the true Priest, the one mediator between God and man. Indeed, Hebrews may be considered a grand portrait of Christ with the Old Testament as its background.

- What is the most helpful act a brother or sister has ever done for you?

The term "son of man" as used by the Jews has come to mean Jesus Christ to us today. But to the Jews the term "the son of man" meant that the person so addressed was well and truly a man. The book of Ezekiel uses the term to refer to Ezekiel himself, but also to the Christ. A son of man was the offspring of man. When it refers to Jesus it emphasizes His humanity. As a man the Lord Jesus, in His sovereignty, His sufferings, and His sympathy, meets all the needs of mankind. In chapter one Jesus has been seen as God completely and totally. Here He is described as a man and related to all mankind. Much will be made of this later in the book, but for now we are instructed that for all Jesus' superiority, he is still very near to us. He is approachable, and He is the kind of savior we need.

Angels were most important in the Jewish religion, primarily because thousands of angels assisted in the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. This fact is stated in Deuteronomy 33:2 (where "saints" in KJV means "holy ones" or "angels"); Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53; and Galatians 3:19. Since the theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ and His salvation to the Law of Moses, the writer would have to deal with the important subject of angels.

This long section on angels is divided into three sections. First, there is an affirmation (Heb. 1:4-14) of the superiority of Christ to the angels. The proof presented consists of seven quotations from the Old Testament. Second, there is an exhortation (Heb. 2:1-4) that the readers (and this includes us) pay earnest heed to the Word God has given through His Son. Finally, there is an explanation (Heb. 2:5-18) as to how Christ, with a human body, could still be superior to angels who are spirits.

...Warren

Wiersbe

1. **JESUS RECOVERED MANKIND'S LOST DESTINY (2:5-9).**

A. **SOVEREIGNTY WAS BESTOWED UPON MANKIND (READ 2:5-8B). MAN—MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS!**

In these verses God shows us the ideal of what man was intended to be. Man was made in God's image. Man was created a little less than the angels. There was a sovereignty given man. Angels must one day yield before man because it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, but to man.

So man's destiny eclipses that of angels. Angels are ministering servants sent to serve those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). Man will inherit. Paul states that man (in this case Christians) will judge both the world and angels (**READ 1 COR. 6:2-3**). The existing world is under the control of angels. Revelation shows them working to dispatch the enemies of the early church doing "things which will shortly come to pass." Throughout the Bible they have been seen time to time working out the rule of God. Angels destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah. An angel destroyed the Assyrians who surrounded Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day. The kingdom of heaven which will one day be handed by Jesus up to God will be served by men. Have you ever thought of that?

Man's dignity is no less than his destiny. The "man" and the "son of man" in verse 6 are one and the same. The quote is from Psalm 8:4-6. Man was created for glory. Sin has interrupted God's original intentions for the human race, but it has by no means thwarted them as we will learn.

God dignified man by placing him between the world of angels and the world of the beasts. He is higher than the beasts but a little lower than the angels. God has given man a dominion over everything. Sin has cursed this dominion, but there is a hint of restored dominion through the man Jesus to a position of glory in a higher realm (**READ AGAIN v.8a & b**).

- What is our God-given place on earth? (2:6-8) _____
- What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the rest of the universe? (2:8) _____

b. **MANKIND LOST HIS SOVEREIGNTY BECAUSE OF REBELLION (READ v.8c).**

Having reviewed the sovereignty bestowed on man by God, the writer of Hebrews now brings us back to reality. Having shown us the ideal he now gives us the actual state of man. Because of sin man has entered into defeat instead of mastery. Man has made a mess of the world God gave him. We infest ourselves with diseases like A.I.D.S. We make deserts where forests once grew. We spew crude oil all over the creation over which God gave us dominion, but our greatest failure is our failure to control self. We talk about peace, but wars continue. Reality must soak in. Every generation starts out with such great expectations and dies defeated and worn with the majority rejecting the perfection which can only be found in Jesus Christ! Brethren, let's be the exception, and let's do P.R. for Jesus who can restore what man has lost.

c. **Mankind's sovereignty bestowed by God is revived in Christ as the Son of Man (READ 2:9-10). Jesus—made a little lower than the angels.**

- To prove that Jesus is too great and too valuable to neglect, the writer tells us more about Him (vs.5-9). What major

facts does he cite here?

- What is Christ's present heavenly status?
(2:9)_____
- What actions by Christ led to His current exalted position at the right hand of God?
(2:9)_____
- What was unique about the death that Christ suffered?
(2:9)_____

Reality tells us that all is lost and being even further destroyed, but "we see Jesus!" God has made glory easy to be seen again by placing it in Jesus Christ! He has been made a little lower than the angels in a position which to Him is not natural. He stepped down from equality with God (Phil. 2:5ff). What a position Jesus took! He stepped off the throne of the universe to be placed in the womb of a young virgin. If the universe is filled with awe at the position He took, what can be said of the purpose for which He took the position? He came to die. We all shrink from death's dark prospect. So did Jesus in Gethsemane, but He suffered it for the opposite reason. He came to reveal the glory of God intended for man to all who will see Him. He reveals:

THE DIVINE PLANNER: "by the grace of God"

THE DIVINE PLAN: "because He suffered death"

THE DIVINE PRIVILEGE: "now crowned with glory and honor"

THE DIVINE PRICE: "He might taste death for everyone"

Now passages like Romans 5:12-21 come to life. Death came to man through the man Adam. Life comes through the man Jesus. The dominion Adam so recklessly threw away has been picked up by the Man, Jesus Christ.

We can better understand other passages like Ephesians 1:22-23. Jesus, who had all this honor inherit as God, has now purchased the honor afresh as a Man for mankind to all who will believe in Him or His body, the church.

- a. Jesus has become for man what man was destined to be!
- b. God has predestined that every Christian become like Jesus (Rom. 8:28-31).
- c. From this can you see what the work of a Christian is to be?

The glory Jesus has restored to man is a glory which cannot be hemmed into a single garden, or a single world. It is not to be confined to a 1000 year rule upon the earth. It is an eternal glory which will extend into heaven itself!

Brethren, the world is very blind to all this. The glory of God which Christ revealed is recognized only by faith—that comes to us from studying books like Hebrews. I am so blessed to be here tonight!

QUESTIONS:

- a. At what point might you be tempted to give up on faith in Jesus Christ?
 - 1) After a big disappointment?
 - 2) When you are away from fellowship?
 - 3) When things are not going your way?
 - 4) When people laugh at Christianity?
 - 5) Any others?
- b. How do the accomplishments and example of Jesus encourage you in times of great trial?

2. **Jesus has established a brotherhood of holiness based upon His (2:11-18). Mankind's destiny was recovered through Jesus' incarnation and His atonement!**

b. **JESUS IDENTIFIED WITH MEN BY SUFFERING AS A MAN (READ 2:10-13). HE IS OUR PIONEER!**

Jesus is the "author" or "captain" or "pioneer" of our salvation through suffering. The word "ARCHEGOS" is the word in Greek for "author." It literally means the chief or leader. It carries with it the idea of paving the way. Jesus paved the way of our salvation becoming the author or captain of salvation. ILLUSTRATION: A new wider bridge was built on a canal where I used to live as a child. We used to swim under the old bridge which was about 15 feet across. The new bridge was 35 or 40 feet across. Tony Taylor pioneered the way under this new bridge for the rest of we children by swimming under it first. In the same way Jesus pioneered our salvation by suffering, dying, being buried, and finally rising to glory in a way which we can follow. It is a way of faith, and we can believe because Jesus provided the righteousness!

Look how this can become encouragement to the lost sinner. He can believe, and has good reason to believe. The perfect Son of God has become our perfect Savior (v. 10), opening the way to God. In order to accomplish that, he must endure suffering and death. The path WE tread HE first had to tread as our leader to God. Only such a perfect Leader can be our adequate representative in God's presence.

Man suffers because of sin. Suffering is a result of sin. Jesus identified himself with man through suffering. Jesus also suffered because of sins. He suffered to purchase our salvation. By suffering he became like us sharing in our sufferings. Yet His suffering purchased salvation for us, and we can also share in His sufferings.

This shows He is not ashamed to be related to man. We can be related to Jesus. We have been allowed the privilege to be freed from our own sins, but there is a depth here which suggests that we also can share with Christ in suffering to free others from their own sins.

Through His suffering Jesus identified with man, and through Christian suffering He continues His work through us...the church.

- What is God's ultimate goal for us?
(2:10) _____
- What does Christ do to qualify a person for membership in the family of God?
(2:11) _____

- What is required from us to become a "brother" to Jesus?
(2:13)_____

b. JESUS OFFERED ATONEMENT AS A MAN TO SYMPATHIZE WITH MANKIND (2:14-18).

1) JESUS BECAME HUMAN TO DELIVER US FROM DEATH (READ 2:14-16).

Jesus identified with man by becoming a man and enduring suffering as a man. As such He sympathized with man's weaknesses. It is very hard to tell how sister Charlotte Cox feels if we do not have the same ailment she has. It is very hard to tell how it feels to be like brother David van Winkle unless we have walked in his shoes for a while. Jesus walked in our shoes and shared our problems by becoming like us.

Because He sympathizes Jesus can really help. He has met our sorrows; He has faced our temptations. As a result He knows exactly what help we need; and He can give it!

Jesus is the perfect example of what Paul was talking about (**Read 1 COR. 9:22**).

- Why did Jesus become flesh like us?

- What effect did His death in the flesh have on Satan and his power?
(2:14)_____

- What effect did the death of Christ have on those who were enslaved to the fear of death?
(2:15)_____

2) JESUS IS A HEAVENLY HELPER WITH AN EARTHLY INSIGHT SUPPLYING A DIVINE SOLUTION (READ 2:17-18).

Our Lord Jesus Christ has been made like us so that He can be to us all that we need. We need someone to intercede for us compassionately. He is merciful. Oh, that you and I can learn to become like Him for the world needs Jesus. We need someone to intercede for us continuously. Jesus is faithful. Jesus has been equipped to take all our needs into God's presence for us.

Moreover, Jesus understands our needs through experience "because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." A man who has been poor can understand the plight of the poor better than a person who has always been rich. Jesus has experienced temptation. He knows

what it is like. Therefore, He is able to "succor" those who are being tempted. Jesus knows what we need and He is prepared to give us exactly what we need. Praise God for Jesus!

- Why did we need someone with flesh and blood like us....not an angel....to die in our place? Verse 17 tells us why God

required it: _____

- What makes Christ especially qualified to help Christians when they are being tempted? (2:18) _____

"Be sure your seatbelts are securely fastened," the airline captain warns you because of approaching turbulence. How can we help one another to be "securely fastened" to Jesus?

HEBREWS

THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS IS PREEMINENT TO THE MOSAIC ORDER

(3:1-19)

LESSON FIVE

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS PREEMINENT TO THE MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

✓ Who are (or were) some of the heroes of your generation?

For us today it has been almost 2,000 years since God tore apart the Temple veil signifying the end of an era which had lasted 1,500 years. Because of the lapse of time it is very difficult for us to imagine the difficulty of a Hebrew adjusting to the thought that God had brought an end to all his religious observances, associations, and concepts. It was hard for the Jew to realize that the law had been fulfilled and was no longer needed.

Next to Abraham, Moses was undoubtedly the man most greatly revered by the Jewish people. To go back to the Law meant to go back to Moses, and the recipients of this Letter to the Hebrews were sorely tempted to do just that. It was important that the writer convince his readers that Jesus Christ is greater than Moses, for the entire system of Jewish religion came through Moses. In this section, we learn that Jesus Christ is superior to Moses in at least three respects.

a. **CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY TO MOSES (3:1-6). (Moses and Jesus)**

Notice how chapter three begins. It begins with a "therefore" or a "wherefore" which means in view of what has just been said. The Hebrew writer calls his readers "holy" because he has said that they are sanctified (**READ 2:11a**). He calls them "brethren" because he has already stated it (**READ 2:11b-13**). He also describes those to whom he is writing as those "who share in the heavenly calling" which is described in chapter 2 as the loss of the fear of death (**READ 2:14-15**). When you come to think about it these are the marks of every Christian. We have been made holy, and we now possess a holy character in a holy kingdom. We are brethren with Jesus Christ Himself and with one another. This fellowship is not an optional thing...it is not a take or leave it type of thing...it is everything. If I am a child of God, as long as I am able to breath I will not be separated from the children of God. It is a holy thing! And we have a heavenly calling. Our life is invested in higher things than my feelings, my pride...all those base things associated with my earthly tabernacle. With a heavenly calling we are

becoming spiritual every day. We are becoming less and less carnal even though the flesh is passing away because we have a heavenly calling.

So the chapter begins bringing to our memory our sanctification, our holy fellowship with Christ and our eternal destiny in Him, but it also begins with an exhortation to "CONSIDER" Him. The N.I.V. reads, "fix your thoughts on Jesus" because "consider" comes from a Greek word "KATANOEEO" which means "...to observe, to understand... to consider attentively, to fix one's eyes or mind upon" (Thayer, p. 334). The Hebrew writer is saying, "Now listen to this!" or "Look carefully here!" at Jesus!

1) WE ARE TO CONTEMPLATE JESUS(READ 3:1-2).

We have been asked to consider the believer's titles, then, the Hebrew writer turns at once to the titles of Jesus. He is the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession." An apostle is one "sent forth." To the Jews Moses was God's "apostle" because God sent Him forth from the desert to represent God to the people. Aaron was made the first High Priest. The high priest represented the people to God. In Jesus we see a combination of both the functions of an apostle of God and a High Priest of man.

Christ's titles are unique, but so is His trust. He was faithful to the one who appointed Him." In this Jesus is like Moses which is the fulfillment of prophecy (READ ACTS 3:21-23 which is a quote of Deut. 18:18-19). Moses was reluctant at first to execute the task set upon him, but finally he agreed. With God's help he fulfilled his commission magnificently because he was willing. He became Israel's redeemer, revealer of divine truth, and their ruler. He was used by God to overthrow Egypt and to lay it in the dust of defeat. He brought Israel out of Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb, through the water of the Red Sea and finally brought her through the wilderness of unbelief to the promised land. The followers of Moses persecuted and killed these new Jewish Xians, but Moses was faithful, and so was Jesus...in a greater cause and at immeasurable greater cost. The Jews are being told here to get their eyes off of Moses and get them on Jesus instead. Moses' journey was just a shadow of Christ's greater journey.

✓ Who is Jesus? (3:1-

2)

✓ What does the word "Apostle" mean?

✓ Who sent Jesus to the world?

2) NOTICE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN JESUS AND MOSES (READ 3:3-6).

Jesus has been seen as superior to the prophets, superior to the angels, now superior to Moses. To us this sort of loses its meaning because we would put Moses with the prophets. The Jews did not. They thought that Moses was superior to the angels. In Num. 12:6ff it states that Moses was unlike any other prophet. He is said to be "faithful in all my house." The Jews took this to mean that Moses' was superior even to the ministering angels.

✓ **With one word describe in what way Moses and Jesus are similar? (3:2, 5-6)** _____

Moses was indeed faithful in God's house which refers to Israel's place in the kingdom. To the Jews it was the kingdom. Moses deserves glory for his service, and his name is mentioned some 700 times in the Bible. He was one of the cornerstones in God's plan to bring salvation to every man. He "testified of what would be said in the future." The word used for servant in verse 5 is not the usual word for "servant." It is not deacon or slave, but a word meaning "a ministering servant of great esteem."

✓ **Why is Jesus worthy of more honor than Moses? (3:3-6)** _____

✓ **What is this "house" made of, or of what does it consist?**

But Jesus is not only greater than the prophets, the angels, He is also greater than Moses. Moses is seen as "in" God's house, Jesus is seen as "over" it! He is greater than Moses in two ways here: 1) He is greater as the builder of the house, and 2) He is greater as the Son over the house!

JESUS IS GREATER THAN THE GREATEST! When Jesus asked His disciples who men said that He was, they answered that some thought He was Jeremiah, Elijah or one of the prophets. But that is not enough. Jesus is not just a great man, nor is He like great men. That is why He expected a better answer from His own disciples, and it is why He was pleased with Peter's confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus is greater than the greatest!

Moses was great, and his ministry was a great ministry. But Jesus is greater and His ministry is far greater. There is a wilderness of unbelief to cross, and there is a promised land to enter which is far greater than that which Moses led the Children of Israel into.

There is a great statement of glory and fact which ends this section: "And we are His house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast!" With these thoughts we turn to the next section...

QUESTIONS:

- a. If you were lost in the desert what would you do?
- b. If you were lost on a trip in your car what would you do?
- c. If you are usually early or late getting somewhere, why is it?
- d. How does this relate to Jesus?
- e. What is the significance of Jesus as "apostle and high priest?"
- f. How are Moses and Jesus similar? Can our study of the events of Moses' life help us understand better how to follow Jesus?
- g. How are Moses and Jesus different?

b. **WARNING AGAINST DOUBTING CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY AND POWER (3:7-4:13).**

This is the second warning found in the book of Hebrews. The first warning had to do with disregarding the salvation of God by drifting from the word of truth. Now this is a warning against doubting the power and sufficiency of Christ. It is a warning not to do as the Children of Israel did who rebelled against God in the wilderness through unbelief.

✓ **What does it mean to rebel?**

✓ **What are the pros and cons of procrastination? PRO: _____**
CON: _____

1) **DON'T HARDEN YOUR HEARTS—THIS IS A WARNING AGAINST UNBELIEF (PROCRASTINATION)—HEBREWS USES THE EXAMPLE OF THE DISASTER OF REBELLION OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS IN O.T. TIMES AS AN EXAMPLE (3:7-19).**

There is the danger here of these Hebrew Christians becoming only second-class Christians which the writer stressed in chapter 2:1-4. Now he develops this same theme by appealing to scripture. Notice that this warning comes directly from the Holy Spirit. It is God's warning!

A) **THE ISRAELITES' EXAMPLE OF UNFAITHFULNESS (READ 3:7-13) (NOW'S THE TIME TO LISTEN!)**

The writer draws an exact parallel between an historical incident and their present day experience. I believe we can draw the same parallel between their situation to our situation today.

We are reminded of the rebellion of the Children of Israel which provoked God in the wilderness. The Children had seen God pour out His plagues upon the land of Egypt, separating, as the judgments proceeded, between the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived, and the rest of Egypt. How could they doubt that God was with them and that His favor rested upon them? They witnessed the crowning judgment: the slaying of the firstborn in every Egyptian home. They saw God deliver them from the armies of Egypt and lead them to safety through the Red Sea. Then they saw Him destroy that army in the sea. Yet they complained and cried and rebelled against God. It's amazing isn't it? Because they provoked God, He punished them. Notice from our text:

✓ **How is Israel's period of wandering in the wilderness described in this passage?**
(3:8) _____

✓ **Why was God angry with the generation of Israelites who came out of Egyptian exile?**
(3:9) "They _____ and _____ me and for forty years saw what I did."

✓ **For forty years they saw what God did, and before that they saw how God took them out of Egypt, but did they**

trust God? (Yes or No) _____

b) THE EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS (READ 3:14-19) (GOD TELLS US TO HOLD ON TIGHT).

The offer God made the Children of Israel was the Promised Land. The promise God makes man today is a new Promised Land of eternal life in heaven.

i. TO OBTAIN THE BLESSINGS OF GOD TWO THINGS ARE NECESSARY.

i) TRUST IS NECESSARY.

We must believe that what God says is true. We must be willing to stake our lives on His promises. The Jews of old were not willing to take this chance. They wanted God's blessings, but they were not willing to trust God to keep them, so they rebelled against His instructions.

ii) OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY.

The Children of Israel would not do what God instructed. They let fear (which is a lack of trust) keep them from obedience. It is kind of like going to a doctor. The doctor can cure our ailments if and only if we trust him enough to follow his instructions.

The message to us is clear. God is the expert on life. He created us. If we are to really live, we must have enough faith to obey God and follow his instructions. Obedience will bring joy and excellence into our lives.

ii. THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE OFFER OF GOD HINTED HERE.

The exhortation repeated in verse 13— "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..." "...encourage one another daily as long as it is called today..." The limit of God's offer to us is the duration of our lives. We never know when the limit of our lives will be reached. Someone has said, "We should live each day as if it were a lifetime." Hell is populated with many who planned to heed God's offer of life, but not today. Their "tomorrow" did not come in time (**READ 2 COR. 6:1-2**).

iii. LOOK AT THESE "DO'S AND 'DON'TS":

- Do take heed.
- Don't have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God.
- Do encourage one another daily.
- Don't be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
- Do hold firmly to the confidence you had at first and thus continue to share in Christ.
- Don't harden your hearts and rebel against God as did the Israelites.
- Don't incur the displeasure and anger of God as did the Israelites who were not permitted to enter His rest because of unbelief.

QUESTIONS:

- a) What are some practical ways we can put verse 13 into practice?
- b) What might help you keep from becoming hardened?
- c) Can you share a time in your own life when you became rebellious spiritually?
- d) What or who brought you back?

e) Describe your own heart now: Is it soft? Hard? Cold? Warm? Why?

f) What according to verses 14-18 will be the outcome of our faithfulness?

g) Is the Christian family important in helping us remain true to God?

Does that shed new light on 1 John 4:20-21?

HEBREWS

THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS IS SUPERIOR WITH BETTER SALVATION

JESUS IS THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST

(4:1-16)

LESSON SIX

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS PREEMINENT TO MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

a. JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO MOSES (3:1-6).

b. WARNING #2: DOUBTING CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY AND POWER (3:7-4:16) "THE PERIL OF UNBELIEF."

1) **DON'T FALL SHORT OF ENTERING YOUR REST**...THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH WHICH PRODUCES EFFORT TO AVOID THE DANGER OF REBELLION BY UNBELIEF TODAY (4:1-11).

READ 4:1-11. Brother Dayton Keesee calls this section: "THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S REST!" The jest is that the Children failed to enter into God's rest because of rebellion, nor did Moses, Caleb or Joshua enter into it. David did not enter into it, but through Jesus Christ we can enter into that rest if we do not miss it by not making the proper effort (**READ v.11 AGAIN**).

✓ How do we know that not everyone will experience God's rest (that is, His salvation)? (4:1-2) _____

✓ Why didn't the Israelites of the Exodus enter God's rest? (4:2) _____

✓ What should we learn from the Israelites' negative example? (4:11) _____

✓ **If the Children of Israel did not enter into God's rest because of unbelief, and because their negative example to us is disobedience; we can conclude that faith in God's word will result in _____!**

This section of scripture is very difficult to understand. One reason is that the writer refers to God's "rest" as meaning at least three different things: (1) It can refer to the "peace of God" which is a cessation of hostilities between man and God because of the removal of sins by Christ's sacrifice. (2) It surely refers to the "Promised Land" as it does in chapter 3:11-19. (3) It also refers to God's rest from creation. A rest He wanted to share with the Children of Israel but they failed to enter into it because of their rebellion, and a rest He is willing to share with us through Christ.

The Jewish rabbis had long held that God's Sabbath-rest was a never ending rest. They observed in Genesis chapters 1 & 2 that at the end of each day of the creation, the Bible records a beginning and an end to each of the six days. But for the Sabbath day there is no such qualification. Therefore, the Jewish rabbis concluded that God's Sabbath rest was a continual and eternal rest. The Hebrew writer elaborates upon this concept.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) After you have been to church on Sunday, what is your favorite way to spend a restful afternoon?
- 2) From what you have read and learned so far, how would you describe to an unbeliever "God's rest"?
- 3) It is obvious that hearing the word is not enough, but what is the proper response of faith to the warning found in verses 1 & 11?

2) **THE IMPORTANCE AND TERROR OF THE WORD OF GOD (4:12-13).**

Remember that this is the concluding exhortation to heed this second warning. A warning not to harden our hearts to the word of God, and a warning not to fall short of God's rest (**READ 4:12-13**).

We must remember too that God created the world by the power of His word. Jesus is described by the apostle John as the incarnation of the word! There are several words used to describe the word. It is living (Greek, "zao" = to live, be among the living...to live and be strong" Thayer, p.269f). It is active (Greek, "energes" = "active...efficient, energetic,...adapted to accomplish a thing."). The word is penetrating described as a sharpened sword. It penetrates to the division of soul and spirit.

In Greek the "psyche", the "soul", is the life principle. All living things possess "psyche", it is physical life. In Greek the "pneuma", the "spirit", is that which is characteristic of man. It is by spirit that man thinks and

reasons and looks beyond the earth to God. It is as if the writer to the Hebrews were saying that the word of God tests a man's earthly life and his spiritual existence. He says that the word of God scrutinizes a man's "desires" (RSV) and "intentions." "Desire" ("enthumesis") is the "emotional" part of man, "intention" ("ennoia") is the "intellectual" part of man. It is as if he said: "Your emotional and intellectual life must alike be submitted to the scrutiny of God." (Wm. Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews, pages 39-40).

QUESTIONS:

- a) What efforts (from verse 11) can help us enter into God's rest? (see Matt. 11:28-30).
- b) What evidence can you give that the word of God is living and active in the church in San Angelo? In your own life?

Everything that we are and have done is exposed before God's eyes. We are indeed naked before Him, and we will be judged by His word (John 12:48-50). There is one interesting word used in verse 13. It is the Greek word "tetrachelismenos" which is translated in the N.I.V. as, "...laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." In the K.J.V. it is rendered "...opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." This Greek word is difficult to translate. Here are three ways the word was used:

a) It was a wrestler's word and was used for describing a wrestler seizing an opponent by the throat in such a way and to render him immovable. The point is that God and His word are one issue which no man can finally evade. We try. We deceive ourselves into thinking that we have covered our shame, but for all who are trying to hide from God in the end they will be forced to stand before God face to face.

b) It was also a word used for skinning animals leaving the animal hanging exposed without its hide for a covering. Men may judge us by our outward appearance, but God knows what we are like inside.

c) One of the most intriguing uses for this word was how it was used to describe how guilty men were brought publicly to judgment. Have you seen men arrested on T.V.? They try to hide their faces from the cameras by covering their heads with a coat or something. The Greek language used this word to describe a process whereby when a criminal was brought to justice a dagger was placed at his neck denying him from bowing his head in shame and exposing his shame to the gaze of all onlookers. There comes a day when every man and woman on earth will be forced to meet the gaze of our Creator, and we will not be allowed to avert our face in shame and dishonor. Kermit Eby writes in The God in You: "At some time or other, a man must stop running from himself and his God --possibly because there is just no other place to run to." That being true let's not harden our hearts or fall short of God rest by not expending the effort which faith demands!

3) **LOOK AT THREE “THEREFORE’S” LISTED IN CHAPTER FOUR...**

- a) Since God’s promise of entering His rest still stands, “Let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it!” In other words, “Be careful not to miss it!” (4:1-5).
- b) Because “formerly” those preached to did not enter into God’s rest because of disobedience; don’t harden your hearts but obey God and enter God’s rest (4:6-13). “Therefore strive to enter that rest” (v.11).
- c) Since we have a great high priest who has gone into heave, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold on to our faith which we profess (4:14-16).

2. **JESUS’ PRIESTHOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (4:14-7:28)**

In the New Testament the priesthood is centered in Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholic Church still does not understand His priesthood having "priests" who serve as mediators in each congregation. And to the Jews this was a drastic departure from what they had been accustomed. For that reason the writer is careful and detailed in his handling of this subject. Jesus is depicted as the perfect high priest in the book. His task is to bring the voice of God to man and to usher men into the presence of God. As this high priest he at the same time must perfectly know man and perfectly know God. Such is the claim this epistle makes for Jesus.

During His ministry upon the earth Jesus was more a prophet than priest. But toward the end of His ministry as He "set His face toward Jerusalem", He began His task as high priest. He offered Himself as sacrifice for our sins, and He entered heaven. He represented God to man upon the earth, and He now represents man to God in heaven where He serves as King of God's people.

When Israel fought against the Amalekites in the wilderness, Moses was on the mount while Joshua and the army were in the valley. As long as he made intercession for the people by lifting his hands to God, Joshua and his men prevailed. But because Moses was a mere man, his arms became heavy and he became tired. Aaron and Hur had to come to the aid of Moses. Indeed Moses was not up to the work of intercession...it wore on him. But we now have a priest in heaven whose arms never grow tired. He cannot tire or fail in upholding us in all our weakness before the throne of God. Jesus is indeed a real high priest!

A. **JESUS IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST (4:14-5:10).**

Jesus is declared to be perfect in at least three ways in this text. He is perfect in His identity with man, His selection by God and His submission (obedience through suffering). Jesus never served as an Aaronic priest. He did not even attempt to do so. He came to fulfill all the shadows of the old with a new reality.

His greatness is declared in verse 14, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." His greatness as man comes from his name "Jesus" or "Joshua" which means "savior." And His greatness as God comes from His name "The Son of God!" He is not just a high priest, but a "great" high priest. He did not "pass through" an earthly tabernacle, but He has "passed through" heaven itself of which the tabernacle is only a representation.

Notice that His greatness demands a confession from man. To the Jews this confession had a particular point...to confess Jesus as their great High Priest called for a sharp break with Judaism. Just as the same confession from us demands that we make a distinct break with the world from which we are attempting to escape through His leadership.

1) JESUS IS PERFECT IN HIS SYMPATHY WITH MANKIND (READ 4:14-16).

Jesus can identify with man, and man can identify with Jesus because He has felt the same depression we have felt. He has known the same temptations, and greater temptations than we have endured. Satan tempts us till we sin, then he lets up. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are yet He did not sin. Satan hit Jesus with a level of temptation which you and I have not yet reached because we cannot endure it. Jesus endured it all!

Opal Wilson came to me with the news that Lesotho had had a change of governments because she knew that I had been there. That night in prayer there were tears of concern and feeling for the Basotho...I cried. Why didn't Opal cry for Lesotho? Because she had not been there. Through Jesus, God can now sympathize with man because Jesus has been there!

Knowing this the Hebrew writer exhorts us to approach the throne of God's grace with confidence...not in self but in Christ's power as our high priest! When we come to God we will receive the mercy God has to offer and the grace He can give to help us in our time of need. How many times do we allow problems to keep us from the help we need?!? God give us more faith!

HEBREWS

JESUS IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST

(5:1-10)

LESSON SEVEN

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS PREEMINENT TO MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

2. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE LITURGICAL ORDER (4:14-7:28).

a. JESUS IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST (4:14-5:10).

1) JESUS IS PERFECT IN HIS SYMPATHY WITH MAN (4:14-16).

Read Hebrews 4:14-6. This will give us a bit of a review before joining back into our study of Jesus' perfection as our High Priest. Notice in verse 14 that Jesus "passed through" the heavens. Jews believed that there were varying levels of heaven. The apostle Paul stated that he has ascended into the third heaven. Look at Solomon's statement...**Read 1 Kings 8:27.** If there are layers of heaven Jesus in human form (after His resurrection) rose to the top level where he is seated at the Father's right hand. **Read Romans 8:34.**

It is important to note that Jesus has not ceased to be in human form when He ascended into heaven. He provides in His human body—the church—a vehicle into which you and I can enter to go where He has gone. According to 1 Corinthians 15 Jesus will exist in this form until the last enemy—death will be brought into subjection under His feet.

Read Hebrews 5:1-10. Here we will see that Jesus is...

- ...begotten of God
- ...a priest forever
- ...praying, beseeching, crying on our behalf
- ...the source of eternal salvation
- ...learned obedience through His suffering

...perfect (in human form) as our High Priest!

2) JESUS IS PERFECT THROUGH HIS SELECTION BY GOD (READ 5:1-4).

These verses give the general qualifications of a high priest. Later in verses 5-10 we'll see Jesus qualifications which supersede Aaron's

Aaron did not seek to become high priest. He and his family were chosen by God. Jesus too was chosen by God. He did not choose His task; God chose it for Him. At His baptism God said, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you" (Ps. 2:7). Like Aaron, Jesus accepted God's appointment. Unlike Aaron, Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek—a royal priest of God. Jesus was never intended to become a Levitical priest. He is a priest as Melchizedek is a priest. We will hear more on this in chapter 7.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR A HIGH PRIEST FOUND IN VERSES 1-4—

1. He must be taken from among men (v.1; cf. Numbers 8:6,14)
2. He must be a mediator of both worship (gifts) and atonement (sacrifices for sins)(v.1).
3. He must be appointed by God (v.1).
4. He is appointed for mankind (v.1).
5. He is appointed in things pertaining to God (in spiritual areas)(v.1).
6. He offers gifts (v.1).
7. He offers sacrifices for sins (v.1).
8. He must be able to bear gently with the ignorant and the erring (v.2).
9. He was himself encompassed with infirmities (v.2).
10. He is obligated to offer sacrifices for sin for himself and for the people (v.3).
11. He is not self-appointed (v.4).

These were the qualifications of a high priest. What priesthood are we talking about here? Aaron's of course. How long did Aaron's priesthood last? So you can see that the shortcomings of a human high priest was death resulting from sin. Jesus is going to destroy death through his resurrection from the dead providing God and mankind with a human high priest who will not be affected by death nor sin.

3) JESUS IS PERFECT BY HIS SUBMISSION AND SUFFERING (READ 5:5-10).

Here is Jesus' qualifications which are superior to Aaron's qualifications. Jesus was "made perfect", but He was already perfect. This indicates His service to and for us. He was "made perfect" for our sake so that we can have "eternal salvation" by obeying Him. Note that we are not going to be saved by our obedience, but by His. Someone had to earn this salvation. We cannot, so Jesus did...not for Himself, but for us! Our obedience is in response to His salvation. It is then proof of it.

A high priest had to identify with men and with God. In this Jesus was perfect. He identifies with God through his submission which led to His obedience which resulted in His suffering. He identified with God in sinless obedience, and He identified with man with His suffering. Because of sin man suffers. Because of sin Jesus suffered. The resultant sacrifice satisfies both God's and man's needs. God receives perfect obedience through Christ, and man receives the atonement of sins through the suffering of Jesus. There is absolutely no life outside of Christ. There is no joy outside of Christ. There is only impending doom outside of Jesus Christ and His body the church of Christ. No wonder we are to run with a warning to those who are in danger of losing their protection in Christ through dullness towards the word. And that is exactly what the Hebrew writer does beginning in verse 11.

JESUS' QUALIFICATIONS FROM HEBREWS 5:5-10—

1. He was begotten of God (v.5).
2. He is a priest forever (v.6).
3. He offered up prayers/supplications and was heard because of His godly fear (v.7 ASV).
4. He learned obedience by the things He suffered (v.8).
5. He is found perfect (v.9).
6. He is the source of eternal salvation (v.9).
7. He is named of God as a High Priest (v.10).

Jesus reveals the secret of His success for man, at the same time He reveals the spirit which every Christian must adopt. Upon the cross Jesus made a request to God as a High Priest for man... He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Our text states that "He was heard because of His reverent submission." God could have saved Him, but He submitted even to the death upon the cross. Jesus said, "...the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31). The world has learned it, and Jesus has been heard because of His submission. Salvation has been brought down! Now every Xian must adopt a spirit of submission in our obedience to Jesus. [READ MATT. 5:3-12.](#)

Salvation at one time was out of man's grasp because God's requirement was and still is sinless perfection. Jesus fulfilled that requirement, not for Himself, but for us. Now His request to forgive us has been granted because of righteousness, and His demands upon us as the recipients of this salvation is not sinless perfection in practice, but loving submission in spirit, and we can do that! Thanks to Jesus salvation is now within grasp not only to us, but to everyone who will call upon the name of Jesus as Lord.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) When you "blew it" as a youngster, to whom did you turn? Mom? Dad? Brother?
- 2) What is encouraging about Jesus' priesthood as seen in verses 14-15?
- 3) That should give us confidence to receive what from God (v.16)?
- 4) Verses 6 & 10 give two qualities that only Jesus has which make Him a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- 5) What are these? (He is eternal, He has been designated by God as such)
- 6) Why is it so hard for many people to trust the love of God? How could you explain the meaning of the priesthood of Jesus to such a person?
- 7) Have you ever contemplated turning away from Christ? If you have what made you contemplate this? At such times, of what advantage is it to you to remember Jesus as your high priest?

b. WARNINGS AGAINST BECOMING DULL TOWARDS GOD'S WORD (5:11-6:20).

HEBREWS

JESUS IS THE PROMISED HIGH PRIEST

(5:11-6:20)

LESSON EIGHT

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS PREEMINENT TO THE MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

2. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL ORDER (4:14-7:28).

A. JESUS IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST (4:14-5:10).

1) JESUS IS PERFECT IN HIS SYMPATHY WITH MANKIND (4:14-16).

2) JESUS IS PERFECT THROUGH HIS SELECTION BY GOD (5:1-4).

3) JESUS IS PERFECT BY HIS SUBMISSION AND HIS SUFFERING (5:5-10).

b. WARNINGS AGAINST BECOMING DULL TOWARDS GOD WORD (5:11-6:20).

Here we come to one of those digressions so prevalent in the book of Hebrews. He is teaching us about the priesthood of Jesus, and has been using the example of Melchizedek's priesthood. Deep teaching which he warns is hard for some to grasp. The Hebrew writer pauses to cause his readers to face up to their mental immaturity. So we come to the third warning in this book so far.

First we were warned of drifting from the word (cp.2). Then the warning against doubting God's power and His word by failing to act (cps. 3 & 4). Now we are being warned concerning becoming dull to the word. Notice the progression of apostasy: First we drift from God's word losing interest, then we become lethargic and uninvolved through unbelief, and now we progress to becoming bored with it all failing to even learn never reaching spiritual maturity. This reminds me when congregations shorten the Bible Study periods and worship periods as short as they can to cut the misery. When Bible Study becomes a bore to teach and to set through it is a symptom of the third stage toward falling completely away from the Lord!

1) THOSE WHO ARE DULL TOWARDS THE WORD REFUSE TO GROW UP SPIRITUALLY (READ 5:11-14).

The term "**dull of hearing**" (KJV) or "**slow to learn**" (NIV) comes from a Greek word, "nothros." It means "slow-moving in mind, torpid in understanding, dull of hearing, witlessly forgetful. It can be used of the numbed limbs of an animal which is ill. It can be used of a person who has the interceptive nature of a stone" (Wm. Barclay).

Those who are not excited about learning...who are dull toward the word...will never grow up spiritually. How could they? There are two ways we can lack maturity: **(1) WE CAN BE IMMATURE BECAUSE OF A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.** There are many who do not study the word. They say things like, "If it was good enough for mom and dad it is good enough for me!" You can see that their Xianity is not theirs, but their parent's. The word of God is so boring to some that they do not even bother to find out the truth, but take the word of others. This is dangerous because they can fall so easy to false teaching because they don't know the truth first hand. For a Xian who does not study and remain up on the teachings of the word, it would be like a doctor who refused to learn the new treatments and techniques available today. God is infinite. The teachings of Christ are unsearchable. When study of the word becomes boring and painful, the problem is not with God, but with the one who is bored! **(2) WE CAN BECOME IMMATURE IN PRACTICE.** When the word of God becomes dull, and we are not interested in its deep secrets we fail to reach maturity, not only in knowledge, but also in behavior. Some remain preoccupied with first principles because they are not interested in knowing more. They may know all about church organization, baptism, and the resurrection from the dead, but have not learned to act like a Xian through love, patience, kindness, goodness, etc. They are still a baby drinking milk and not eating solid food. Xians who fuss, find fault, complain, carry grudges are spiritually immature because they do not know any better. They don't know better because the word is dull to them.

In a Bible Class of mature Christians, there should not be a man (or lady if it was a ladies' class) there who would be unable to teach the class. As a matter of fact, an insistence and continual desire for teachings on first principles, is a sign that we are bored by the word, and that we are not mature. When we cannot teach (and teaching is not just standing up in a classroom) it is also a sign that we are immature.

When we are confused about what is right and what is wrong, it is also a sign that we are immature spiritually. Some feel that it is alright to miss assembly, to withhold contributions, to hold a grudge because they don't know better, and they don't know better because they have only learned the word superficially, not deeply. Indeed the immature would rather there be confusion about right and wrong than to know for sure. When we become opposed to a deeper study of God's word, we progress in a direction toward total rejection of God's word which the Hebrew writer covers in cps. 10 & 12.

QUESTIONS:

- a) If you could eat it hot from the oven right now with a glass of cold milk, what would you prefer: Chocolate chip cookies? Pound cake?
- b) Home-made bread with butter? What helps you choose what you prefer? (appetite).
- c) When we do not prefer to study the deep secrets of God's word what does it say about our appetite?
- d) How is Xian practice related to Xian knowledge? Why then do some not want to learn?

LOOKING AT THE TEXT (HEBREWS 5:11-14)

1. The oracles of God, to these first century Jews, were the Old Testament scriptures (cf. Acts 7:37-38; Romans 3:1-2; 1 Peter 4:11).
2. The word “*oracle*” from v.12 is from the Greek word “*logion*” which means “*sayings.*”
3. The “*basic principles*” or “*rudiments*” in others versions in v.12 refers to the fundamentals or the ABC’s of the first principles.
4. These “*basic principles*” or “*rudiments*” of the first principles of the “*oracles*” of God relate not to faith, repentance, confession and baptism as we might think here, but to, the primary introduction of the Messiah in the Old Testament (Note Luke 24:13-49 as an example).
5. The Hebrew writer here is comparing their spiritual state to an immature childhood state (vs. 13-14).



2) REASONS TO GO ON TO MATURITY (6:1-12).

In verses 11-14 of chapter five the Hebrew Christians are being accused. Now motivation is given to cure the problem. Three reasons are listed as to why they ought to go on to maturity: (1) Because growth is necessary spiritually, (2) Because if we do not mature we will crucify the Lord afresh, and (3) Because we need to avoid becoming lazy (or dull) toward the word of God. Really being lazy is the key. One who does not want to learn, who has no spiritual appetite, is dull or lazy toward the word of God. A lazy person does not want to learn what needs to be done because he does not want to do anything. Therefore remaining preoccupied with first principles will avoid learning anything new.

QUESTIONS:

- a) Why are people lazy physically?
- b) How can this help us understand spiritual laziness?

a) THE NECESSITY OF PROGRESSING SUPRITUALLY (READ 6:1-3).

The exhortation by the Hebrew writer is to progress in our teaching past first principles. To build upon the foundation we have built and not to continue only in foundation teachings.

LOOKING AT THE TEXT (HEBREWS 6:1-3)

PRESS ON UNTO PERFECTION

1. The word “*leave*” in v.1 comes from the Greek word “*aphiemi*” which means “*to send forth or to send away, to leave alone; to forsake; to divorce*” (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:11-12; Matthew 15:14).
2. The word “perfection” also in v.1 to the Hebrew writer (in this context) is the reality or the completeness of Christ and His priesthood as opposed to the shadow system contained in the Old Testament which could never bring perfection (See also 7:11, 19; 8:7; 9:9; 10:1, 12, 14).
3. The Foundation principles that were not to be laid again listed in verses 1-2.
 - a. Repentance from dead works.
 - b. Faith towards God.
 - c. Teachings of baptisms or “*washings.*”
 - d. Laying on of hands.
 - e. Resurrection of the dead.
 - f. Eternal judgment.
4. The appeal of the writer all the way through the book of Hebrews is going to be to leave Judaism and enjoy the new Christian privilege.

QUESTIONS:

- 1] What are the elementary teachings listed here? How are these a foundation?
- 2] Are foundation teachings important?
- 3] When should we go on and progress past these teachings?

b) THOSE WHO ARE IMMATURE CRUCIFY CHRIST AFRESH (READ 6:4-8).

This is the strongest warning yet, and the strongest reason to press on toward maturity. When we become lazy toward the word of God, we have become dulled to the knowledge of salvation. The suggestion is obvious. We can find ourselves outside having “fallen away” from salvation and now dull toward the only thing that can save us. That’s worse than being lost.

Notice that this passage like Gal. 5:4 teaches that a person can fall away from grace and salvation. A person who dies unfaithful to Jesus and His church brings Jesus again to public disgrace. It is a sad thing to read in the obituaries of a person we know who used to be a member of the Church of Christ. That person is more lost than a pagan because of his or her choice to forsake Jesus Christ and His salvation. They were believers who became lazy and dull toward the word which at one time they believed. They want to believe but are too lazy to believe. They are worse than lost, they were saved but became lost again. They chose to crucify Christ afresh. Instead of honoring His death, they mock it.

When faith fails to produce fruit for God, but instead produces the fruit of unbelief it will reap destruction. Faith saves, but laziness will destroy faith. Salvation is not by works. The works of the saved do not and can not save them. But the saved will produce works of faith. Works then are a result of salvation. Laziness will kill faith and rob us of salvation!

This does not teach that our salvation is not secure if we believe. Nor does this passage teach that a person is saved by what he does. Grace from God is needed because of our sins. Grace is needed for our justification as well as our sanctification. There would never come a time when God's grace is not enough to keep us saved. There is however a condemnation upon the person who loves life more than he loves Christ and the greatest mockery against Christ is to become so dull towards the word of God that we become lazy. To pretend devotion to Christ while we really do not believe crucifies Christ afresh!

c) LAZINESS WILL KILL FAITH KEEPING US FROM MATURITY AND ROBBING US OF SALVATION (READ 6:9-12).

The Hebrew writer gives the brighter side in these verses. His warnings are designed to keep these Hebrew brethren from falling from grace, and from losing what they had gained in Christ. He refers to their works which he says "accompany salvation." Notice they are the product of salvation. They are the love we have for God and the help we have been to His people.

The Hebrew writer's desire is that the Hebrews imitate those who inherit God's promises. Those who inherit the promises of God are those who believe and are patient in that faith till the end!

Notice that being lazy is what must be avoided! Being lazy does not cause us to fall from grace. We lose salvation when we lose our inheritance. We lose our inheritance when we stop believing and being patient. Laziness is not the problem, but the result of a problem. A lazy person is an unbeliever. Faith will spur us on to action in works of love and help to others!

LOOKING AT THE TEXT (HEBREWS 6:4-12)—

WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY

1. Some first principles of Christianity.
 - a. Enlightenment.
 - b. Tasting the heavenly gift.
 - c. Partaking of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Tasting the good word of God.
 - e. Tasting the powers of the age to come.
2. The word “*once*” in v.4 is from the Greek “*hapax*” and denotes once for all (cf. 9:28; Jude v.3).
3. Four things that are impossible in the book of Hebrews:
 - a. It is impossible to renew the man once enlightened, etc., to repentance (6:4).
 - b. It is impossible for God to lie (6:18).
 - c. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (10:4).
 - d. It is impossible to please God without faith (11:6).
4. The warning against apostasy (6:4-6).
5. The danger and the tragedy of apostasy illustrated (6:7-8).
6. Apostasy is not a fact yet—the writer’s encouragement (6:9-12).
7. Two things we need to pay attention to in order to assure ourselves that we have the things which accompany salvation:
 - a. Faith in God.
 - b. Patience in tribulation.



2) THE CERTAINTY OF GOD’S PROMISE IS MOTIVATION TO BELIEVE (READ 6:13-20).

Here we are led to the example of Abraham. We have become partakers of the promises to Abraham because in that promise God promises to bless "all the nations of the earth." There were other promises to Abraham, but this one includes us. It was a long time before Abraham even began to even see any of God's promises being fulfilled. For twenty-five years he went without even a son, yet his faith did not waver and he was patient. Oh, he did try to help God out from time to time. In the 15th chapter of Genesis God swears by Himself that he will keep His promises. God does this when Abraham tries to make things easier for God by asking God to bless him through his servant instead of a son. This shows that Abraham did not have a clue as to how God was going to

keep his promise. Yet it also shows an Abrahamic faith which was stubbornly placed upon the integrity of his God. God rewarded Abraham's faith and He bolstered it by swearing upon Himself to do what He promised. The Hebrew writer speaks as if this promise was made not only to Abraham, but also to us who believe in Christ. This idea is supported by Paul in Romans 4:16-25.

There is a great lesson here for us. We have been warned not to lapse into a dullness which makes us dull or lazy. Dullness is a sign of a lack of faith, and when we lose our faith, we have lost Christ. Remember that those who inherit God's promise do so "through faith and patience" (v.12), and Abraham received what was promised after waiting patiently for it (v.15).

God has given us two "unchangeable things" as reasons to believe in the promises of God:

A LOOK AT THE TEXT (HEBREWS 6:13-20)

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PROMISES

1. The example of Abraham (6:13-15; cf. v.12).
2. The reason God swore to Abraham (6:17)—to show to the heir of the promise the immutability of His counsel (To show that God keeps His promises).
3. The two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie:
 - a. His promise.
 - b. His oath.
4. The description of the hope set before us (6:18-19).
 - a. A refuge.
 - b. An anchor.
 - c. Sure.
 - d. Steadfast.
 - e. Penetrates the veil.
5. The word "*forerunner*" in v.20 comes from the Greek word "*prosdromos*." It suggests a trailblazer, one who goes before. One who is first to go.
6. The Christian's hope is based upon:
 - a. The immutability of God's counsel—His promises.
 - b. The work of Christ as a forerunner.

a) HE HAS BASED HIS PROMISE UPON HIS OWN INTEGRITY!

Notice that the promises of God are not based upon man's integrity. We would really be in trouble. If I dwell upon my weaknesses or your weaknesses, I have not lifted my eyes high enough. A lot of people lose their faith when they see the weaknesses and mistakes of others. We need to consider God's integrity. In old Testament times when a person made a promise to someone else, he killed an animal and cut it in halves. Then he walked between the halves and said, "Be it done to me as it has been done to this animal if I do not keep my promise." If you will note in Genesis 15 God did this with not just one animal, but with a heffer, a goat, a ram a pigeon and a dove. Our salvation is secure because God has sworn that He will keep His promises. Jesus is the proof of His integrity.

b) GOD HAS GIVEN US HOPE IN JESUS CHRIST WHO SERVES AS OUR HIGH PRIEST.

A Xian's only hope is Jesus. Our hope now resides in heaven. Our hope is not dead but alive. There is a depth of principle suggested here. Our relationship with Christ, and our faith in Christ must grow till He becomes our only hope. A lazy person hopes there is some other way to be saved. But a Xian, who has put to death all hope in self or anything else, has only one hope. That hope is Jesus Christ. This is the anchor to which Xians cling when their faith is being tested, and this is the power which bolsters faith in God's promises!

QUESTIONS:

- a) Sometimes we must wait patiently. What is hardest for you to do? Elevators? Traffic jams? Christmas? Waiting for food in a restaurant?
- b) How would Abraham's example help us help those who turn away from the living God (3:12) or crucify Christ afresh (6:6)?
- c) How did God's promise to Abraham affect Abraham's heirs?
- d) Does it have an affect on us today?
- e) When is it easiest in life for you to trust in God? When is it hardest?

HEBREWS

JESUS IS AN ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

(7:1-28)

LESSON NINE

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

1. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS PREEMINENT TO THE MOSAIC ORDER (3:1-4:13).

2. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE LEVITICAL ORDER (4:14-7:28).

A. JESUS IS THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST (4:14-5:10).

1) JESUS IS PERFECT IN HIS SYMPATHY WITH MANKIND (4:14-16).

2) JESUS IS PERFECT THROUGH HIS SELECTION BY GOD (5:1-4).

3) JESUS IS PERFECT BY HIS SUBMISSION AND HIS SUFFERING (5:5-10).

b. WARNINGS AGAINST BECOMING DULL TOWARDS GOD WORD (5:11-6:20).

c. JESUS IS A ROYAL PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (7:1-28).

To understand this passage better it is well to learn to think like a Jewish scholar. To the Jewish Rabbi there were four meanings found in every passage: (1) There was the literal meaning. This meaning was arrived at simply by looking at the facts. (2) There was also the suggested meaning. (3) Then, there was the meaning which the Jews called "Derush." This was the meaning arrived at after careful and deep investigation. (4) There was also, however; the inner or allegorical meaning. This meaning to the Jews many times was the most important. By reading the apostle Paul's writings we can see some of these interpretation methods in practice. The Jews also placed as much importance on what a passage did not say as they did on what it did say.

In this section the Hebrew writer states that Christ's priesthood is "after the order of Melchizedek." He does this to prove that Christ's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood because Melchizedek's priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood. To bring us up to the discussion **Read 5:1-10.**

1) A TRUE KING AND A TRUE PRIEST (READ 7:1-3).

Notice that Melchizedek was not only a king, but he was also a king. This could never occur in the Aaronic Priesthood because the priest had to be of the tribe of Levi, and the king of the tribe of Judah. Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness"; but he was the king of Salem which made him also the king of "peace." Notice then the following qualities of Melchizedek's priesthood:

- A) **IT WAS A PRIESTHOOD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
- B) **IT WAS A PRIESTHOOD OF PEACE.**
- C) **IT WAS A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, HE WAS A KING.**
- D) **IT WAS A PERSONAL PRIESTHOOD, NOT AN INHERITED PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE HE HAD NO GENEALOGY.**
- E) **IT WAS AN ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE HE HAD NO BEGINNING AND NO END.**

We can summarize that Jesus is a High Priest, whose priesthood depends not on any genealogy but on him alone. Genealogy was very important to a Jew, and Christ's genealogy as to His right to be King of the Jews is very precise. But when it comes to His right to be a priest, it was not an inherited right, but His by right according to His own might. It was declared by God Himself through the prophet David in Psalms 110:4.

We can also summarize that Jesus is a High Priest who lives for ever. Therefore His priesthood lasts forever.

Why didn't the Hebrew writer just come out and say these things instead of using Melchizedek as an example? To the Jews Melchizedek was a fact they could not deny. If Melchizedek could be a priest of God, so could Jesus. If Melchizedek was superior to Abraham—the founder of the Jewish nation—the ancestor to the Levitical priesthood—so is Christ.

2) THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEK (READ 7:4-10).

If Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, then his priesthood was superior to any priesthood which would come from Abraham; and because Christ's priesthood is like Melchizedek's, His is superior! Notice the Jewish logic here:

a) MELCHIZEDEK TITHED ABRAHAM, THEREFORE HE WAS SUPERIOR TO HIM.

Abraham was one of the patriarchs; the patriarchs are superior to their descendants; therefore Melchizedek is greater than the Children of Israel; the Jewish priests are the descendants of Abraham; therefore Melchizedek is superior to them also!

1] THAT MAKES MELCHIZEDEK GREATER THAN THE SONS OF LEVI WHO WERE THE OFFSPRING OF

ABRAHAM.

The Levites received the tithes from the rest of the tribes as a legal enactment. Melchizedek on the other hand received the tithes from Abraham as a right he personally possessed, and Abraham conceded that right.

2] THE LEVITES RECEIVED TITHES AS MORTAL MEN; MELCHIZEDEK RECEIVED TITHES AS ON WHO LIVES FOREVER (7:8).

The Children of Israel were instructed by the Law to give a tenth of all they had to help support the Levite tribe who were not to work for a living but to be a tribe who's purpose was to serve the Lord. They received the tithes as their help to live. Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham because he lived, not in order to live.

3] LEVI, TO WHOM THE ISRAELITES PAID TITHES, MAY BE SAID TO HAVE PAID TITHES TO MELCHIZEDEK WHEN ABRAHAM PAID TITHES.

They paid tithes to Melchizedek when Abraham did, because by the Hebrew writer's logic, they came from Abraham not having yet been born. In other words, when Abraham paid tithes, they paid tithes. The point is that the one who receives tithes is greater than the one who pays tithes. Therefore, Melchizedek is greater than the Aaronic priests, and his priesthood was greater than theirs.

b) ABRAHAM WAS BLESSED BY MELCHIZEDEK.

It is always the the superior who blesses the inferior, therefore Melchizedek was superior to Abraham even though Abraham was the founder of the Jewish race and the father of all who will receive God's blessings. That Gives Melchizedek the unique position of which there is none higher. This is a point we may miss, but which was profound to a Jew, and it was true.

2) THE NEW PRIESTHOOD AND THE NEW WAY MAKES THE OLD OBSOLETE (7:11-19).

[Read 7:11-14](#)) To the Hebrew mind the function of religion was to bring man to God. The very function of the Levitical priests was a constant reminder of man's failure as the priest made atonement for sins. Instead of providing access to God the Levitical priesthood only illuminated man's distance from God. If man could have been brought into God's presence by keeping the law and through the Levitical priesthood, then there would be no need for a new priesthood and a new High Priest. The Hebrew writer only introduces the thought here, but the introduction of a new priesthood was a radical thought to the Jews. Because Jesus was not a Levite, but of the tribe of Judah this idea suggested the whole old Mosaic law system be superseded.

[Read 7:15-19](#). The introduction of an eternal and everlasting priesthood like Melchizedek's priesthood makes the Levitical priesthood only temporary. To the Jews this was a powerful idea indeed. This indicated to the Jews that a person could be a Xian without any of the Jewish traditions at all. This is a fact that the Hebrew writer wants his readers to finally come to before he is finished.

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

II. A CHANGE IN PRIESTHOODS (HEBREWS 7:11-19).

A. PERFECTION (v.11), TO THE HEBREW WRITER, MEANS TO WALK INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD (THE HOLY OF HOLIES) WITHOUT A VEIL.

B. AARON'S (LEVITICAL) PRIESTHOOD COULD NOT PRODUCE THAT UNVEILED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (v.11).

C. TWO REASONS WHY THE LAW MUST BE CHANGED WITH THE PRIESTHOOD IS CHANGED (VS. 12-16):

1. Jesus belonged to the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi (vs. 13-14).
2. Christ has a non-genealogical priesthood.

D. THE WORD "ANOTHER" (GREEK HETEROS) (VS. 11,15) MEANS "OF ANOTHER KIND, DIFFERENT"—NOT ANOTHER IN A SERIES, BUT A DIFFERENT ONE.

E. THE DECISION TO CHANGE THE PRIESTHOOD WAS GOD'S (PSALM 110:4).



3) THE GREATER PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST (7:20-28).

The point being made here is that Christ's priesthood is superior to the Aaronic priesthood, but the writer is also introducing another thought which he will deal with later, and that is that the new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

a) THE NEW PRIESTHOOD WAS INTRODUCED BY AN OATH FROM GOD ([READ 7:20-21](#)).

This is a quote of Psalms 110:4. The Jew knew that God does not swear or make oaths lightly. He never introduced the ordinary priesthood with such an oath. This is something new and something better.

b) CHRIST IS GOD'S GUARANTEE OF A BETTER COVENANT ([READ 7:22](#)).

The whole way of coming to God has been changed. The Jews tried to come to God by keeping the law. They never made it even though they tried. The new way is through the righteousness of Jesus Christ when we

have faith in God. What is the proof that God will accept us when we come to God in faith? The answer here is: Jesus Christ is the proof. He is the guarantee of our salvation but through a new covenant.

c) CHRIST'S ETERNAL NATURE MAKES HIS PRIESTHOOD AN ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD (READ 7:23-25).

We have already seen that the Levitical priesthood was temporary. The death of the priests made it so. This is not the case when Jesus is our High Priest. His is an eternal priesthood.

d) CHRIST HAD NO NEED TO OFFER SACRIFICE FOR HIMSELF (READ 7:26-27a).

In the Old Testament, the priest had to first make atonement for himself before he could make atonement for others. Because Jesus is sinless and pure, this need not be done.

f) CHRIST DOES NOT NEED TO ENDLESSLY REPEAT SACRIFICES FOR OUR SINS BECAUSE HIS SACRIFICE IS SUFFICIENT (READ 7:27b-28).

Jesus is the sacrifice for our sins. He made one sacrifice which never needs to be made again. He has opened up the way through His priesthood for man to come to God's presence!

QUESTIONS:

- a) As a child, who was your favorite super-hero? What could he do that you wished you could do?
- b) How did Abraham regard Melchizedek?
- c) What is the main point being made regarding Abraham and Melchizedek?
- d) Why was a new type of priesthood needed?
- e) Had the law failed? How was it weak and useless (7:18)?
- f) How does verse 11 and verse 18 tie together?
- g) In what ways is Jesus a better high priest than the priests of the Jewish system?
- h) The Hebrew writer was showing the Jews who were being tempted to go back to the old way the superiority of

Christ's priesthood over that to which they were returning. What are some of the "old ways" which tempt you

to turn aside from Jesus?

Lesson 10 is not in the original

HEBREWS

JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST IN A SUPERIOR COVENANT

(8:1-6)

LESSON ELEVEN

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

B. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT] (8:1-13).

1. THE NEW COVENANT IS A BETTER COVENANT BECAUSE JESUS IS A BETTER PRIEST WHO SERVES IN A BETTER PLACE (8:1-6).

In the next six verses the Hebrew summarizes his discussion of Jesus being a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He previews a discussion concerning the tabernacle which he will continue in chapter nine, and he introduces the topic of the new covenant over which Jesus is a High Priest.

There is an underlying theme in this book. It is as if the Hebrew writer is trying to get his readers to see the real world. The reality which will endure after the world and all that is in it is destroyed. He is trying to get his readers to see spiritual realities which are perceived only by faith. He says that Jesus now serves in the "true tabernacle", and that the Jews of old served only in "a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven." The pattern from which Moses built that first tabernacle was heaven itself. In chapter 10 he will say that "the law is only a shadow of the good things to come."

Therefore, the book of Hebrews gives us insights as to heaven and glory by interpreting the shadows which we know. Christ's function as a ministering priest is very valuable to the Christian who is striving to be conformed to His image. We could very well call this section **THE MAJESTY OF SERVICE** (8:1-6).

A. JESUS IS SEATED WITH GOD AS AN EQUAL. THIS IS MAJESTY (READ 8:1).

Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek who will serve forever because He lives forever. He is a priest based upon his own personal greatness not upon legal appointments or racial qualification. His priesthood death cannot touch. Now notice the place of His ministry. It is heaven itself! When any person went before a king he was expected to bow before that king in reverence and respect. Jesus has approached the greatest, highest, loftiest

throne in existence, and He has seated Himself there, at God's right hand as an equal. Can you think of any high priest more exalted than that?

Just think about it. Jesus exists in heaven now as God's representative to man and man's representative to God to serve as our high priest. His function is to provide our access to the father. His heart beats for us. Who would ever want some other high priest other than this great high priest, Jesus?

- 1) Jesus sits at or on the right hand of the Father.
- 2) Jesus place is of the throne of God.
- 3) Jesus place is of the majesty of God.
- 4) Jesus place as our High Priest is in heaven.

B. THE PLACE OF MAJESTY IS A PLACE OF SERVICE (READ 8:2).

Jesus does not use his majestic position for selfish reasons, but He combines majesty with service. He reveals that indeed the majesty of God is service to others. His high position enables others to attain it and share in it also. In Jesus the supreme majesty and supreme service meet.

The Spirit of Christ dwells in Christians. Christians do not dread service, nor do they attempt to avoid it because they know that Jesus serves others and still does. He is the first fruits of God who will fill heaven with servants. The Jewish tabernacle was a place of service to God. We find in verse 9 that it was a copy of heaven itself. We can conclude that heaven will also be a place of service. The glory of Christ is service, and the glory of Christianity is service!

- 1) Jesus serves in the sanctuary (in the true tabernacle).
- 2) Jesus serves in the tabernacle "set up" by God and not man.
 - a) Set up by God.
 - b) Not set up by man.

QUESTIONS

Open It

1. What items in your home or office would you consider obsolete? Why?
2. Why is it so difficult to forget the wrongs others do to us?

Explore It

3. Where is Christ right now? (8:1)
4. With what title is God described? (8:1)
5. What is Christ doing presently in heaven? (8:2)

C. THE MAJESTY OF THE PLACE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY (IN HEAVEN) EMPHASIZES THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD AND INTRODUCES THE SECURITY HE HAS TO OFFER IN THE NEW COVENANT (8:3-6).

Christ's position in heaven proves his priesthood to be superior to the levitical priesthood. Were He were still upon the earth He could not honor the law and become a priest. The Hebrew writer says, "He would not be a priest." Jesus is not that kind of priest. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and his position in heaven proves it. This idea introduces the next thought the Hebrew writer wants to develop. Christ has introduced to man a new covenant which replaces the old covenant; after all He could not be a Levitical priest or a priest upon the earth. His position in heaven not only proves Him to be a priest like Melchizedek, but it also proves that man is now under a new covenant.

1) NOTICE THE MINISTRY OF HIGH PRIESTS (READ 8:3-5).

High Priests offer gifts and sacrifices prescribed by the Law.

High Priests serve at a sanctuary (tabernacle).

This tabernacle is a copy and a shadow of heavenly things.

This tabernacle is in accordance to the pattern shown to Moses.

QUESTIONS

1. How do earthly sanctuaries and tabernacles differ from the heavenly one in which Christ is currently serving? (8:2, 5-6)
2. Why would Jesus not be a priest on earth? (8:4)
3. What do the terms "copy," "shadow," and "pattern" indicate about the Levitical priesthood? (8:5)

2) NOTICE NOW THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST (READ 8:6).

- a) Jesus serves by offering Himself for atonement.

- b) Jesus' ministry is different which necessitated a change in the covenant...
- Jesus Christ belonged to the wrong tribe to serve in the earthly tabernacle.
 - He belonged to the wrong order of priesthood to serve in the earthly tabernacle.
 - Jesus is a heavenly priest and therefore must serve in a heavenly sanctuary.
- c) Jesus' ministry is a superior (more excellent) ministry.
- He is a mediator of a better covenant.
 - He has founded (established) it on better promises.

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is the new covenant superior to the old? (8:6)
2. Why did God decide to initiate a new covenant? (8:7-12)
3. How motivated would you be to love and worship God if you had to depend solely on animal sacrifices offered by a stranger?
4. What do we learn about God from the fact that He set aside the old covenant in favor of the new?
5. How much should biblical principles and God's truths govern our thoughts and actions?

Apply It

6. In what ways can we show your thanks to God for the fact that He remembers our sins no more?

2. **THE NEW COVENANT IS A BETTER COVENANT WITH BETTER PROMISES (8:7-8).**

HEBREWS

JESUS SERVES IN A SUPERIOR COVENANT

(8:7-13)

LESSON TWELVE

by Milt Langston

I. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).

A. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

B. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT]

(8:1-13).

1. THE NEW COVENANT IS A BETTER COVENANT BECAUSE JESUS IS A BETTER PRIEST WHO SERVES IN A BETTER PLACE (8:1-6).

2. THE NEW COVENANT IS A BETTER COVENANT WITH BETTER PROMISES (Read 8:7-8).

Jesus has been portrayed as a superior high priest. He is to be preferred. Now the Hebrew writer also states that the new covenant of Jesus Christ is also far better than the old covenant. It contains better promises which we will be looking into in the verses to come. The old covenant was weak because of sin, the new one is strong because of Christ. The old Law condemned, but forgiveness of sins is promised in the new covenant.

3. THE NEW COVENANT IS BETTER BECAUSE IT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD ONE—IT IS AN IMPROVED COVENANT (8:9-12).

If the New Covenant is better than the Old one, it stands to reason that it will be different. In the next few verses the Hebrew writer will show some of the ways the New Covenant is different proving it to be superior.

a. IT IS A KEEPABLE COVENANT (READ 8:9).

The reason is given here why a new covenant was sought by God. "Because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, says the Lord." If the Jews could not keep the old covenant, it can be concluded logically that this new one can be kept! The Old Law did require faith, but a person was judged by his works (Gal. 3:12; Lev. 18:5). In the New Covenant our faith must produce works (Eph. 2:10), but we will be justified by faith (Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:23-25). Hebrews 5:8-9 states that Jesus has become perfect to save through His obedience and suffering, and He saves all who will obey Him. Salvation is through works, but the works of Christ. Christians can now keep the new covenant because our obedience is through faith in Jesus who serves as our Lord...we now obey Him. We could not keep the Law, but we can serve Christ through faith. The New Covenant is now keepable (my word)...not easy, but keepable through faith!

b. IT IS AN INWARD COVENANT...A COVENANT OF THE MIND AND THE HEART (READ 8:10a).

The Laws of the Old Covenant were written on stone. They became lost to the people. The laws of the New Covenant will be written on the hearts of men and women. There it cannot be forgotten. We do not follow the letter of the law, but we have gone to the heart of the law, and we follow the spirit of the law because we follow the lead of Jesus who serves as our Lord and High Priest.

c. IT IS A COVENANT OF GOD RULED PEOPLE (READ 8:10b).

When Jesus taught us to pray He showed us that our greatest need was to be ruled by God. He said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." The Hebrew writer shows that God will be our God and the covenant people will be His people. This indicates loyalty and uniqueness. Because God is our God we have no other loyalties. Because we are God's people we serve no other power.

d. IT IS A COVENANT OF GOD TAUGHT PEOPLE (READ 8:11).

In the Old Covenant people were born in covenant relationship. In the New Covenant people will be reborn into it. Teaching must precede covenant relationship. This is seen in the Great Commission. Jesus insists that His people go out to teach others. Why? Because teaching must precede conversion. Before a person can be saved by God, he must know God. Therefore, teaching is the command of the Lord Jesus to His people (see also John 6:44-45).

e. IT IS A COVENANT PROVIDING FORGIVENESS (READ 8:12).

Here is the kicker. The New Covenant will make provision for the forgiveness of sins. The Old Covenant did not! The New Covenant is different, and it is better. There is no comparing it to the Old Covenant which is the whole point of this book.

4. THE NEW COVENANT MAKES THE OLD COVENANT OBSOLETE (READ 8:13).

When we get something new, it makes the old obsolete. This is true of most things. The Hebrew writer applies this logic to the Old Covenant. It has become unnecessary and obsolete because it has been replaced by a better covenant!

QUESTIONS:

- a. What are you best at forgetting: Names? Assignments? Birthdays?
- b. When your car develops chronic problems, are you the type to keep on fixing it up, or to buy a new one? How do you decide "it's got to go"?
- c. Why was a new covenant needed (vs.7-9,13)?
- d. Which aspect of the new covenant brings you the greatest joy: Having God's law in your heart and mind? Being one of God's people? Knowing God? Having your sins forgiven?
- e. Why do these aspects of the new covenant bring you joy?
- f. Which of these aspects of the covenant would you like to experience more?
- g. Has your experience of these promises been gradual and almost imperceptible, or was it sudden and dramatic?
- h. If we have not experienced them at all, why might this be so? Let's be honest with ourselves.
- i. The old covenant ended up focusing in on man's abilities (or inabilities) to measure up to God's demands. Do you ever try to come to God on that same basis? What results? What does it mean to you that the new covenant is based on God's actions in Christ, not on yours?

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of two faults with the first covenant?
2. Can you name the four improvements in the new covenant?
3. Can you name the "new" ingredients of the "new" covenant?
4. Why did God decide to initiate a new covenant? (8:7-12)
5. What became of the old covenant when the new was introduced? (8:13)
6. What do we learn about God from the fact that He set aside the old covenant in favor of the new?
7. A person despondent trying to earn God's approval needs to go to whom? How can we show them the way?

HEBREWS

JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A SUPERIOR SANCTUARY

(9:1-10)

LESSON THIRTEEN

by Milt Langston

PART ONE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18)

PART TWO

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18)

I. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

II. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT] (8:1-13).

III. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SANCTUARY (9:1-28).

The Christian is really a citizen of two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly. We must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Matt. 22:21). Because we have become citizens of heaven and still live on the earth, we must learn how to walk by faith in a world that is governed by sight. We must become like Moses who was pulled by the world but who saw by faith the invisible God (**READ HEBREWS 11:24-27**). Practical man says, "Seeing is believing!" But the man of faith replies, "Believing is seeing!"

This same principle of faith must apply to our relationship to the heavenly sanctuary or tabernacle. We have never seen this sanctuary. Yet we believe the Bible's instruction concerning it. Some religious people have not been able to make this step of faith, and they regress back into a faithless concept of ritualistic worship making the church building and facilities become to them the sanctuary. Sadly, they miss out on the real albeit unseen sanctuary in heaven. Some of these religious people call themselves "church of Christer's." They think doing anything but worshipping God in the auditorium is somehow forbidden by God. Some in the past have denounced kitchens and fellowships on the church property as if to do so would defile the sanctuary. What is needed is faith in what the Bible teaches. We know that God is not worshipped today in temples made with hands (Acts 7:46-50). There is no special place on earth where God dwells. We may call the building the "house of God," but we know that God does not live there. We may dedicate a building to God and to His service, but it is not His dwelling place. God dwells inside his church. Not the building but the people (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

In this chapter we are presented with a detailed contrast between the Old Covenant sanctuary (the tabernacle) and the New Covenant heavenly sanctuary where Jesus now ministers. We were introduced to this thought in chapter 8:1-2. (READ 8:1-2).

A. THE INFERIOR OLD COVENANT SANCTUARY [THE TABERNACLE] (9:1-10).

We are reminded that the regulations and practices in the tabernacle were ordained by God. If there was any inferiority in the tabernacle service, it was not because God. He had established the ritual. While the Old Covenant was in force, the ministry of the priests and Levites was ordained by God Himself and perfectly proper.

What, then, was it that made the Jewish tabernacle inferior? There are five answers to that question:

1. IT WAS AN EARTHLY SANCTUARY (READ 9:1).

It was made by man (9:11), and it was pitched by man (8:2). The ex-slaves gave generously till they had to be stopped. From these materials the tabernacle was constructed. Then God gave spiritual wisdom and skill to Bezalel and Oholiab to do the intricate work of making the various parts of the tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex. 35-36). When the tabernacle was finished and set up, it was dedicated to God (Ex. 40). Even though the glory of God moved into the sanctuary, it was still an earthly building, constructed by humans out of earthly materials.

It didn't get the job done. It needed constant repairs. It had geographical limitations. It was close to some yet far from others. It had to be painstakingly taken down and carried when the people moved from one place to another place. Its greatest weakness was that it belonged to the nation of Israel and not to the entire world.

2. IT REPRESENTED SOMETHING MUCH GREATER (READ 9:2-5)

Here we have listed the furnishings of the tabernacle because each of these carries with it a spiritual meaning. They were "copies of the heavenly things" (Heb. 9:23) which Moses followed when he built the first tabernacle in the wilderness.

THE JEWISH TABERNACLE:

The Holy Place ("It's first room..." 9:2) contained....

The table of show bread

The candlestick

The incense altar

The veil

(The position of the incense altar was ordinarily in the Holy Place. "And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you. 7And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, 8and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations" [Exodus 30:6-8 ESV]. However on the day of atonement the incense altar was placed into the Most Holy Place. "Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. 12And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil 13and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die" [Leviticus 16:11-13 ESV]. In our text, Hebrews 9:4 the incense altar is inside the Most Holy Place so we can assume that the writer of Hebrews is describing the tabernacle on the day of atonement as he says in verse 7,)

Holy of Holies (the "inner room" 9:7) was separated from the Holy Place by the veil and contained....

The Arc of Covenant

A golden pot holding the manna

Aaron's rod that budded

The tables of the covenant (10 commandments)

The cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat

a. NOTICE THE SPLENDOR OF THE SHADOW.

The following is a detailed descriptive summary written by William Barclay:

The main description of the Tabernacle in the wilderness is in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. God said to Moses: "Make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8). It was constructed out of the freewill offerings of the people (Ex. 25:1-7), who gave with such lavish generosity that a halt had to be called to their giving (Ex. 36:5-7).

The Court of the Tabernacle was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. It was surrounded by a curtain-like fence of fine, twined linen 7 1/2 feet high. The white linen stood for the wall of holiness that surrounds the presence of God. The curtain was supported by twenty pillars on the north and south sides, and by ten on the east and

west sides; and the pillars were set in sockets of brass and had tops of silver. There was only one gate. It was on the east side and it was 30 feet wide and 7 1/2 feet high. It was made of fine, twined linen wrought with blue and purple and scarlet. In the court there were two things. There was **the Brazen Altar**, 7 1/2 feet square and 4 1/2 feet high and made of acacia wood sheathed in brass. Its top was a brazen grating on which the sacrifice was laid; and it had four horns to which the offerings was bound. There was **The Laver**. **The laver** was made from the brass mirrors of the women (glass mirrors did not exist at that time) but its dimensions are not given. The priests bathed themselves in the water in it before they carried out their sacred duties.

The Tabernacle itself was constructed of forty-eight acacia beams, 15 feet high and 2 feet 3 inches wide. They were overlaid with pure gold and rested in sockets of silver. They were bound together by outside connecting rods and by a wooden tie beam which ran through their center. The Tabernacle was divided into two parts. The first - two thirds of the whole - was **The Holy Place**; the inner part - one-third of the whole - a cube 15 feet on each side, was **The Holy of Holies**. The curtain which hung in front of **The Holy Place** was supported on five brass pillars and made of fine linen wrought in blue, purple and scarlet.

The Holy Place contained three things. (i) There was **The Golden Lampstand**. It stood on the south side; it was beaten out of a talent of solid gold; the lamps were fed with pure olive oil, and were always lit. (ii) On the north side stood **The Table of the Shewbread**. It was made of acacia wood covered with gold; it was 3 feet long, 1 1/2 feet wide and 2 feet 3 inches high. On it there were laid every Sabbath twelve loaves made of the finest flour, in two rows of six. Only the priests could eat these loaves when they were removed. They were changed every Sabbath. (iii) There was **The Altar of Incense**. It was of acacia wood sheathed in gold; it was 1 1/2 feet square and 3 feet high. On it incense, symbolizing the prayers of the people rising to God, was burned every morning and evening.

In front of **The Holy of Holies** there was The Veil which was made of fine, twined linen, embroidered in scarlet and purple and blue, and with the cherubim upon it. Into **The Holy of Holies** no one but the High Priest might enter, and he only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and only after the most elaborate preparations. Within **the Holy of Holies** stood **The Ark of the Covenant**. It contained three things--the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the law. It was made of acacia wood sheathed outside and lined inside with gold. It was 3 feet 9 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches wide, and 2 feet 3 inches high. Its lid was called **The Mercy Seat**. On **the Mercy Seat** there were two cherubim of solid gold with overarching wings. It was there that the very presence of God rested, for He had said: "**There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony**" (Ex. 25:22).

The Hebrew writer brings all this splendor and glory to the remembrance of his Jewish audience, yet he is declaring that all this glory was only a shadow of reality. The tabernacle was only a representation of something much better. That better tabernacle is where Jesus our High Priest now serves in heaven!

b. If THE SHADOW HAD SO MUCH SPLENDOR IMAGINE THE GLORY OF THE HEAVENLY.

Here follows a chart of the tabernacle and its furniture in type-and-anti-type. There may be some question about some of these, but scripture is given for study and to indicate why this arrangement is given:

ANTI-TYPE PURPOSE TYPE (IN TRUTH) ANTI-TYPE

HOLY PLACE CHURCH tab. of Ex. 26 (esp.v.33); 1 Pet.2:5,9-11; Heb.
witness, Nu.18:1-7; Lev.16: 12:22-23; 13:15-16;
Nu.18:2; 2-3,11-13,15-19, Rev. 1:4-6; 5:9-10;
1:50; 32-34; Heb.9:6-7; 2 Cor.6:16-17; Acts
Acts 7:44 Ex.40. 1:8.

CANDLE- LIGHT light for Ex. 25:31-40; 27: Ps.119:105; 1 Jn.2:
STICKS Holy Place 20-21; 37:17-24; 8-11; 2 Pet.1:19-21;
(Ex.40:4 Lev.24:1-3. Matt.24:35; Heb.1:1-2
with
Jn.17:4-
21).

TABLE OF LORD'S Weekly Ex.25:23-30; Lev. Lk.22:17-20,28-30;
SHEWBREAD SUPPER Memorial 24:1-3. Matt.26:26-29; 1 Cor.
11:20-34; 10:14-21.

HOLY OF HEAVEN Where Ex.30:6,10; 25: Heb.4:14; 6:20; 9:12,
HOLIES man meets 21-22; Lev.16: 23-24.
God 15-19.

GOLDEN PRAYERS Ex.30:1-10; 37: Ps.141:2; Lk.1:9-10;
INCENSE 25-29; Lev.4:7; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; Heb.
ALTAR 16:12-13; Ex.25: 9:3-4.
10-16.

ARK OF THE COVENANT

G.POT OF GOD'S Ex.16:32-34. Jn.6:30-68; 14:26; Eph
MANNA PROVISIONS 1:3; 2 Cor.9:8-11.

AARON'S GOD'S Num. 17:1-11. Heb.3:1; 5:10; 7:14,
ROD PRIEST 21-22.

TABLES OF GOD'S Deut.10:1-5; Ex. Jn.17:6-8; Rom.16:25-
COVENANT PRECEPTS 20:1-17. 27; Heb.1:1-2; Acts
3:22-26; Jn.1:17.

CHERUBIM GOD'S PARDON Num.7:89; Ex. Eph.2:4-10; 1 Tim.1:
25:21-22. 15-17.

Many spiritual truths are wrapped up in these pieces of furniture, and all of them are of great value. But the most important truth is this: all of this was symbolism and not the spiritual reality. It was this fact that made the tabernacle of the Old Covenant inferior.

3. IT WAS INACCESSIBLE TO THE ORDINARY PEOPLE (READ 9:6-7).

The Jewish tabernacle was not a place of worship to God by the ordinary people. The Jews never went into the tabernacle. Only priests and Levites could enter into the Holy Place, and then only to perform some service. The ordinary people could never enter the Tabernacle. Most would live from birth till death never having seen the glory of that tabernacle. Only hearing about it. No one ever entered the Most Holy Place. It was empty except for the smoke from the incense altar. Only once a year could the High Priest enter, and only then when he had made elaborate preparations for the atonement of his and the people's sins. Contrast the Heavenly tabernacle. Everyone who is a Christian can enter, and Christ has gone before us into the Most Holy Place where we will follow. Where the way once was closed, it is now open for all!

4. IT WAS TEMPORARY (READ 9:8).

We said that the ordinary people could not enter into the first tabernacle. That fact that it still stood the Hebrew writer says was a constant reminder that the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet opened. As a matter of fact the people could not even enter into the Holy Place.

This verse shows, that although the first tabernacle was temporary, it did serve a purpose. Its purpose was to point the way to the future. God planned the ritualistic worship not to satisfy man's needs but to whet his appetite. It taught that the way to the Holy of Holies, the way into God's presence, was not yet open to man. Sir Robert Anderson writes:

While the old covenant had an earthly sanctuary and a human priesthood, the sanctuary of the new covenant is heaven itself, and the Great Priest who ministers there is no other than the Son of God...So exclusive are the prerogatives of the sons of Aaron, that while on earth not even the Lord Jesus Christ could share them. What a staggering fact it is that, during His earthly ministry, the Son of God Himself could not pass within the veil which screened the antechamber to the holy shrine!...The very existence of this antechamber - the "first tabernacle" of Hebrews - gave proof that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." An earthly place of worship is proof that the heavenly place of worship is still closed.

5. ITS MINISTRY WAS EXTERNAL [CARNAL], NOT INTERNAL [SPIRITUAL] (READ 9:9-10).

The worship of the first tabernacle was ritualistic. It was carnal, not spiritual. The sacrifices offered, and the blood applied to the mercy seat, could never change the heart or the conscience of the worshiper. All the rituals of the first tabernacle had to do with ceremonial purity, not moral purity. They were "carnal ordinances" that pertained to the outer man. The inner man could not be changed because the blood of Christ had not yet been shed. And because the blood of Christ had not yet been shed, sins remained.

THE TABERNACLE RITUALS (HEBREWS 9:6-10)

1. The priests went continually into the first tabernacle (the Holy Place)(v.6)—but the high priest alone entered the second tabernacle (the Holy of Holies) on the day of atonement (v.7).
2. The way into the Holy of Holies was not made manifest while the first tabernacle stood (v.8).
3. The veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was rent at the death of Jesus (Matthew 27:50-51).
4. The veil represented the **SIN PROBLEM**.
5. The old covenant sanctuary was a symbol of **BROKEN FELLOWSHIP**—the new covenant sanctuary is a symbol of **RESTORED FELLOWSHIP**.
6. The worshiper under to old covenant was separated from the presence of God by two veils and the priesthood.
7. The **TIME OF REFORMATION** (v.10) refers to **CHRISTIANITY!**



QUESTIONS:

- a. In your childhood home, was there a "holy of holies" or place where you were forbidden? Was there any things you were not allowed to do?

- b. From verses 1-5 how do you picture this earthly sanctuary? What is the significance of each item in the Holy Place?
- c. According to verses 8-9 what did not happen in the Jewish tabernacle?
- d. Should our conscience be cleared by our worship today? Why?
- e. Why were the gifts and sacrifices of the Old Testament not able to clear their consciences?
- f. Is it possible today to revert to an outward ritualistic type of worship again?
- g. When you feel guilty how do you try to clear your conscience?

B. THE SUPERIOR HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (9:11-28).

Having just described the earthly or Jewish tabernacle as being earthly, as only a representation of a greater...it was only a shadow with splendor, as being inaccessible to ordinary people, as temporary, and finally as ministering to the carnal and not the spiritual; we now see contrasted the ministry of the heavenly tabernacle in the rest of this chapter.

1. IT IS HEAVENLY, NOT EARTHLY (READ 9:11).

The Hebrew writer is trying to get his readers to shift their attention from things upon the earth to things of heaven itself. Man has always had to be reminded to look with faith and not with the eyes of the flesh. The beautiful temple that was in Jerusalem was soon to be destroyed by the Romans. As a matter of fact all the beautiful and seemingly important things of the earth will be someday destroyed, but heavenly realities will endure forever.

The tabernacle of Moses was built with materials from "this creation," and the world is only temporary. Yet this heavenly tabernacle "is not of this creation." It will endure through the aging process. It will endure through the trials and tribulations. It exists now, and the benefits are ours now by faith for Jesus is a high priest "of the good things that are already here!" We no longer need a pattern of the heavenly because we now possess the heavenly where our Lord Jesus Christ now serves our needs. The old tabernacle was like a 100 watt light bulb burning in the night. It was brilliant. But as the sun rises and the brightness and brilliance of its light lightens every nook and cranny, the 100 watt light bulb pales to insignificance. You will not even notice if it is on or off. Such is the comparison between the old and new tabernacle.

THE BETTER TABERNACLE (HEBREWS 9:11)

1. Christ serves in a greater tabernacle. Reasons why that tabernacle is greater:

It is heavenly (9:24).

b. It is the true tabernacle (8:2).

It was pitched by God (8:2).

2. Christ serves in a perfect tabernacle. It is perfect because it does not have a veil inside.



HEBREWS

JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A SUPERIOR SANCTUARY AND SACRIFICE

(9:11-28)

LESSON FOURTEEN

by Milt Langston

PART ONE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:2:18)

PART TWO

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18)

I. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

II. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT] (8:1-13).

III. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SANCTUARY (9:1-28).

A. THE INFERIOR OLD COVENANT SANCTUARY (9:1-10)

B. THE SUPERIOR HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (9:11-28).

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2. THE MINISTRY OF THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE EFFECTIVELY DEALS WITH SIN OPENING THE WAY TO GOD (READ 9:12-15).

Several contrasts are here provided:

a. A CONTRAST IN THE SACRIFICES PROVIDED (9:12).

The ministry of the heavenly tabernacle involved the sacrifice of Jesus Christ while the ministry of the earthly tabernacle involved the sacrifices of animals. Again the Hebrew writer lays a foundation for a more complete discussion which will be discussed in chapter 10. Do we need proof that the blood of Jesus is superior to the blood of animals? How can the blood of animals solve the problem of man's sins? Jesus became a man. He lived a perfect life, and He gave that life voluntarily for our sins. No animal ever gave its life of its own accord. The high priest in the old covenant took the blood of the animal and presented it in the holy of holies, but Jesus took His blood into heaven itself to present it to God Himself!

The atonement provided by the sacrifice of the Old Covenant was only temporary, but notice that Christ's sacrifice provides "eternal redemption!" Paul speaks of saving faith as a faith that is "from faith unto faith..." in Romans 1:16-17. You and I were led to conversion because we have all believed that Jesus is willing and able to save us. We need to have a faith that will lead us from conversion trusting in God's ability to keep us saved. And Christian works are the proof of such a faith. When works are absent, faith is absent.

b. A CONTRAST IN THE CLEANSING PROVIDED (9:13-14).

The ancient sacrifices cleansed the body from ceremonial uncleanness, but the sacrifice of Jesus cleanses the soul of man (READ 1 JOHN 1:7-9). In the Old Testament a person's heart could be far from God, yet he could still be ceremonially clean by going through the outward motions. In the New

Testament God judges the heart of man, and it is the inward man which is made clean by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament an ordinary person could not serve God in the holy place even if he were cleansed by the sacrifice, but in the New Testament by Christ's sacrifice we are enabled to leave the deeds of death to become the servants of the living God! The carnal man (we all have that side) chafes and resists service. The carnal side of us resists being imposed upon or put out, but the inward and eternal part of us considers it pure joy to be able to serve Jesus by serving others! It is a carnal headache to provide used clothes for poorer folks, but it is a spiritual joy. It is a carnally exhausting to teach V.B.S., but spiritually it is a joy. Can't you see how even as we live in Christ we are putting to death the deeds of the flesh and beginning to find real life in the eternal spirit. Aren't you glad that Christ's sacrifice and blood has redeemed you making your service to God possible?

C. A CONTRAST IN THE BLESSINGS PROVIDED (9:15).

Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant because the old one depended on man's obedience and perfection. Therefore the blessings were only temporary and conditional. If the people obeyed God He blessed them, but if they disobeyed Him, He withheld His blessings. The blessings were also temporal. No mention is made of spiritual blessings. He blessed their crops, their land, their prosperity and their peace. That made it temporary because eventually death claims everyone. But the blessings of Christ are spiritual (EPH. 1:3). Even if every physical blessing is removed, our spiritual blessings remain (Romans 8:31-39).

The New Covenant does not depend on our righteousness but upon Christ's. We are only required to have faith (to be faithful) in Him and in service to Him in His church. The blessings do not depend on our work but His. Our work is only a proof of our faith in Him, and faith is what ties us to Him. The works then are not ours to claim because they were offered in faith. They are His possession. They are His work because we are only a part of His body. (This is an important concept hard for some to grasp and follow).

In the New Testament we have freedom from sin. Therefore we have freedom to serve. Therefore we have eternal blessings from God.

- By means of what blood did Jesus enter the greater and more perfect tabernacle?
- According to verse 13, what was cleansed or sanctified by the blood of animals?
- What does the blood of Jesus cleanse or purge in us?

- What is said about Christ's offering of Himself in verse 14? It was through the eternal Spirit.
- What do you think is significant about the phrase "how much more?" In verse 14?
- What is said in verse 15 about the transgressions which were committed under the first covenant?

3. THE MINISTRY OF THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE IS BASED UPON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST'S DEATH WHICH IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH SINS CAN BE

FORGIVEN (READ 9:16-22)

This is a very hard section of scripture for us to understand fully. It could be that it is difficult because of the Hebrew logic being presented. While we may not discover the depths of its meaning, there are some truths which are fairly evident:

a. CHRIST'S DEATH WAS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION (9:16-17).

A covenant is an "agreement," but it can also be like a will. The argument is that a will is not in force till the one who makes it dies. This is the Hebrew writer's way of saying that Jesus had to die to save man. Luke records Christ as saying when He partook of the fruit of the vine in the last supper, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). Before the terms of the New Testament could be in force, Jesus had to die.

I believe that the Hebrew writer will tell us why this is true in the verses which follow, but it is a bit hard to follow. Verse 22 will finish by stating, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Jesus had to die to provide the life which was represented in the blood.

- List the things that are said in these two verses about a testament: (1) The death of the one who makes the will must be established. (2) A will does not come into effect while the one who made it is alive. It comes into effect only after the death of the one who made it.
- According to this passage, when did the New Testament (covenant) become effective?

b. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD IN THE PLAN OF GOD (9:18-21).

From the beginning God has associated the life with the blood. **READ GEN. 9:4-6**. Notice that God will require an accounting for our own lifeblood. Animals and men must also give an account, and we are not to eat the blood because the blood represents the life of an animal.

Blood was used in Abel's acceptable sacrifice. It was used in Passover ritual. It was used to consecrate the first covenant when Moses delivered the law to the Children of Israel. It was also demanded in most of the ceremonial rituals of the Old Testament worship. Moses said, "**For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life**" (Lev. 17:11). The Children of Israel had to provide the sacrifice, but it was God who gave life through the blood by allowing atonement.

This helps me understand that God did not view the blood as viewing the death of the animal, but the life of the animal. And the blood of the animals was only a shadow of the blood of Jesus.

Now this New Covenant must also be consecrated by blood. It required Christ's death to provide the blood!

C. WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF CHRIST'S BLOOD THERE CAN BE NO FORGIVENESS (9:22).

Perhaps Romans 6:23 will shed light on this passage. "**The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.**" Jesus provided the payment for the sins of the world by dying. He gave to God His life by providing His blood. With that life God can now provide eternal life to others. God sees life in the blood. He always has!

There is a depth of meaning here. God's nature demands that we give Him our most prized possession. That would be our life...our own blood. But our life is unacceptable because of our sins. So Jesus provided His life for us by giving His life upon the cross and shedding His blood. Now we can give our most prized possession to God because our life has been made a part of Christ. Christ has provided us a way to give God our most prized possession. Without Him we are lost. Without his blood we are nothing with nothing to give. There is a glimpse of spiritual joy here which we cannot comprehend with the carnal mind.

4. OUR MINISTER (OR JESUS) CONTROLS OUR INHERITANCE FOR US THROUGH HIS CONTINUING LIFE (9:23-28).

A. CHRIST'S MINISTRY PROVIDES PERFECT PURIFICATION FOR OUR SINS (READ 9:23-24).

You and I are now living for God. In our feeble way we are giving God our most prized possession. We have offered God ourselves as "living sacrifices." But even in this we are helpless without Christ's fellowship. He purifies our life's service with His continued presence in the heavenly tabernacle serving as our high priest with the adequate sacrifice. He serves as our Master and our Lord! In return for His provisions we serve God as His servants and as a part of His body the church upon the earth. We are dead to sin but alive to God in Christ (Rom. 6:11). We do this by remaining alert to the Holy Spirit. We are led by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

- List the things that were dedicated with blood under the first covenant: The book, the people, the tent of the tabernacle, the vessels used in worship in the tabernacle!
- According the law of Moses (v.22) how many things were cleansed with blood?
- Under the law, was the same thing true concerning remissions? Give the scripture phrase which verifies your answer: "...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins!"
- What is said about the "heavenly things" in verses 23-24? It requires the blood of a better sacrifice than that used in the earthly tabernacle.
- What is said about Jesus in verse 24? He has appeared in heaven on our behalf.

b. CHRIST'S MINISTRY PROVIDES FINAL AND COMPLETE FULFILLMENT OF OUR NEEDS IN FACING GOD (READ 9:25-28).

Again we see the contrast a bit. Jesus' sacrifice is not like the sacrifice of the priests of old. His work as a sacrifice is done. He has provided the fulfillment of all our needs. Man must live then give an account for his life. Jesus has already lived a perfect life in the flesh. Because He is perfect, instead of judgment, He has received justification not only for Himself, but also for those who will believe in Him. He has entered heaven with the blood of that perfect and sinless life, and by doing that He has provided God with life to offer us through Him. When He returns He will bring with Him our salvation if we will wait for it. That's the faith of it. Isn't it?

- How often and with what did the earthly high priest enter the tabernacle?
- How often and with what did Jesus enter the heavenly sanctuary (verse 26)?
- Why do you think the Hebrew writer inserted verse 27 into this discussion?
- What does verse 28 say about (1) Christ's first appearance? And (2) Christ's second appearance?

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What event in your life have you gone through "once" but never want to go through again?

- 2) Have you ever seen a "blood and gore" movie? Which one?
- 3) By what right has Jesus entered into heaven for us (v.12)?
- 4) Contrast the cleansing of the old testament to the cleansing of the new testament.
- 5) Because the new covenant is like a will, what did it require of Christ?
- 6) What does God see in the blood?
- 7) Does the fact that Jesus died to take away your sins free you to serve Him more? Does it make you spiritually "lazy?" Why?
- 8) How does the death of Christ provide us a way to give God our most prized possession...our life?
- 9) So does the blood of Christ represent not only His eternal life but our eternal life as well?
- 10) Is your life Christ's life?

HEBREWS

JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE

(10:1-18)

LESSON FIFTEEN

by Milt Langston

PART TWO

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PRIEST

3:1-10:18

I. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH BETTER SALVATION (3:1-7:28).

II. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SECURITY [COVENANT] (8:1-13).

III. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SANCTUARY (9:1-28).

IV. HE IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST WITH A BETTER SACRIFICE (10:1-18).

Back in chapter 9:11 the idea of Christ's blood introduces the better sacrifice of Jesus our high priest. Yet the discussion in chapter 9 is concerning Christ's ministry within the heavenly tabernacle which is superior to the earthly tabernacle. Now in chapter 10 the Hebrew writer focuses his attention on the sacrifice of Jesus.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Why was there a year-by-year remembrance of sins under the old covenant?
2. What was God's will and who came to do that will?
3. Why are sins and iniquities not remembered under the new covenant?

A. CHRIST IS THE ONLY TRUE SACRIFICE (10:1-10).

We need to remember that this book was written to the Jewish Christians who were growing cold in their faith. They were being tempted and drawn back into the Jewish religion. Like so many even today they were losing their vision. They were becoming discouraged. They were becoming lax allowing daily living to drag them away from the riches of eternity in Christ which is the Christian's vision of faith.

This chapter will give us some of the most glorious truths concerning man's salvation in Christ found in the entire Bible. It is almost as if the Hebrew writer will reach a climax of importance here. And the chapter will also contain some of the most stern warnings found in all the Bible concerning the dangers of becoming unfaithful to Christ.

To our section now (verses 1-18) we can say that no religion is better than its ability to deal with sin. Sin is man's problem. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). If a religion cannot deal with sin, it is of no value to man. Man has long proved that he is unable to resist sin. Even when we do not want to sin, we sin! The knowledge of good and evil is more than we can handle.

1. THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE SHADOW DEMANDED A BETTER SACRIFICE (READ 10:1-4).

The Law required that animal sacrifices be made for the atonement of sins. While it is true that the Jews fulfilled God's requirements in an empty ritualistic manner (ISAIAH 1:11-15), many others came to God in faith and were blessed by God in doing so.

From verse 1 what things are said about the law and sacrifices under the old covenant?

From verse 2 what two things would have occurred if the sacrifices under the old covenant could make perfect?

We are told here that without Jesus (and remember that the Jewish Christians were considering giving Him up) a person can never get beyond the shadows of God. The Law was a "shadow." The word for "shadow" here is from the Greek word, "skia" which means "a pale shadow, a nebulous reflection, a mere silhouette or a form without reality." The sacrifices of old were not real, they were only a shadow of what was real, and Jesus'

sacrifice is what is real. The shadow of a key cannot unlock a door. The shadow of a meal cannot satisfy the stomach's hunger, and neither can the shadow of Christ's sacrifice remove man's sins.

The Old Testament sacrifices far from removing sins only reminded the sinner of his sins. They promised to remove sins, but guilt remained. Those who died in faith were blessed by Christ's death and sacrifice for sins (Rom. 3:25). But the repeated sacrifice being only a shadow of the real sacrifice instead of removing sins reminded the Children of Israel of their sins.

If the doctor gives you a bottle of pills, and you recover from your illness, that bottle of pills will always remind you of your cure. But if the same bottle of pills does not cure you of your illness, it will be a constant reminder that you are still sick. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament did not remove sins. They only reminded the sinner of his sin because they were repeated year after year.

The blood of bulls and goats declared the desperate need for a better sacrifice. They could never effect the removal of man's guilt, only Christ's sacrifice could accomplish that. Yet, the Hebrew Christians were being tempted to trade the real sacrifice to return to the shadow. Just as some today are flirting with abandoning the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Even tonight some are so weak in their faith that they have traded fellowship with Jesus and His body for a warm comfortable chair in their living rooms in front of a T.V. set.

2. THROUGH CHRIST GOD HAS PROVIDED THE BETTER SACRIFICE (READ 10:5-9).

The only effective sacrifice for sin is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To make this point the Hebrew writer quotes Psalm 40:6-9. Yet the quote is not a quote of the Hebrew but a quote of the Greek translation known as the Septuagint. There are three major statements made in these verses in the following order: 1) God prepared for Christ a body to accomplish His purpose. 2) The requirement of God is a sacrifice of obedience rather than an animal sacrifice. 3) Jesus took away the first in order to establish the second. For my discussion, I will take the second first, and discuss the first second.

a. THE REQUIREMENT OF GOD IS A SACRIFICE OF OBEDIENCE.

This is really the major thrust of these verses, and it is not a new concept to the Jews. READ 1 SAMUEL 15:22; PSALM 51:16-17; HOSEA 6:6; ISAIAH 1:11-20; MICAH 6:6-8. The Hebrew writer has already said, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Jesus' suffering and death fulfilled the requirements of obedience. While Jesus was in the flesh He perfectly did God's will. Our life is marred by rebellion against God, but Jesus' life was perfect. It is Christ in the Psalm quoted who says, "I have come to do your will, O God." In chapter 9 we learned that the life is in the blood, therefore; the blood of Christ's sacrifice satisfies the requirement of obedience because Christ's life perfectly obeyed God's will.

b. GOD PREPARED FOR CHRIST A BODY!

The Hebrew writer says, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me." This is the same as it is rendered in the Septuagint. Read Psalm 40:6, there it says, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced." The meaning here is not real clear. Most think it refers to Exodus 21:1-6 where if a slave did not want to leave his master, the master would pierce his ear to show that he was a willing slave. This description aptly fits Jesus' service to the father. He submitted willingly as God's slave. Another thought is that everything I hear you say I will obey which is how Jesus obeyed the Father to fulfill the requirements of obedience.

But there is another meaning the holy spirit uses here in Hebrews. The body of Christ through out the New Testament has a dual meaning. It refers to His sacrifice in the Lord's supper which is represented by the bread, but it also always refers to the church. Again Hebrews 5:8-9 will help us. Jesus has become the "source of eternal life for all who obey Him." In the body or in the church the perfect requirement of obedience still continues.

In chapter 9 we said that man's greatest gift to the Father is his own life, and through the blood of Jesus we have found a way to offer God that life as a gift of gratitude. Our life as a Christian is swallowed up in Christ. There, in Christ, our life is given to God as the willing slave of Jesus. He became the willing slave to God (Ps. 40:6) so that you and I might become the willing slave of God in Christ who now serves not only as our high priest but as our Lord as well.

Now in chapter 10 we see another parallel to the thought in chapter 9. The true sacrifice to God for sin is obedience, and you and I have the opportunity to become a part of that obedience when we become a part of the body or church of Christ. Christ is the perfect sacrifice, but you and I become a part of Christ dwelling in His body!

c. JESUS TOOK AWAY THE FIRST IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE SECOND.

The first sacrifice was insufficient. At most it was a translucent shadow of the real sacrifice of Christ which can even involve others who call upon His Name as Lord and Master. That first sacrifice was removed now that Christ has provided the reality of sacrifice. A sacrifice that can bring everybody back to God if that person will just remain faithful! And that is just the point. The Hebrew Christians were on the verge of losing all this glory.

Notes from Sunset's Book:

I. THE NATURE OF THE OLD COVENANT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM (10:1-8).

- A. The old covenant did not reproduce the new covenant privilege (v.1a)—it was a shadow, not the real thing.
- B. The old covenant could not with its yearly sacrifices make the worshipers perfect (vs. 1b-2).
 - 1. If those sacrifices could have made the worshipers perfect, then they would have ceased to be offered.
 - 2. For the worshipers once cleansed would have had no more conscience of sins (would no longer have felt guilty for their sins—NIV).

REMEMBER: Under the old covenant the worshiper was separated from God by two veils and the priesthood and was consequently never perfected in his relationship with God.

- C. The old covenant sacrifices were an annual reminder of sins (v.3). Sins were remembered by: 1) God; 2) The people; and 3) The priests.
- D. The old covenant sacrifices (blood of bulls and goats) could not take away sins (v.4). This is the reason sins were remembered under the law.
- E. The old covenant sacrifices did not do God's will (vs. 5-9).

NOTE: The word "will" (vs. 7,9) is being used in the sense of "desire."



3. THE BETTER SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IS EFFECTIVE TO MAKE MAN HOLY (READ 10:10).

Here is the greatest thought yet. Christians have been set apart for God's service...made holy...sanctified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. No old Testament sacrifice could ever do that. In the Old Covenant a person had to be ceremonially cleansed repeatedly, but by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ a believer is set apart finally and completely.

B. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (READ 10:11-18).

When Jesus hung upon the cross for our sins, just prior to His death He made a profound statement: He said, "It is finished!" The Hebrew writer will help us understand this statement by Christ in this section. If the work of redemption is finished, what is left for you and I to do? When we can answer this question we will begin to understand the significance of Christ's power and sacrifice!

1. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S ACHIEVEMENT (READ 10:11-12).

Again the Hebrew writer contrasts the new covenant with the old. In the old the priests stood and performed his religious duties again and again with sacrifice after sacrifice. The Hebrew writer states that this cannot take away sins. It only stands as a reminder of sins. Jesus served as our high priest with only one sacrifice, then He sat down. His work finished!

a. IT CANNOT BE REPEATED OR DUPLICATED.

There are some things which cannot be repeated. Who can do what Christ did? If we search for some alternative to Christ as the Hebrews were on the verge of doing, who could you turn to who could duplicate what Christ has done? That's why, when a person rejects Jesus, it is "impossible" to bring them back to repentance because they are crucifying Jesus afresh (Heb. 6:4-6).

b. IT NEED NOT BE REPEATED.

Jesus' work as high priest need not be repeated because the work is done. It is finished! Verse 18 states: "And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin." Because of Christ's sacrifice sins are remembered no more! Therefore, there need be no repeat of the sufficient sacrifice.

2. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION (READ 10:12-13).

The exaltation of Christ is seen in the fact that He no longer stands offering a sacrifice, He has taken His seat in the exalted place. This shows that His work of redemption is completed. He now rules victoriously "till all His enemies are the footstool of His feet." (Psalm 110:1). This idea is a recurring concept in the New Testament. We can face Jesus now as His friend and slave, or we can face Him later and call Him Lord as a conquered enemy. But one thing is sure: every knee will bow to Jesus one way or the other. It's just a matter of time which is based upon God's eternal purpose and plan. To believers James says, "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near." (James 5:7-8). Christ is exalted, and Christians belong to that exaltation. By faith we wait till that exaltation is made manifest to those who doubt it and disregard it.

3. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S TRIUMPH (READ 10:14-18)

The sacrifice of Jesus has "made perfect forever those who are being made holy." The N.I.V. reading here brings out the tense of the verbs. The sacrifice's work is complete, but the process of our being made holy by our faith is still in the process of being accomplished. The emphasis is on the finality of Christ's triumph.

The Holy Spirit testifies to us. His testimony in words we have written in our hearts and minds. I don't think this refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit here though it might. It refers to the testimony that Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient. This fact is written in our hearts and on our minds. For proof of this the Hebrew writer goes back to Jeremiah chapter 31 again quoting the Spirit's testimony. The conclusion of that prophesy is summed up in verse 17. **God will not remember our sins anymore because of Christ's sacrifice. That is the triumph of Christ's sacrifice and the witness of the Holy Spirit!**

So final was Christ's triumph that He need never offer Himself again (10:18). When Jesus hung upon the cross suffering for our sins. God saw it and His justice was satisfied for hanging there was the life of a perfect unspotted sacrifice. God looked for a spot or a blemish, and found none, and if Satan was there and if he looked on he must have began to tremble as the reality of the significance of the sacrifice soaked in. The door to heaven has been opened through His blood. The sacrifice of a sinless man has been made available to any who will believe in Him. Moses E. Lard says of this scene:

Never did the Son of God appear in the eyes of His Father in an attitude of such grace and loveliness as when He expired on the cross. It was 'the savor of the burnt offering' filling the heaven of heavens with its divine fragrance. It was the infinite love of 'the Only Begotten' unfolding its hidden riches to the eye - the all-searching eye of the Father. He saw down into the unfathomable depths of His mighty soul the purest, the brightest flame of undying affection and unshaken devotion to the will of God that was ever seen before or since. History furnishes no fact that even faintly illustrates this scene of unutterable tenderness, of dutiful affection, of intelligent obedience, of unswerving fidelity; and fiction, in its widest range of invention, is struck dumb in view of the heroism and grandeur of the dying scene of Calvary! It must stand alone in the history of the universe, as the most tender, touching, and impressive event ever known; and which will furnish the theme of all the songs in the ages of eternity: 'Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood be glory and dominion forever and ever.'

C. SUMMARY: THERE ARE FOUR THINGS THAT CHRIST DID FOR US THAT ONLY DEITY COULD DO...

1. HE DIED FOR US (2 COR. 5:14-15).

2. HE AROSE FROM THE DEAD FOR US (ROMANS 1:4-5; PHIL 3:10-11).

3. HE RULES IN HEAVEN FOR US (MATTHEW 28:18; EPH. 1:22-23; JER. 10:23; 1 PET. 2:21).

4. HE INTERCEDES FOR US (1 TIM. 2:5; EPH. 5:20).

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What repetitious activity do you dislike the most: (a)Cleaning the bathroom? (b)Mowing the lawn? (c)Shaving? (d)Driving to and from work? (e)Doing dishes? (f)Getting out of bed in the morning? Why?
- 2) What daily rituals do you enjoy the most?
- 3) Why according to 10:1 is the law insufficient? Knowing what you do about how a shadow is produced, how then is the law a "shadow" of reality? What is the true reality? How can you know that?
- 4) What is the single most difference between the animal sacrifices of the old and the sacrifice of Christ as is discussed in verses 11-18?
- 5) Why was the first sacrificial system taken away?
- 6) In what sense are Christians already made perfect, while still in the process of being made perfect (v.14)? Look carefully at this verse again.
- 7) According to Romans 6:1-11 what part of man is dead and what part is made alive? Who are we now alive for?
- 8) Who came to do God's will? Did He do it? How does He still do it from heaven?
- 9) How are we sanctified?
- 10) How much of your time is spent with a gnawing and vague sense of guilt? Let's be honest! Can you tell me where you are living according to verse 14: Are you already made perfect, or are you being made holy? What does this tell you about yourself?
- 11) How can we change guilt to gratitude?

Notes from Sunset's book:

II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM (10:9-18).

- A. The new covenant sacrifice did do God's will (vs. 9-10).
 1. Christ came to do God's will (v. 9a).
 2. The first sacrificial system (that did not do God's will) was taken away so that the second sacrificial system (that did God's will) could be established (v.9b).
 3. By that will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus (v.10).
- B. The new covenant sacrifice was and is complete and final (vs. 11-14, 18).
 1. Seen in contrast between the Levitical priests and Christ (vs. 11-12).
 2. Since that time, Christ waits — not to offer another sacrifice but for His enemies to be made His footstool (v.13).
 3. By one sacrifice He (Jesus) has perfected forever those that are sanctified (v.14). The Christian does not need another sacrifice because

Christ offered the once-for-all perfect sacrifice.

4. Where sins have been forgiven (remitted) there is no more offering for sin (v.18).

C. The new covenant sacrifice does not bring a remembrance again of sins (vs. 15-17) — *“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!”*



PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR PATH

(CHRIST THE WAY THROUGH FAITH)

HEBREWS 10:19-13:25

LESSON 16 is not in the original

HEBREWS

THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN JESUS' SACRIFICE

(10:19-39)

LESSON SEVENTEEN

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

In introducing this book the writer pointed out Christ's superiority as a person. He is the Son of God and He is the Son of Man. Then, he demonstrated Christ's superiority as a high priest. As our high priest He provides a better salvation, a better covenant, a better sanctuary, and a better sacrifice. Now in the closing comments of this book the writer will concentrate on the better provisions of Christ's priesthood to we who claim them through faith in His working. This section, then, is a section on faith—faith in Christ's better sacrifice, better sanctuary, better covenant, and better salvation.

The confidence of faith we can now have because of Christ's work as our high priest is that we can enter boldly into God's presence. Fear has been removed because Christ has established peace between God and man. Peace through the blood of Jesus which He has carried into heaven itself. But this confidence in Christ's work as our high priest must be exercised through faith in His working.

And notice that faith issues from the heart. Jesus has made acceptable religion an inward religion! The Jews had turned their religion into a heartless ritualistic observance of commands by God. It had become outward observances, and they had strayed far from the heart of God's desires and God's will. This is not to be so when we come to God by faith. We are told to come to God with "a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." The sprinkling refers to the blood of Jesus' sufficient sacrifice which represents His sinless life given for our sins. Our hearts are sincere because of Christ's sacrifice, and we know this only through faith. Now our hearts are cleansed not because of the outward cleansing of baptism which is alluded to here, but because of our faith in what God did to us when we were baptized. Baptism is only an outward cleansing of the flesh, but inwardly...in the heart...it cleansed us of all sins removing guilt and providing confidence. But this is not experienced outwardly at baptism. It has been revealed to have occurred inwardly at baptism, and we know it only by faith. Jesus has become the "new and living way" to God's presence, and it is a way of faith in the power and working of God through Jesus Christ our sufficient priest.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- What are the blessings of having Jesus as a high priest over the house of God? (What should our response be?)
- What does it mean to “sin willfully?” (What are the consequences of such sin?)
- What can we do to keep from “shrinking back” when faced with trials?

A. THE EXHORTATION TO CONFIDENCE OF FAITH (10:19-25).

Notice in this text that the phrase "let us" occurs five times. Jesus is being described as the way to heaven. A "new and living way" to heaven and God has been opened up to us through faith by the work of Jesus as our high priest. But notice that in this section of scripture we are being exhorted to exert effort ourselves to take advantage of Christ's work. This reminds us that faith without works is indeed dead. It does not mean that the new and living way to heaven depends upon our works, but it does tell us that it involves our works. We are here being exhorted to do something. Salvation comes through the works of Christ which saves man and involves him in working for Christ. Not to merit salvation, but in response to salvation through a faith that obeys Christ (READ 5:8-9). Before we are exhorted to produce effort, we are reminded of three things about Jesus:

1. CONFIDENCE IS SUPPORTED BY THREE THINGS JESUS IS BY FAITH TO THE CHRISTIAN (READ 10:19-22):

Suppose you were a Gentile looking down at the Jewish tabernacle out in the desert. You would not be allowed to enter even into the outer court unless you were born a Jew. Suppose you were a Jew and you looked at those entering into the Holy Place having washed in the golden Laver. You would not be allowed to even do that unless you were born a Levite. Suppose you were a Levite and you looked longingly beyond the veil in the temple. You would not be allowed to do that unless you were chosen to be a high priest, and then only for a very short time. Do you see the significance of Christ's sacrifice? Because of it we are being invited to do what no Jew could even do....enter into the Holy of Holies with Christ because of His blood. And remember that this Holy of Holies in Hebrews is heaven itself.

Before we get into this thought more, there are three things about Jesus that we need to recognize:

a. JESUS IS THE NEW AND LIVING WAY INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD (READ 10:19-20).

Jesus has provided access into the presence of God. This text tells us that His body was represented in the shadow by the curtain or the veil in the Temple which separated man from God. Jesus represented God to man in the flesh in a way that man could understand...through faith. In all that Jesus did He revealed God to man in a way that we could understand but in a way that required faith on man's part. Some believed Christ. But most doubted Him in unbelief thus rejecting Him. The one thing that separated Jesus from God in many people's eye was His flesh...His body. Like that veil it hid God's presence. But when Jesus offered His body which was torn upon the cross, the love of God shone through revealing access to the Father. Access to God today is through His death and through His body which is also the church. It requires faith to all who will see the torn veil or the torn body of Jesus Christ which provided access to God!

b. JESUS IS THE HIGH PRIEST OVER GOD'S HOUSE (READ 10:21).

The function of the priest in Jewish history was to bridge the gap between God and man with his service and his sacrifices. Jesus has bridged that gap. His sacrifice satisfies God's righteous requirements. The standard of righteousness has not been lowered in order for God to associate with lowly man. Christ fulfills the most demanding of God's righteous requirements. God is still righteous. He is still just, and Christ enables Him to be so. This provides us with satisfaction and confidence. We know that through Christ's sacrifice we now have peace with God, and a way has been opened to us whereby we might offer our service to God through Christ in His body the church.

c. JESUS IS THE ONE PERSON WHI CAN REALLY CLEANSE (READ 10:22).

Man is cleansed by God through the sacrifice of Christ. But even this requires faith in God. For the righteousness is outside of ourselves and our ability. We must humble ourselves under the protective grace of God in Christ. We must stand not apart, not alone, but together in Christ. And we must stand not by our power, but by God's power in Christ. We stand by faith and not by sight.

2. WITH CONFIDENCE A BELIEVER IS URGED TO DO THREE THINGS (READ 10:22-25):

The power of faith is in the object of faith. Some believe in a Jesus of their own making...much like the Jews who rejected Him in the first place. Much like the Hebrew Christians to whom this book is addressed were thinking of doing. We too must guard against any faith other than one based upon the word of God concerning Jesus. He has been portrayed as the only way to God, our ministering high priest, and the only one who can cleanse us from the guilt of sin. Now we must believe in Him, and He is revealed in the Word (Romans 10:17).

Many think that faith is just a mental ascent. But we are to learn that the Lordship of Christ makes demands of our faith, and saving faith produces obedience to the leadership of Christ. Salvation could never be found

through obedience to the law because of man's weakness. But, in Christ through the sacrifice of Christ, those, who have submitted to Christ through faith, produce works which are the result of His salvation! Notice three things we are encouraged to do:

a. LET US APPROACH GOD IN FAITH (READ 10:22). NUMBER ONE!

God has opened a "new and living way" whereby we might approach God, but we must enter it and progress upon that way. Christianity is described as "walking in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), and John describes it as "walking in the Light" (1 John 1:7). A "walk" requires two things: 1) Direction...you must be headed in the right direction to go the right way. And it requires 2) Progress...once headed in the right direction we must make an effort. Growth is expected in our new spiritual life. We must draw near to God.

We draw near to God through our worship. Worship can be divided into two areas of involvement: 1) Worship is praising God. We praise God with our money, with our voices in song, with our voices in prayer, with our minds in study, with our commemoration of the death of Jesus upon the cross at the Lord's Supper. We worship God together in joyful assembly. We find our identity with others in the body of Christ, and thereby draw near to God. But worship also involves 2) Service to God. We serve God by serving others (Matt. 25:31-46).

God is perfect. He is holy. He is wonderful, mighty, awesome, and righteous. He does not need to move. Man is the one who needs to change. You and I need to become like God. We need to move by faith towards God. God does not need to change. Jesus came to provide a way..."a new and living way" whereby you and I might go to God, but we must make the effort in response to Christ's majestic effort for us!

You suggest to me some ways that a Christian can draw near to God. (Prayer, Bible study, Bible reading, assembling, et.al.). **READ 4:14-16.**

b. LET US HOLD FAST OUR HOPE (READ 10:23). NUMBER TWO!

A Gentile had absolutely no hope of ever entering into the Holy of Holies unless he were born again. Christ has provided us with that opportunity. He has brought hope even to these Hebrew Christians where there was no hope in the Old Covenant. They were on the verge of forsaking the salvation they had obtained in Christ for the Old system. They were on the verge of this because they had lost hold of their hope.

There are many enemies to our hope. Materialism, cynicism, legalism, liberalism all try to cause us to loose sight of what we believe. Even fear and boredom can try to take away our hope. That is why our fellowship together is so important, and why we will be further exhorted to worship together and encourage one another.

C. LET US SERVE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS IN LOVE (READ 10:24-25). NUMBER THREE!

Have you noticed that the Hebrew writer has stressed faith, hope and love? The Holy Spirit revealed through the apostle Paul that the "greatest of these is love!" In these two verses we are being told how to love others.

1) We must spur each other on to noble living (10:24).

Someone said to me the other day, "Milt, you have hound dogged me to death about daily Bible reading till I've started to read my Bible." That is spurring one another on to what is good. In the Greek "to spur" means "to prod or provoke" like the man who wears spurs who provokes his horse to run. It is the only place in the Bible where we are told to provoke one another, and in this case we are to provoke to love and good works.

A mother provokes her children to eat the right food because she loves them. We must spur one another on because of our love for one another. If I know you love me, I'll take almost anything you say or do to me because I know you love me.

When I was a newly married young man, the elders of the church in Mesa asked for volunteers to preach and lead singing at Eloy, Arizona. I would have never preached because I would have never had the courage to volunteer. Two men helped me. Delbert Taylor was asked to preach because he had in the past. He told the elder, brother Ken Davidson, that I should also preach. Ken came to me and told me he thought I should try it because he thought I could do it. Here two brothers provoked me to do something that left to myself I would have never done. God wants us to provoke one another to love and good works because God wants results from our faith (READ EPHESIANS. 2:10).

David Shero took a wayward brother aside on a hunting trip for the sole purpose of provoking him to repentance, and it worked. God give us all enough love for others that we will want to provoke one another to grow spiritually.

We must be careful because some will only get provoked when we try to spur them on. Here we must learn the wisdom to know who to spur on. God tells us not to cast our pearls before swine, and not to give that which is holy to dogs. When the love that motivates us is genuine, most of these problems will take care of themselves. Even a person who gets provoked at us will know if your motive was love or not. Therefore we must take care to love others more deeply because we will never purposefully antagonize one we love, even though we will do anything to keep one we love from falling from grace and losing the precious eternal life we have all found in Jesus Christ.

2) WE MUST WORSHIP TOGETHER (10:25a).

When Judy I and the children lived in Africa we used a coal fire in the fireplace in the living room to keep warm in the winter. I've built and watched many a coal fire. Once the coal all begins to burn the coal turns red hot, and sometimes we would use a poker to stir the fire so it would breath. But sometimes a piece of the red hot coal would fall out of the grate. Alone it would quickly loose its red luster. It would smoke a bit then turn black again till soon it would be cool enough to pick up by hand.

The same principle applies to our assembly. We have already been told to keep each other stirred up. Together the church burns red hot, but when we begin to forsake the assembly we will turn cold. Without the closeness of Christ and His body, we imperceptibly turn colder toward the things of God until, finally, for all the evidence of eternal life in us, we are no different from the worldly, unsaved people around us.

The word "**assembling**" or "**meeting together**" comes from the Greek word "EPISUNAGOGE." It can be translated "assembling together or gathering together." The word is used in only two places in the New Testament. Here in Heb. 10:25, and in 2 Thess. 2:1. In 2 Thess. 2:1 Christians are assembled together in the air with Christ in order to dwell with Him throughout eternity in heaven, and here in Hebrews we are warned against forsaking the gathering together, and the reason we are told not to forsake this assembling is because the approaching of a coming day. To the Hebrew writer, and to believers the assembling together of Christians is no less important than that coming day when Christians will be gathered together to dwell in eternity with Jesus in heaven. The inescapable warning is there. If we loose our desire to assemble with Jesus in His body, we stand to miss the great assembly on the coming Day of gathering.

All this requires faith. To many Jesus is easy to believe in, but this wretched bride of His is harder to take. She (the church) is harder to believe in. She is in the process of becoming perfect, she is not yet made perfect as He is. Therefore, even our assembling requires faith. There are some who love Jesus, but just can't love His bride, and this is shown by their unwillingness to assemble with them, but Jesus has warned that to reject those who represent Him is to reject Him. So we are being exhorted to increase our faith.

a) REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOT GO TO CHURCH.

There were some who had abandoned the practice of meeting together with other Christians whom the writer of Hebrews is here warning. There are many who still consider themselves Christians who have abandoned the habit of meeting regularly with other Christians. They become Christians in isolation. Let's try to discover some of the reasons why people stop going to church.

i) SOME DO NOT GO TO CHURCH BECAUSE OF FEAR.

Some are ashamed of being seen going to church. They may live or work among people who will make fun of them for going to church. This is why many teenagers when they grow older stop attending church. They are associating with people who will make fun of them for going to church or getting too involved with it.

This type of disciple is trying to be a secret disciple, but someone has said that "discipleship kills secrecy or else secrecy kills discipleship." Therefore, one of the reasons we go to church is to demonstrate where our loyalty lies. Even if it is boring and dry as dust, going to church shows men on who's side you are on.

ii) Some do not go to church because of fastidiousness.

This is the person who shrinks from crowds of people who are not "like himself." When an entire congregation becomes like this, that congregation becomes more like a social club than like the body of Christ. Christians should never make people from different ethnic or economic groups feel uncomfortable. No person to God is "common." But there are people who refuse to worship with a certain congregation because of the kind of people who attend.

iii) SOME DO NOT GO TO CHURCH BECAUSE OF CONCEIT.

This is the person who doesn't think he needs the help of others. He can do it all on his own. He is the person who will say, "You take care of your responsibilities, and I'll take care of mine." They say things like, "I'll take care of the needs of my kids, I'll not go down there and try to take care of the needs of someone else's." No man can live the Christian life without the fellowship of the church, and this verse proves it. The wisest man is only a fool compared to God who is the head of the church. The strongest man is weak in the face of temptation. We cannot survive without Christ, and we need the fellowship of His people. Together we stand. Alone we fall.

b) REASONS WHY WE SHOULD GO TO CHURCH.

Fellowship must never become selfish. We must also fellowship with other Christians in the local assembly. The emphasis in these two verses is not on what we get from the assembly, but rather on what we can contribute to the assembly. People who move to a new area and shop around for the church which will give them the most are not spiritual. They should look for congregations which will give them the most opportunities for service. Faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works. One of the strongest motives for faithfulness is the soon return of Jesus.

3) WE MUST ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER (10:25b).

This is the thrust of the thought. When we have a gospel meeting, if the local members do not attend, their unfaithfulness will kill the gospel effort. Unfaithful attendance discourages everything. We need to become encourages of one another. We need to encourage our shepherds. We need to encourage our deacons. We need to encourage our Ladies Bible Class. We need to encourage all our teachers. We need to encourage our

new young married adults. We need to encourage our children. The victory is won. Jesus is coming soon. We need to encourage one another to be faithful to Him!

(from Sunset's notes)

BECAUSE WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD...

I. WE SHOULD ENTER BOLDLY... (10:19-25) ("Boldly"— freedom in speaking, unreserved in speech. Free and

fearless confidence, cheerfull courage, boldness, assurance ...Thayer, p. 491).

A. "...LET US DRAW NEAR..." (v.22).

1. "True heart"—sincere (Hebrews 3:12-13).
2. "Full assurance of faith"—confident (Hebrews 3:6, 14).
3. "Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"—innocent (Hebrews 9:13-14; 1 Peter 3:21).
4. "Body washed with pure water"—cleansed.

B. "...LET US HOLD FAST THE CONFESSION OF OUR HOPE..." (v.23).

1. "That it waver not" (Hebrews 2:1).
2. "For He is faithful that promised" (Hebrews 6:13-20).

C. "...LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER..." (vs. 24-25).

1. "Provoking one another."
2. "Not forsaking our own assembling together."
3. "Exhorting one another."



QUESTIONS:

- a) How did you meet your spouse?
- b) What was the first date with your spouse?
- c) Why can we enter boldly through the veil? (What does boldly mean?)
- d) What is the "confession of our hope?"
- e) Based upon Christ's priesthood and His sacrifice, what attitude of faith should we adopt?
- f) What does it mean to "provoke one another to love and good works?"

- g) In what specific ways could you spur another Christian on toward love and good deeds?
- h) How have you been spurred on by others? Whose exhortation, example, or encouragement means the most to you?
- i) Why is meeting (assembling) together so important in Hebrews?

B. WARNING #4 DESPISING THE WORD THAT CREATES FAITH (READ 10:26-31).

The major theme of Hebrews is "**God has spoken....how are you responding to His Word?**" The Hebrew writer has shifted into high gear now. He has moved into the response God desires from us....faith! We now have confidence to move into God's presence, to spur one another on, to demonstrate our faithfulness and to encourage one another. But the opposite of faith is warned against in this section.

The Hebrew writer has gone to great lengths to compare the superiority of this covenant through the blood of Christ to the inferiority of the old covenant made by Moses. Under the Old Law (Deut. 17:2-7) a covenant breaker was to be killed without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. Since the Old Covenant was inferior to this new covenant we are being led to believe that the punishment will be more severe. Those who contemplated breaking with Christ faced a far greater punishment than the Law ever demanded. This makes this section of scripture a very sobering section indeed.

Notice the progression of the Hebrew writer's warnings: The person who begins to **drift from the Word** (2:1-4) will soon start to **doubt the Word** (3:7-4:13). Soon, he will become **dull toward the Word** (5:11-6:20) and become "lazy" in his spiritual life. This will result in **despising the Word**, which is the theme of this warning.

We need to state at the outset here that to one who has repented of sin, the sin he commits are not his life's practice. A repentant sinner is no longer a practicing sinner. However deliberate sin is not forgiven. Deliberate sin comes from one who has not repented or who has reverted.

Let's bear in mind the context once again. The Hebrew writer saw the horror of sin for two reasons: First the church was under persecution during these days. It was actively being opposed by the Jews, and New Testament prophets foretold of the coming persecution from the Romans. The worst possible advertisement for the church was a sinful Christ

HEBREWS

AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH

(11:1-3)

LESSON EIGHTEEN

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

II. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

HERE ARE SOME THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. What is "faith?"
2. What are the benefits of faith?
3. How does faith affect those who have it?
4. When you were a child, what are some ways you showed trust in your parents?

The Hebrew writer has shown Jesus to be superior as a person and as a priest, and now he is showing Him to be superior as the way back to God's presence. That way is a way of faith. If Jesus is a superior person to Moses or angels, and if He is superior as our High Priest, now the writer is exhorting us to trust in Him. The Jewish Christians were being tempted to transfer their trust in Christ back to Moses and the law. They stood to lose everything.

Before the world existed God existed. God is the power which created everything we know. In order for us to get back to God...after all we were created in His image...we must learn to see past and beyond the clutter of all that is physical. Verse three shows us that only through faith will man ever see God and know God. Man can know God in no other way. Peter reminds us that all that is physical will one day be removed...burned up. This will leave only God, and the only ones who will be able to see Him or get to Him are those who have trusted in Him. Those who trusted in anything else will be lost because everything else will no longer be!

Faith is man's access to God. But man is no stranger to faith. We exercise it every day. When we come into this building we had faith. We trusted James' and Johnny's ability to build a safe dwelling. We trusted the truss maker's ability to create a safe roof over our heads. When we write a check to pay a bill, we trust the bank to honor our debt. When we take a 5 dollar bill and place it in the contribution plate, we trust the government to honor its worth. When we eat at Underwood's we are trusting the people that work there to provide clean and healthy food to eat. Everyone trusts in something: The Muslim puts his faith in the Koran and in Muhammad; the idolater puts his faith in his graven images; the humanist puts his faith in himself; the philosopher puts his faith in his own ideas; the materialist puts his faith in his money; and the legalist puts his faith in his own good works. Therefore, the importance of saving faith is the object of our faith. No faith other than a faith in Jesus Christ can save. Only Jesus can save sinners, no one else nor nothing else can save us. Peter said it this way: "**And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved**" (Acts 4:12 ASV).

Because the Jewish Christians were being tempted to abandon the truth concerning Jesus thinking they could rely upon the older ways, the Hebrew writer gives in this section an explanation of what saving faith is. Then starting in verse 4 to the end of this chapter he will illustrate what he explains in our text.

Having turned our attention to the whole idea of faith we will next be shown the faith of a significant sampling of Old Testament believers who trusted in God. Enoch had never seen a person translated, Noah had never seen a flood, Abraham had never seen the Promised Land. Yet each of these was held to God by knowledge. They did not restrict themselves to what they knew or could do, they trusted in the word and promises of God. Most did not receive what they hoped for in their own lifetime. Abraham died living as a wanderer. He was connected to God not by what he received, not by what he had, not by what he knew, not by what he could see; but by what he believed. If you take away the physical, you have taken nothing away from a believer in God! It was these believers who stood as a great "**cloud of witnesses**" to bar the way of any believing Jew from going back to the law. These Jewish Christians were on the verge of trading the Spiritual realities which are not seen nor can be seen for what could be seen. They were about to abandon what Abraham, Moses and David longed for and lived for.

The lesson to us is that the world must see to believe, but Christians believe to see. This brings us into contact with the unseen and eternal world that will not be burned up. This is not blind acceptance of which the world accuses us. It is not unquestioning acceptance. It is confidence and knowledge of what we cannot see based upon the integrity and power of God Himself.

True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences. The issue is clouded because there are so many who claim to believe who really do not. They want to believe, but fail to obey because of fear or opposition. The book of James reveals to us the attacks against our faith.

Bible faith works quite simply. God speaks, and we hear His word. We trust Him and His word and act on it regardless of the consequences or the circumstances at the time. I know my mother believes in God, not because she has told me, but because she was a daily Bible reader all the days of her life. What was she most interested in? She used to read to me as a child. She heard God, and acted on it. When circumstances and problems arose in her life, she always went to the word for an answer. Sometimes the circumstances in life do not lend themselves to obeying God. And many times the consequences of obeying Him are frightening. It might cost us our job or worse, but believers will obey in spite of the circumstances and consequences.

One of the reasons the world knows so little about real Biblical faith, is because it sees it practiced so little these days. Faith is not a feeling. It is confidence in the one in whom we trust. Unbelievers do not trust God. Believers know Him and trust Him. Believers will give up their own children to let them go do mission work. Believers will go do mission work both home and abroad. Believers will put their jobs second to their God and His kingdom. Believers are just like the people who will be described in this chapter.

A. THERE ARE THREE WORDS WHICH HELP US UNDERSTAND SAVING FAITH ([READ 11:1-2](#))...

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report." (KJV).

"Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them." (ASV).

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for." (NIV).

Of the three versions above the KJV is probably the most familiar, and the NIV is probably the easiest to understand and get the meaning, but the ASV is the closest to the original meaning in the Greek. From all three we will get our three words: **SUBSTANCE, EVIDENCE, WITNESS.**

1. **SUBSTANCE.**

Faith is the "substance," or "assurance," or "being sure" of what you hope for. The word in the Greek which is so translated literally means "to stand under, to support." Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house. It is faith which substantiates our hope. As a house's foundation gives the house a firm footing and

confidence to stand, so the faith of a Christian gives the Christian confidence that he will be able to stand. Why do we hope? Because we believe what God has said! What can we show to explain our hope? Only our faith, our confidence, our being sure that God will do what He says!

2. EVIDENCE.

The Hebrew writer also shows that faith is “evidence” or “conviction” or “commendation” to God and others that a person is convinced that God will keep His word. The Greek word from which the K.J.V. translates “evidence” means “conviction.” The A.S.V. uses this word. How do I know that I am convinced that God is telling the truth? Do I take the Lord's Supper each time I can to proclaim my faith? Our faith becomes the evidence of our trust in God. Faith is the proof of our certainty. Faith shows others, God included, that I am certain of what I do not see, and faith is the acceptance of what God says. The rest of chapter eleven the Hebrew writer will give examples of men who believed God enough to become active in doing what God said.

This makes what Jesus said a little clearer (LOOK AT JOHN 8:31-47). “³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” ³⁴Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” ³⁹They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, ⁴⁰but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹You are doing what your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” ⁴²Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” (ESV) The only people who know God are those who accept the word of Christ. Our faith is the evidence that we can see what is not seen. There are many who do not see. Jesus said, “**They have eyes but they do not see!**” There are many who do not believe but who think that they do. That is the deceptiveness of Satan. The narrow gate is entered by those who have faith, and that faith is evident! Did you notice that Jesus used Abraham as an example just as the Hebrew writer does. Abraham's faith made him accept the word of God even when it was hard to do so. Even when it was seemingly against God's own promises such as when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his own son, Isaac. Abraham did not understand, but he was going to do what God asked—that's the evidence of Abraham's faith!

Notice in the following verses:

- a. By faith Able offered...
- b. By faith Noah built...
- c. By faith Abraham obeyed...
- d. By faith Abraham was enabled...
- e. By faith Abraham offered...
- f. By faith Isaac blessed...
- g. By faith Jacob blessed...
- h. By faith Joseph spoke...
- i. By faith Moses' parents hid...
- j. By faith Moses refused...and chose...
- k. By faith the people passed...
- l. By faith walls fell when people marched...
- m. By faith Rahab welcomed...
- n. By faith Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets conquered, administered, gained, shut the mouths of lions, etc., etc.

Faith is a conviction which leads a person to some action or another. Our faith is evident because of what it causes us to do which an unbeliever would never do!

3. WITNESS.

Verse 2 in the A.S.V. reads, "For therein the elders had witness borne to them." This Greek word translated "witness" in the A.S.V. and "commended" in the N.I.V. and "obtained a good report" in the K.J.V. is used twice in verse 4, once in verse 5 and again in verse 39. The word is used again in chapter 12:1. Believers of the past are witnesses to us because through faith God bore witness to them. Look at verse 39, "And these all, having had witness born to them through their faith..."

God witnesses to us through our faith. God communicates in a very special way to man through faith. I suppose this is true because Biblical faith is based upon God's integrity, and that is the only power whereby God can effectively communicate salvation to us. As John taught in 1 John 5:13, we can know we are saved, but it is by faith! Jesus makes an interesting observation in John 6:29, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one whom He has sent." Faith is the work of God. It is the witness of God to us that we are saved.

B. Faith is seeing what cannot be seen (READ 11:3).

If a person does not think he is saved, he is not saved at all because he lacks faith. A person who is not sure lacks the substance of salvation, the evidence of salvation and the witness of God because he lacks faith. Faith is God's way of working with man based solely upon the working and power of God...working on the integrity of God. If a person believes, that faith lets him know his future is secure. **"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God."** Faith takes away the worlds which have been created, and gets us back to the power of God which cannot be seen any other way. By faith man understands and sees what cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh, and by faith saints move from the carnal to the spiritual. Just as our baptism made us dead to the flesh and alive in the spirit (Romans 6:1-11; 8:10), faith is what caused us to understand it and to see it.

Faith becomes very practical. It causes us to understand what God does. It helps us to see what others cannot see ([READ 11:7,13,27](#)). Faith will enable a person to do what no one else can do. People of faith in the past were ridiculed and made fun of by unbelievers, but they were empowered by God because they looked at the future as if it were the present, and viewed the invisible as if it were seen.

The best way to grow in faith is to walk with the faithful. Let's not forget chapter 10:24-25. Men of God hear His word. They obey it, and God bears witness to them by their efforts for God.

QUESTIONS:

1. Consider someone in our group and describe them with one positive adjective.
2. In chapter 10:32-39 there is an appeal to look at their past, present and future. See the good of the past. Don't throw away your confidence now, and secure a future by not shrinking back. How does this relate to the theme in chapter 11?
3. What three verbs describe faith in verses 1 & 2? What is the object of the first verb? The second?
4. So what is faith?
5. What does faith help us comprehend about the creation of the world?
6. How do we teach others to believe?

HEBREWS

THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAVING FAITH

(11:4-40)

LESSON NINETEEN

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

II. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

LESSON AIMS

1. What is "faith?"
2. What are the benefits of faith?
3. How does faith affect those who have it?

Now that faith has been explained, it helps us understand the people of faith recorded in the Bible. (1) Their faith in God placed them at odds with the world. Therefore we see Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego risking death rather than conform to the world's dictates. (2) Their faith caused them to trust the spirit of God's word against the testimony of the senses. Abraham will trust God to cause Sarah to become pregnant even after she has passed the age of having children. He will be willing to kill his own son even though God has promised through him specifically to bless the world. (3) Their faith caused them to invest more in the unseen future rather than spending all on the present. Joseph will make the people promise to carry his bones out of Egypt in faith that something better was in store for his people. Abraham trusted God to provide a promised land even though he died in a tent as a sojourner.

So the Hebrew writer turns now to examples of the faith he has explained in verses 1-3...

A. SAVING FAITH IN THE PRE-DELUVIAN AGE (11:4-7).

To demonstrate faith in action the Hebrew writer first brings our attention to the age before the flood. He introduces us to Able, Enoch and Noah. Able's faith had to do with his worshipping. Enoch's had to do with his walking with God, and Noah's faith had to do with his working for God and his preaching for God.

1. ABLE—WORSHIPPING BY FAITH (READ 11:4).

Genesis chapter 4:1-12 contains the Biblical account of Cain's murder of Able. The Jews had many traditional reasons why Cain killed Able. We can speculate ourselves, but the plain fact from this passage is that Able's faith caused him to worship God in an acceptable manner where Cain's sacrifice was unacceptable. Many point to the fact that because Able's sacrifice required the giving of a life (to the Jews the shedding of blood where the life is found) it was a sacrifice acceptable because it pointed to the sacrifice of Christ. That would place Able's faith in Jesus. We can assume that Able was probably the first human being to die, yet because of his faith, he yet speaks to man concerning the sacrifice of Jesus our savior.

2. ENOCH—WALKING BY FAITH (READ 11:5-6).

Enoch is the seventh descendent of Adam through Seth who replaced Able. A contemporary with Enoch is Lamech who was the seventh descendent of Adam through Cain. As Lamech was godless, Enoch was godly. We know very little about Enoch. The Bible says that "he was not" (Gen. 5:24). He just turned up missing and was never seen again. The Hebrew writer tells us that God took him, and that he did not die. He was a man who lived a righteous life in a time when there were not many who were living so. He exercised his faith. He lived by faith, and he was taken to heaven by faith. The Hebrew writer will summarize that "It is impossible to please God without faith." It is absolutely impossible to please God without faith.

All these heroes of faith produced works, but faith must be in God. Faith in works will cause a person to be condemned. However saving faith always manifests itself in righteousness.

LOOKING CLOSER AT THE FAITH OF ENOCH

1. How was Enoch pleasing to God? What did Enoch do that pleased God?
2. Why would anyone "*earnestly seek*" God? What would you have to believe?
3. How can you and I seek God?
4. How does God reward us when we seek after Him?

3. NOAH—WORKING BY FAITH (READ 11:7).

"Warned about things not yet seen." Noah saw what had never to this point happened. He saw what was not seen because he believed God's word. Noah took God at His word. The wicked and unbelieving and fearful doubt God's word. They think within themselves that God's description of what will happen will not, and just like those who perished in the flood they are condemned to hell.

"In holy fear built an ark to save his family." Noah took God as this word....he believed God never doubting God's pronouncement. The proof of his faith is that he built that ark. Noah was not saved by his works because he would have never known what to do had he not believed and obeyed God. His building of the ark was the product of his faith. Because of his faith he saved his family.

Acappella (The singing group) sings a song which says, "Let's build us an ark..." How can we build an ark in today's world? (camp?) (V.B.S.?) (others?)

If building an ark is the result of faith. Seeing the coming judgment of us all....ourselves, our children, our relatives, our friends, and our neighbors...doing nothing will result in nothing and is the activity of unbelievers. Sometimes God's people become in this category. May it never be with us!

What is the exhortation to us all and to the Hebrews?

Noah preached for 100 years as the ark was being built. He endured ridicule and persecution from the people as he demonstrated his faith in God's warning. (What does pressure from the outside do to us?).

"By his faith he condemned the world." When old Noah and his family stepped into that ark, he condemned the world, and they were left without an excuse when the floods came. ([READ 2 COR. 2:14-16](#)).

"He...became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." Were it not for Noah's faith Jesus would or could not have come to man. Salvation truly comes by faith. By the faith of these heroes Jesus came into the world. Jesus brought righteousness into the world, and we become righteous by our faith. Faith brought Jesus, and faith connects man to Him now! ([READ 2 COR. 5:21; ROMANS 4:23-25](#)).

LOOKING CLOSER AT NOAH'S FAITH

1. What is "reverent fear?"
2. What caused Noah to have this reverence or fear about "events as yet unseen?" (Cf. Romans 10:17)
3. What are some of the "warnings" God has given us in

His word that would cause us to be moved with godly fear?

B. SAVING FAITH IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE (11:8-22).

1. ABRAHAM—WAITING BY FAITH (READ 11:8-10).

There are many traditions about Abraham. The Arabs have some interesting traditions. The truth is that Abraham believed the promises of God concerning the promised land and concerning the gospel without ever seeing them come to pass. He is put forward to us as the father of our faith. Notice concerning him.

a. ABRAHAM'S FAITH MADE HIM READY FOR ADVENTURE.

When God called Abraham it meant that he had to leave his own home, his own culture, his own family and his own business. He was truly the world's first missionary. Most of us live a cautious life and stress safety first. But to really be a Christian we must learn to be a little reckless. That adventurous spirit comes through faith. We will launch out into the unknown when we believe the message and promises of God.

b. ABRAHAM'S FAITH CAUSED HIM TO BECOME PATIENT.

When Abraham entered into the promised land he was never allowed to possess any of it. He was never allowed to stay in one place. He wandered around like the Children of Israel did in the wilderness for 40 years, yet he never lost his faith.

Most of us lack the faith to be adventurous, yet we are probably more deficient of the faith which will give us patience. We are always in too big of a hurry. For many of us God has to slow us down with old age to get us to believe. But Abraham had a faith which caused him to wait as long as it took. God caused him to wait all his life. I believe that the same will be true of every one of us!

c. ABRAHAM'S FAITH CAUSED HIM TO LOOK BEYOND THIS WORLD.

Abraham was a man with a vision. No man can follow God by faith without it. We must be able to see what is unseen by faith...that is a vision (READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:18). Faith will cause us to see what is eternal!

2. ABRAHAM—ENABLED BY FAITH (READ 11:11-12).

There are so many lessons here that it is hard to start. Sarah was past the age of having children, and Abraham was "as good as dead." He too had passed the age of fertility. He and Sarah were past 90 years of age. God promised Abraham a seed through Sarah. They had tried to compromise with God. Sarah according to the customs of the day offered Hagar to provide fertility to replace her own infertility. As the years passed the implication became clear to both Abraham and Sarah. God's promise did not depend upon man's wisdom, but upon God's power. This is a lesson we all desperately need to learn.

a. ABRAHAM'S FAITH BEGAN FROM AN UNBELIEVABLE PROMISE BY GOD.

When Abraham first heard the promise of God he fell down on his face and laughed (Gen. 17:17). When Sarah heard it she laughed to herself (Gen. 18:12). And that is not too different from what we all do. God's promises are just too good to be true. Someone has written:

How Thou canst think so well of us,
And be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.

The message that God loved man so much that He died to save us and make us like Himself so that we could eternally live with Him is too good to be true. That is why we call it gospel...good news!

Abraham's faith started out by laughing at the sheer incredulousness of the promise. But when the baby was finally born God named him Isaac which means, "he laughs!"

b. FAITH IS THE DAWNING REALIZATION THAT GOD DOES NOT LIE.

A person should never promise his children what he cannot give them. Because, if he does promise what he cannot give, he introduces his children to a broken promise fostering dishonesty. When Abraham realized that it was God who was promising that Sarah would have a child, it finally dawned that this was God promising, and nothing is impossible to God. We need this same dawning in our own hearts.

c. FAITH GROWS TILL WE CAN BELIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE.

For Abraham and Sarah to have children was humanly impossible. Sarah said after Isaac was born, "**Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?**" (Gen. 21:7). Yet for 15 years Abraham clung to the promise of God that she would. He was not believing in man's power, but God's! Paul said of him, "**Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations...**" (Read Romans 4:18-21).

d. FAITH'S REWARD IS THAT WE ARE ENABLED TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.

The KJV says that Sarah and Abraham received "**strength.**" The ASV states that they were given "**power**" to do what is impossible to do for a man. The NIV uses the word, "**enabled.**" The reward for faith in God's power is that we are blessed by God to do impossible things through faith!

When we listen to the arguments and plans of men, there are lots of things that are impossible for us. I know some here who thought it would be impossible for this congregation to build and pay for a new auditorium. Now that we have done it wouldn't it be a shame to brag about our own power? There are a lot of desirable things I wish this congregation would do to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but there are still skeptics who believe that it is not possible for this small group of people to do it. When are we going to grow up in faith? If it is desirable and God wants (in the congregational context if a majority of the saints desire it) nothing is impossible because the church operates on God's power, not man's. God will enable the church which has faith like Abraham! (READ MATTHEW 28:18-20....DO WE BELIEVE THIS?).

Faith is the ability to lay hold of the grace of God which is sufficient for all things so that the things which are humanly impossible become divinely possible. If God is for us who can be against us? With God all things are possible, therefore; the word impossible has no place in the Christian's or church's thought or vocabulary.

3. THE PATRIARCHS—SEEING BY FAITH (READ 11:13-16).

Did you listen carefully to what was being said? In the face of opposition, disappointments and failures the men of faith continued on in faith till they died. They did not get what was promised. Yet they did not give up on God who promised. Their faith still speaks beyond their death...they were living not for the present but for what was to come. Their faith caused them to be able to see what the world cannot see. They saw a better land.

When our faith is unwavering in spite of the fact that the promises of God to us are unfulfilled to the point of death, and at that point instead of giving up we just die secure in our faith till the end; this pleases God. I believe God would say, "That's what I'm talking about! His or her faith is in Me and in heaven!" Our text states that "**God is not ashamed to be called their God!**"

It is hard to live as a stranger and foreigner among people who are settled. It is hard for a Yankee to come from the north and live in Bangs, Texas where everyone is related to everyone else. He will live out his days as a stranger...only his children will be at home. But a person of faith chooses to be regarded by the world as a temporary resident. Because we live for heaven, we will never be at home in the world.

The only person who will subject himself to the role of an outsider is the person who has a faith which sees the world to come!

4. ABRAHAM—FAITH TESTED (READ 11:17-19).

The assurance of faith will cause us to do what God instructs. Again Abraham is placed forward as our example. Abraham believed God. His faith had grown to the point that he did not question God. He just did what God instructed. Obedience is the by-product of faith.

God has given us instructions...preach to the lost, seek out the wayward, and discipline the rebellious. Our faith can be measured by our willingness to do these things. Our faith is also tested by our response to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

LOOKING CLOSER AT ABRAHAM'S FAITH

1. Why did Abraham become a sojourner dwelling in tents in the first place?
2. What was Abraham looking for?
3. If his inheritance was a city made by God — a heavenly city — could he see it? Why did he keep looking?
4. Why did Abraham offer Isaac?
5. What was involved in this trial? What did Abraham's faith have to overcome? How did he do it?

5. ISAAC—BLESSING BY FAITH (READ 11:20).

Isaac's blessing was given when he was old and about to die. The very fact that he was passing on the blessings which had been promised to him are a witness to his faith.

6. JACOB—FAITH TO THE FINISH (READ 11:21).

Like Isaac Jacob passed on the promises of God to his descendents.

7. JOSEPH—CONFIDENCE OF FAITH (READ 11:22).

Joseph knew that God had plans for His people. His faith was evident when he made the people promise to carry his bones out of Egypt. Look at this faith. He did not know how or when God would do what He promised. He didn't even understand what God was going to do, but he saw something and lived and died in faith that God would do it!

C. SAVING FAITH IN THE PATRIOTIC AGE (11:23-31).

Now the Hebrew writer shifts from the age of the patriarchs to the period of history when God began to make the Jews into a nation. We'll call it the patriotic age.

1. MOSES—WAGING WAR BY FAITH (11:23-29).

a. FAITH FROM GODLY PARENTS (READ 11:23).

Moses' faith started in his parents. Moses could thank God for his parent's faith. Just like we today can thank God for our parents' faith. We all as parents need to have a strong faith too for our children's sake. So they can have an example of faith and assurance and sight of things not seen.

b. FAITH TO CHOOSE RIGHTEOUSNESS INSTEAD OF PLEASURE (READ 11:24-26).

Did you notice that Moses' faith caused him to serve Jesus even though he did not know Jesus yet? His faith caused him to choose slavery above luxury in order to have God's promise. Is that any different from our choice? To call Jesus Lord is to make ourselves powerless as slaves. Only by faith will we ever make such a choice!

c. FAITH TO SUSTAIN IN THE WILDERNESS (READ 11:27).

Moses when he ran away went to the wilderness. Maybe he was not ready yet for God's service, but this verse tells us what sustained him there—it was his faith in God's promises. We do not know what he had been

taught by his mother, but it must have been a great lesson! Faith in what he had learned sustained him in his seemingly meaningless sojourn in the wilderness.

d. FAITH TO AVOID GOD’S WRATH (READ 11:28).

Moses' faith caused him to do what God commanded concerning the night when God's wrath would fall upon all who did not believe. Moses' faith caused others to believe, and it saved the entire nation. God give us such an influence by our faith!

e. FAITH TO SEE YOU THROUGH TO VICTORY (READ 11:29).

Moses stood by his own might powerless to save himself, but because of his faith in God a way was opened to him which gave freedom to God's people and which destroyed the enemy of God's people. God ever give us such a faith.

LOOKING CLOSER AT MOSES’ FAITH

1. List the things Moses did by faith. Why did he do them?
2. What does “recompense of reward” mean in the ASV? What reward is being talked about? (Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
3. How did he endure, not fearing Pharaoh, when he forsook Egypt?
4. How can we see God who is invisible?

2. JOSHUA & RAHAB—WINNING BY FAITH (READ 11:30-31).

D. SAVING FAITH BY VARIOUS HEROES (READ 11:32-40).

QUESTIONS:

1. What aspect of faith (v.1) is demonstrated by Enoch (v.5)? By Noah (v.7)?
2. How is faith demonstrated or explained in each of the three examples from Abraham's life?
3. Give me a Texas definition of faith we have seen here.
4. Give some verbs that describe your faith.
5. Of all the people described in this chapter who do you feel you have the most in common with?

6. How has your faith changed your life?
7. In what sense are we aliens and strangers on earth?
8. Who are some contemporary heroes of faith that spur you on today?

HEBREWS

THE ENDURANCE OF GOD THROUGH SAVING FAITH

(12:1-13)

LESSON TWENTY

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK TO THIS POINT

I. JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).

II. JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PERSON (3:1-10:18).

III. JESUS PROVIDES A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD (10:19-3:25).

A. THE CONFIDENCE OF SAVING FAITH (10:19-39).

B. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

C. EXAMPLES OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

D. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).

E. MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21)

F. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS (13:22-25).



I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

II. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

IV. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).

We've seen the demonstration of saving faith in Hebrews chapter 11. Faith was defined as seeing by faith what cannot be seen any other way. Because we believe God we see His plan for us. The Hebrew writer points out those heroes of faith that are paraded in chapter 11. He finishes by saying that the world is not worthy of them. Then he places the thrust of saving faith by telling us that their faith was not fulfilled in their own lifetime, but they—the people this book was written to—were charged with the opportunity to finish up or fulfill the faith of those who died looking for what God had handed these Christians. In short he is saying, "It is time to go on!" "By all means press on in your faith!"

A. THE EXHORTATION—FOLLOW THE ORIGINATOR OF SAVING FAITH (READ 12:1-3). "...LOOKING TO JESUS..."

The theme of chapter 12 is hope! This is not the "I hope so" kind of hope. It is a hope for when the doctor tells you that he has exhausted all efforts to prolong your life and now there is no hope. It is a hope that will stand even when the judge looks at you as says, "You are condemned to die!" Hebrew chapter 12 is telling us that our life is no longer hopeless.

There are three things in Hebrews "set before us." (1) First based on the integrity of God we are told to "hold fast to the hope set before us" in Hebrews 6:18. Having run to Jesus as sinners seeking refuge in Him we are being exhorted to hold on to the hope God has provided for us in Jesus. Hold on to your salvation—hold on to your faith—hold on to your hope! Never give up! (2) Second here we find "the race...that is set before us." Before Isaiah was born God had a course for his life to follow—the same with the apostle Paul. Here we find that God also has a plan and purpose for all our individual lives. (3) Thirdly there is the "joy set before" Jesus our Lord. The salvation Jesus purchased was not for Himself, but for us. That's why we are to hold fast to the hope He set before us. Jesus considered it a joy to suffer for us because his hope and his faith was in the finished product—namely eternal glory in heaven. As we run our race "set before us" we are to look "to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame..." Jesus' joy was not from the suffering He endured, but for the result of the suffering He was enduring. He anticipated the outcome with joy—that brethren is hope! Short term losses in this life cannot distract from the glory waiting for Christians—that's our hope! And our hope gives birth to our joy because glory is now through our faith in Christ's work a sure thing!

A CALL TO SELF-DISCIPLINE (12:1-3).

The word picture here is that of a race. At this race there are witnesses—all the people of faith that we looked at in chapter eleven. Let's go back and [read 11:39-40](#). Picture a cross country race. The crowd is not in the arena, but on each side of the course. Who is cheering us on—those whose faith is connected to our race—those who are looking and longing to see the fulfillment of their faith in our faith. They are cheering us on as we run.

Where will our race take us? We don't know, but God does. [Read 13:10-15](#)! We are told to look to Jesus who endured the suffering of the cross with joy—not the joy of suffering, but knowing that His sacrifice was bring life and glory to you and to me and to all recorded in chapter 11.

When Jesus died there were two sacrificial fires. One was at the altar before the temple with all the pomp and ceremony and the blood. But there was another fire outside the camp at the dump. It was not a savoring fire with cooking meat, but as defiled fire that stunk of burning refuse and guts and skin. Jesus represents both fires, and our race can take us to both places in our sacrifice to God. How are we going to run? How are we going to endure the suffering? The Jewish Christians were on the verge of quitting. They are being told to press on and run with a renewed faith. That message is the same to you and to me.

1. FIRST THERE IS THE AUDIENCE. “THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES...” (12:1a).

Look who is watching us—Abraham—Paul—David—Moses—all have run their races, and they are looking with bated breath for our race to start. They have a stake in it. They are cheering us on to run and finish our race. They all want us to endure to the finish. They want us to win. They have shown us that it will not be without a struggle, but like Jesus let's look beyond the pain to the glory which motivated Him.

2. THE STRUGGLE. “LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND SIN WHICH CLINGS SO CLOSELY, AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.” (12:1b).

First of all here there is a discipline required when the writer says, “Lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely...” The word “weight” comes from a Greek word “ogkos.” This word translated means “whatever is prominent, protuberance, bulk, mass...burden, weight, encumbrance...” This is what sin does to us when we run our race. The word picture here is a track runner who takes off most of his clothes so he can run unencumbered his race. It is obvious that being a Christian and follower of Jesus makes it essential in our repentance to discard certain things in life. You tell me what you think these might be? (habits, pleasures, self-indulgences, associations). In short we are to discipline ourselves as does an athlete shedding anything in our lives which might lead to sin. Can legitimate things like family, home, country become weights that hinder our race? How?

Secondly we are to “run with patience the race that is set before us!” Who set us on this race? Who sets the course we are to run? Notice that we are not set adrift by God. God gives a way. In John 14:6 we are given a way identified as Christ! In the words “set before us” from the Greek it means “to lie or be placed before (a person or thing)...to be appointed, destined...the hope opened to us, offered, given...” (Thayer, p.540).

Patience is needed because this race is not a 100 yard dash. It is a distance race which lasts our whole life through. The need for patience in our race has been stressed in this letter. It is easy to start a race, but it takes

perseverance to finish a race. We as Christians are forever on our way to the promised land. The goal is eternal life with Christ. It requires patient perseverance to finish our race.

3. THE STRATEGY—LOOKING TO JESUS (Read 12:2-3).

Our total motivation for running this race is Jesus. It's not for the prize of running the race—Jesus has given us the prize. It is not even because of those described as the “cloud of witnesses” who cheer us on and who have ran their race before us. Our eyes are on Jesus who has set us on our course. The word “looking” comes from a Greek word “*aphorao*” used only here in verse two. It means “looking away from all else, looking at that which fills the heart.” Jesus thrills the soul of a true believer. He has diverted us from the world and caught our eye turning it heavenward.

Jesus is the “founder and perfecter of our faith.” The word “founder” or “author” comes from the Greek word, “*archēgos*” which translated is “a chief leader, prince, author, founder, captain...” This means that Jesus runs this race with us to lead us; he helps point out the pit falls, and lifts us when we fall.

Not only does he set us on our course, he helps us run it. Not only does he lead us he “perfects” our race of faith. This word comes from another Greek word “*teleiōtēs*” which translated means, “a completer, that is, consummator:—finisher, perfecter.” As you can see this race is totally associated with our relationship with Christ. Not only has he moved our sight from worldly pursuits to a heavenly one, he is also the captain and originator of our course and our race. He is the one who set it before us, and when we respond to the race he is there to help us reach the finish because he is the finisher too.

And we are reminded that He is good at finishing because the Hebrew writer says, “...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (12:2b). Remember the Hebrew Christians were considering giving up. In these verses they are being urged to press on. Jesus’ position is being stressed here. He ran His course and because He did He purchased for you and for me—for these Hebrew Christians—this glory and position He has attained. He is setting at the right hand of the throne of the Father. Where He is we will be. We have only to run with Him this race He has set before us.

(Read 12:3) Jesus endured the hostility and opposition against Him from sinners for us that we might have courage to run our race. I believe this means that our race too will be opposed by Satan, but don't fall victim to Satan's trap. You will win this race if you will only run it with patience because Jesus is with us!

NOTES FROM SUNSET'S STUDY GUIDE:

I. LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE (12:1-3).

- A. The word “*therefore*” (v.1) brings us to a conclusion based on the great demonstration of faith presented in chapter 11.
- B. The “*cloud of witnesses*” (v.1) refers to the righteous people mentioned in chapter 11. Those witnesses are witnessing the fact that FAITH IS A VALID RULE OF LIFE!
- C. The language of this context is competitive—the language of the Olympic games.
- D. The “*weights*” (v.1) would possibly symbolize:
1. Sins.
 2. Materialism.
 3. Fleshly attachments and distractions.
- E. The “*besetting sin*” or “*sin which clings*” of v.1 is THE SIN OF UNBELIEF!
- F. The Christian and his running of the race set before him...
1. The Christian runs not to be saved but because he is saved.
 2. The Christian runs with patience.
 3. The Christian runs looking to Jesus.
 - a. Jesus is the author and finisher of faith.
 - b. Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross.
 - c. Jesus endured the cross despising the shame.
 - d. Jesus then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE HAVE READ:

What do the following words/or terms mean?

- a) “Therefore”
- b) “Cloud of witnesses”
- c) “Weights”

Describe the race we as Christians run...

B. THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD IN SAVING FAITH (12: 4-13).

Remember that this section is speaking of the endurance of saving faith. These Hebrew Christians were on the verge of giving up. So in verses 1-3 of this chapter the Hebrew writer has exhorted us to run with patience our race of faith looking to Jesus as we do. From this point he passes on quite naturally and without a break to speak of the important matter of the chastening of the Lord—it is but an extension of this same theme of endurance. God has fellowship with us in our race set before us! We could call this section of our study “The Chastening of the Lord!”

Brother Lynn Anderson said, “What can someone who has never suffered teach you?” In that same vein brother Paul Frizell who for the past 11 years has been serving his wife hand and foot could teach us all a good bit about Christian marriage. What about brother Charlie Young? Could he teach us some things about the value of Christ in our marriages?

1. THE EXPLANATION (Read 12:4).

Jesus has given us a race to run. He is the leader and perfecter of this race. This verse shows the need for chastening as a spiritual discipline in life, for, if this race is to be won and our hope is to be realized, God has to bring pressure on us in certain areas of our lives to help us get rid of weights and sins. If the Hebrew Christians stop running, they are not going to finish this race. We are opening the door to God’s fellowship with us in saving faith which begins in the next verse.

My mom used to quote this passage in verse 4 to me when I was feeling sorry for myself—you know what I mean—when I was saying, “Poor, poor, me, look at what I’m going through.” She would say, “In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

What do you think this means? I think mom was right. You have not suffered near as much as you could be suffering. This could be a warning of the suffering the New Testament Christians were about to face. Jesus suffered, but He finished His race. This is also the spirit we need in our suffering that we might finish the race.

The sin mentioned in this verse could be the sins incurred in the things of life which trip us up. It could also refer to the sin these Hebrew Christians need to avoid of throwing in the towel and giving up short of the finish line.

What are some of the trials we endure in life in our struggle against sin?

2. THE EXHORTATION (Read 12:5-6).

This exhortation comes from Proverbs 3:11-12. The Hebrews should have well known the value of God’s discipline. The exhortation is the fact that we all need chastening as a spiritual discipline in life, for, if the race is to be won and our hope is to be realized, God must bring pressure upon us in certain areas of our lives to help us get rid of the weights of sin.

Remember the suffering of the Jews because of their sin of idolatry. God could not ignore their trespasses so he caused them to be defeated in battle. He caused Jerusalem to be sacked and destroyed. He

even caused the Jews to be carried away with fish hooks in their skin into Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah speaks of God's discipline in Lamentations 3:1-21. (Read Lamentations 3:22-33).

Did God love Israel? Was his wrath seen in their destruction accompanied with His love? Jeremiah seemed to think so. This leads us to our next point..

3. THE EXPECTATION (READ 12:7-8).

It is to be expected that God's chastening will accomplish something. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, and after a remnant of the Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem. There was never again a trace of idolatry of foreign gods seen among the Jews. They had plenty of other problems, but idolatry will not be one of them.

When we discipline our own children, why do we do it?

What do you think was good or bad about the discipline you received as a child?

4. THE EXAMPLE (READ 12:9-10).

Now the Hebrew writer gives us an example, an analogy from everyday life. There is obvious lessons from parental chastening. We had to submit to human chastening, but instead of hating our parents, we love them all the more because we know that their disciplining of us was done for our own good. We respect our earthly fathers for their discipline

5. THE EXPERIENCE (READ 12:11-13).

The actual experience of chastening is not pleasant, and the writer of Hebrews has more insight than to pretend that it is. However, chastening does bring about a change. No boy ever relishes a whipping from his father, but the punishment might bring him away from a worse consequence if his actions are not corrected. The punishment of God serves the same purpose!

Let's look at some benefits of discipline by God seen in these verses:

- a. Discipline is a sign of sonship (12:6).
- b. Discipline is designed to make us chaste (12:7-8).
- c. Discipline is for our own good (12:9-10).
- d. Discipline purifies us from sins (12:11).

- e. Discipline keeps us from falling (12:14-17).

Questions:

- 1) What measures does the Lord sometimes take toward those who are His "sons"? Why? (12:5-6)
- 2) What do we learn about God from the fact that He disciplines us? (12:6-7)
- 3) What sobering truth can be inferred by those who never experience the discipline of God? (12:8)
- 4) What are some specific ways God disciplines us?
- 5) What state might your life be in if God neglected to discipline you when you went astray?
- 6) Why should we not lose heart when the Lord rebukes or corrects us?

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURE

II. THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD (12:4-13).

- A. Read Hebrews 12:1-13; Proverbs 3:11-12; Deuteronomy 29:18-19 and Genesis 27:30-40.
- B. The value of discipline (chastening) as it produces perseverance.
 1. Discipline is a sign of sonship (v. 6; Proverbs 3:11-12).
 2. Discipline is designed to make one chaste (vs. 7-8).
 3. Discipline is for one's profit (vs. 9-10).
 4. Discipline is to purify one from sins (v.11).
 5. Discipline is to keep one from falling (vs. 12-17).
 - a. Warning (vs. 14-15; Deuteronomy 29:18-19).
 - b. Example (vs. 16-17; Genesis 27:30-40).

HEBREWS

DEFYING THE WORD NULLIFYING SAVING FAITH

(12:14-29)

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK TO THIS POINT

- I. **JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).**
- II. **JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).**
- III. **JESUS PROVIDES A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD (10:19-3:25).**
 - A. **THE CONFIDENCE OF SAVING FAITH (10:19-39).**
 - B. **AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).**
 - C. **EXAMPLES OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).**
 - D. **THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).**
 - E. **MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21)**
 - F. **CLOSING EXHORTATIONS (13:22-25).**

I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

II. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

IV. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).

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V. MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21)

A. WARNING #5: DEFYING THE WORD NULLIFYING SAVING FAITH (12:14-29).

There has been a progression of five warnings to the Hebrew Christians found in this epistle. The **first** is a warning against **drifting** from God's Word through neglect. This warning is found in Hebrews 2:1-4. The **second** warning is a warning against **doubting** Christ's power and Lordship. This warning is found in chapter 3:7 – 4:13. The **third** warning is found in chapters 5:11 – 6:20. This warning is a warning against **becoming dull** towards God's word. Here we have a warning against taking God's Word for granted and ceasing to see the glory of God in it. The **fourth** warning is found in chapter 10:26-31. It is a warning against **despising** and **hating** God's Word. This is when a person says, "I hate that passage!" The **final warning** is found in our text today. It is the final step towards apostasy. This is a warning against **defying** the Word of God. It is a warning against defying the kingdom of Christ.

The path to nullifying a person's faith which results in salvation is as follows: **drifting** from God's word, **doubting** it, becoming **dull** towards God's word, **despising** it and finally **defying** God and His word.

1. THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL EXERCISE TO AVOID DEFYING GOD'S WORD (READ 12:14-17).

In verse 14 there is a path we need to follow—it is the path of peace (Read 12:14). Back in verses 12 & 13 we were told to stop drooping around and prepare for getting on with it. What we are to get on to is this path of peace found in fellowship with God in pursuing holiness which is mentioned here. So the path we are to follow is a path of peace and sanctification (holiness). We could call this "path of peace" God's "eternal purpose" which the apostle Paul refers to it. We could call it God's way or God's will for which Jesus prayed when He prayed in the garden.

A provision for this Christian journey is found in verse 15, "the grace of God!" Any Christian endeavor will fall short without this provision. So the writer says "See to it..."

A set of problems are will result if we do not follow God's plan and try to make endeavors without God's grace. These are mentioned in the latter part of verse 15 & verse 16 Esau being used as an example (Read verses 15-17). The peril we might be headed towards without God's grace is the peril which befell Esau. We need to remember Matthew 7:20-21 where Jesus declares that many who serve in His name will be called "evil

doers.” It is possible to go on in our own wisdom and unwittingly defying the will of God by trying to serve God on our own.

2. THE GOAL WE NEED TO ATTAIN (READ 12:18-24). “FROM MT. SINAI TO MT. ZION!”

There follows here an edifying contrast between the errors of the past and the thrills of the present. This contrast seems so balanced that it can be laid down in a striking parallel. All the trembling, fear, and imperfections of the past are seen gloriously transformed into the thrills, favors, and perfection of the present. This is a very brief summation of all that the book of Hebrews has been doing from the first. The text makes us all want to shout out: **“How blest are we in Christ Jesus!”**

THE TERRIFYING PAST:

1. The mount that might be touched (tangible)—v.18.
2. That burned with fire; darkness; tempest; a God to fear—Heb. 12:18b; Ex. 19:16-18.
3. The sound of a trumpet (a call by angles) who warn of sin, causing all to tremble—Heb. 12:19; cf. Ex 19:13,19; Gal. 3:19; Rev. 8:2,6, etc.
4. The voice of words—they that heard entreated that no more word should be spoken unto them—verse 19; Ex. 20:19-20. They feared His voice “lest we die.”
5. For they could not endure that which was enjoined by God—verse 20. If they drew near God they would perish.
6. So fearful was the appearance that Moses said, **“I tremble with fear”**—verse 21. A mediator who himself was made to fear before God.

THE THRILLING PRESENT:

1. Unto Mount Zion (intangible)—verse 22.
2. Unto the city of the living God; unto the heavenly Jerusalem—Gal. 3:21-31; Heb. 12:22; a God who favors—1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 3:1.
3. An innumerable host of angels—to the general assembly (a company of angels who are sent to serve)—verse 22b; Heb. 1:13-14.
4. The church of the firstborn—verse 23; 1 Pet. 2:9-11; 2 Thess. 2:13-14. They loved this voice for it is His call from darkness to light; a call to be His firstborne ones (James 1:18). These are enrolled in heaven—Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8.
5. Unto God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect—verse 23; Col. 1:21-12, 27-28. If we draw near to God, He will perfect us (James 4:8-10; Heb 13:20).
6. To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel—verse 24; 7:22; 8:6-10; 9:15. A Mediator who prayed to be brought back near to God (John 17:1-5) so we could draw near to God with boldness (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:22-28; 1 John 3:21-24).

Jesus’ superiority has been displayed in multiple ways in this book. In these verses the Hebrew writer seems to summarize the sublime relationship one sustains with the Savior as a prelude and proof-text for the proposition we’ll see in verse 25 following: **“See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking...”**

In verse 18 we are reminded that God’s presence was fearful and dark because of our sins. But because Jesus has died to atone for our sins we are drawing near to Zion the Temple where God dwells, and it is a beautiful

place as contrasted to the scene at Mt. Sinai. This is the contrast depicted by the Hebrew writer. Mt. Sinai was a terrifying sight, burning like a volcano, dark with clouds, roaring with strong winds. Out of that and even worse came the trumpet blast and voice—such a fearful voice that the people begged Moses to ask God to speak through Moses and not out loud. No one not even animals were permitted even to touch the mountain. At the center of this contrast is that the holiness coming from Mt Zion is welcoming, cleansing and healing.

Here we need to be very careful not to make the mistake that many religious people make in this contrast between the law and the gospel. This false notion is that the Mosaic dispensation was about an exclusive sort of holiness and the new covenant is a matter of inclusiveness which simply lets everybody come as they are. Verses 12-17 shows us that the gospel does not include everyone regardless of faith. Indeed faith in God is demanded to become a part of God one true plan of salvation. The holy requirements of God under the law and the gospel are the same. The contrast is teaching us that by faith God has obtained through the sacrifice of Christ forgiveness of sins making the holiness of Mt. Zion open to those who by faith “draw near!”

Almost every feature of Zion described in verses 22-24 emphasizes the fact that those who live in this city are not those who have simply been told to come as they are, but those in whom the lavish grace of God has been granted with such cleansing, such transformation, that they now belong as a right—by sheer grace—within the holy city itself.

Angels in the city in which we have now come (verse 18) don’t give the law, they celebrate the fact that what the law had not been able to do has been accomplished through the Son of God! The fact that inside the city dwell the “spirits” of righteous men who have “been made perfect” sums up the contrast and the sin-forgiving nature of this new covenant. Finally in verse 24 the mention of the “blood” which calls, not for vengeance as Abel’s did (Genesis 4:10), but for the full pardon and cleansing which Hebrews has already described at some length in chapters 9 & 10. What a glorious picture.

And remember from verse 18 that we by faith (or the Hebrew believers) are already in a sense arrived at this heavenly city! You would not want to go back to the dark forbidding Mt. Sinai.

3. THE PERIL WE MUST AVOID (12:25-29).

The Hebrew writer has a habit of exalting God’s greatness and then describing the gravity of our departing from Him. Now again, in this context, the superiority of Jesus’ system is forcefully contrasted with Moses and the law given at Mt. Sinai (12:18-24), leaving it evident that we should not reject nor refuse this richly rewarding redemption that will remain and endure God’s shaking.

God in this section will tell us that His plan is to remove everything transient, temporary, secondary and second-rate. This will take place when the present heaven and earth are shaken. This will leave that which is of the new creation, based on Jesus himself and his resurrection to shine out all the more brightly. Everyone who belongs to the new covenant is to be included.

However, this promise is not made in the form of a promise, but in the form of a warning because, remember, these Jewish Christians were contemplating escaping the persecution of fellowship with Christ by going back to the Jewish traditions and unfulfilled promises of the past.

A. THE DEMANDED RESPONSE (READ 12:25a). “SEE THAT YOU DO NOT REFUSE HIM WHO IS SPEAKING.”

The key phrase here is the phrase “**him who is speaking.**” These points us back to the giving of the first covenant at Mt. Sinai. The Children of Israel did not want to hear God speak. It was too fearful. It was too dreadful. The exhortation to the Hebrew Christians is that they had better see to it that they listen and learn, rather than reject and refuse, what Jesus says. The Jews feared God but did not listen to Him. The Hebrews and we are being told to listen to God, this time and heed carefully what Jesus has revealed to us.

B. THE DEVELOPED REASON FOR THE RESPONSE DEMANDED (READ 12:25b-29).

The jest of this section is summed up in the last two verses. Verses 25b-28 tell us of perils to ponder—these are the things that can happen if we fail to heed the warning, then verses 28-29 give us the possibilities to pursue!

Verse 28 tells us to be grateful for receiving a kingdom which will endure God’s shaking. When God is finished shaking His creation (which by the way is what the word “shaken” implies). The shaking experienced by the Jews at Mt. Sinai was only a foreshadow of the shaking that is to come. We might note that this kingdom is not a millennial kingdom which will one day be given to us. It is a present kingdom which the Hebrews were being given by God were they to remain faithful. The tense of the verb indicate it is continual action—people are continuing to be added to this kingdom even today.

Verse 29 reminds us by describing God as a “**consuming fire**” that all that smoke and thundering and dangerous sounding noise experienced by the Jews at Mt. Sinai was witness to God’s consuming nature for all who fall into His hands without the benefit of Jesus’ atoning blood. The Hebrew writer has come full circle. He has carefully depicted Jesus as greater than Moses, greater than angels, greater as a priest and king. And he has shown God the Father not as an indulgent parent, someone always there to comfort, never wanting to make too much of a fuss. But the true God is not tame, nor does he spoil his children. He is like a fire: the holiness of God, emphasized through the Temple rituals, is not undermined by the fact that, in the new covenant, his people are invited into His presence in a new way through faith. To think like that would be to make a radical mistake.

God has not stopped being holy. God has not changed a bit. It is, rather, that Jesus has opened up a new and living way, through the “**curtain**” and right up to God Himself. Only when we see and appreciate the holiness of God will we appreciate the significance of what Jesus has achieved for us.

The fearful God depicted in Mt. Sinai is the same God who through the cross has brought His plan to save man to a triumphant conclusion. He is the same God, and to slight His working is very unwise.

Going back to verse 28 again we are be grateful to God for all He has done and we are to render to Him “**acceptable worship (service).**” The word “**worship**” here is the word *latreuo* in the Greek. It is a word sometimes translated worship, and sometimes translated service. We are being exhorted to offer religious service or homage to worship—to perform sacred services, to offer gifts, to worship God in the observance of the rites instituted for His worship. The appropriate response to God’s plan and working to save man is gratitude and worship! When you and I bow down before the living God and with our lives thank Him from the bottom of our hearts for what He has done and for what He has promised to do for us giving us an eternal future; it is as though you and I are priests in the Temple, offering the purest, most unblemished sacrifice. This is the holy privilege of being a follower of Jesus Christ our Lord, and it is the life this firey God calls us to.

In short the Hebrew writer has finished his warning to the Hebrews. If they continue to the point of defying God’s word—they forfeit any chance to be apart of the wonderful kingdom of God which is the only vehicle upon which we can endure God’s final judgment or shaking. Great are the possibilities for them in Christ, but great is the destruction for them if they reject Christ and His word.

Questions:

1. What are some warnings that you have been grateful for? Why?
2. Why is holiness important? (12:14)
3. What kinds of things do Christians need to watch out for? Why? (12:15-17, 25-27)
4. How should we worship God? Why? (12:28-29)
5. What roadblocks make it difficult for us in pursuing holiness?
6. What does it mean to worship God with reverence and awe?
7. Make a contrast between Mt. Sinai and Zion...
8. Who are the “spirits of just men made perfect” (v.23)?
9. What should our response be to the Kingdom of Christ (12:28-29)?

SUNSET'S STUDY GUIDE:

1. Discipline is to keep one from falling (vs. 14-17).
 - a. Warning (vs. 14-15).
 - b. Example (vs. 16-17).

III. THE DIGNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN POSITION (12:18-29).

- A. Read Hebrews 12:18-29; Exodus 19 and Haggai 2:4-6.
- B. The contrast between SINAI and ZION (vs. 18-24).
 1. The picture of Mt. Sinai (vs. 18-21; cf. Exodus 19).
 - a. Physical (vs. 18-19).
 - b. Not to be touched—not even by an animal (v.20).
 - c. Moses approached fearfully even though he had been invited to draw near (v.21).
 2. The picture of Mt. Zion (vs. 22-24).
 - a. For the Jew, Mt. Zion was the most holy place on the earth.
 - b. The residents of Mt. Zion:
 - 1) Innumerable hosts of angels.
 - 2) General assembly and church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven.
 - 3) God, the judge of all.
 - 4) Spirits of just men made perfect.
 - 5) Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.
- C. The *“spirits of just men made perfect”* (v.23) refers to ALL OF THE RIGHTEOUS WHO LIVED BEFORE THE TIME OF CHRIST (cf. 11:39-40).
- D. The *“blood of sprinkling”* (v.24) is the BLOOD of CHRIST (cf. 9:14). The Blood of Jesus speaks better than the blood of Abel (v.24) because CHRIST'S BLOOD IS REDEMPTIVE.
- E. The speaker in verse 25 is the Son through whom God speaks (1:1-2).
- F. The *“things that are shaken”* (vs. 26-27) of Haggai's prophecy (Haggai 2:4-6) refers to the removing of the Jewish commonwealth which occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- G. The “Kingdom of Christ” (vs. 28-29).
 1. Was present as the writer wrote—*“having received.”*

2. Cannot be shaken.
3. Response: Exercise your privilege—*“let us have grace whereby we may offer service (worship) well pleasing to God with reverence and awe.”*
4. Warning: DON'T NEGLECT YOUR PRIVILEGE, FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.

The words in chapter 12 represent a challenge to Christian living. Rate the following phrases concerning your spiritual maturity:

- ___ Running with perseverance
- ___ Eyes fixed on Jesus
- ___ Steadfast, not growing weary nor losing heart
- ___ Struggling against sin
- ___ Leading a disciplined life
- ___ Having the right attitude toward hardships
- ___ Living in peace with all men
- ___ Being holy
- ___ Faithfulness in listening to God (Bible Study)
- ___ Being thankful and worshiping God

HEBREWS

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH

(13:1-25)

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

by Milt Langston

PART THREE

JESUS AS A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD

10:19-13:25

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK TO THIS POINT

- I. JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PERSON (1:1-2:18).**
- II. JESUS IS A SUPERIOR PRIEST (3:1-10:18).**
- III. JESUS PROVIDES A SUPERIOR WAY TO GOD (10:19-3:25).**

- A. THE CONFIDENCE OF SAVING FAITH (10:19-39).**
- B. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).**
- C. EXAMPLES OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).**
- D. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).**
- E. MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21)**
- F. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS (13:22-25).**

I. THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (10:19-39).

II. AN EXPLANATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:1-3).

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAVING FAITH (11:4-40).

IV. THE ENDURANCE OF SAVING FAITH (12:1-13).

V. MANIFESTATIONS OF SAVING FAITH (12:14-13:21)

A. WARNING #5: DEFYING THE WORD NULLIFYING SAVING FAITH (12:14-29).

B. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN LOVING CHURCHES (READ 13:1).

We've entitled this section The Manifestation of Saving Faith. In other words the way faith shows in the lives of believers. I've seen this section referred to as The Way of Love. Christian life is a changed life. God's fellowship through the Holy Spirit changes a believer moving him back from rebellion to a practical life that pleases God and honors His will through the Lordship of Jesus as our new leader in life.

There is a theme that runs through this section. The Hebrew writer will say over and over again, remember, remember, remember—don't forget—let us, let us, let us. It is obvious an exhortation to Christian living which a new life (as per Paul) lived in faith. Christians are believers, and faith manifests itself in our life.

The first words out of the box sets the tone for this whole section: "Let brotherly love continue..." ESV, The NASB reads, "Let love of the brethren continue." I like the NIV it reads, "Keep on loving each other as brothers." So the title The Way of Love is an apt title for this section. John the apostle said, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." (1 John 3:14).

Someone penned the following words:

To dwell above, with saints in love
That will indeed be glory;
To dwell below, with saints we know—
Well, that's another story!

I was talking today to Linda Fluitt about some of the squabbles we hear about over at the School (SACA). But there are also squabbles in most families even in the church. But like sibling rivalries in our homes, there needs to be a spiritual love. I know that in our family you might gripe about your brother, but you would defend him if someone else complained about him. Christian love needs to be cultivated. By faith we recognize that the needs of others in our spiritual family are important to all of us. It make passages like those in Philippians chapter 2 where we are told to consider the needs of others as more important than our own needs. This is what Jesus did, and remember what He said. He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Our love is to be like His love—sacrificing, giving. And this kind of love for each other is the gospel to the world that we are Christians—that we are His disciples! Love is a manifestation of a Christian as it is of faith.

C. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN HOSPITALITY (READ 13:2-3).

1. CHRISTIANS ARE URGED TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS (13:2).

This was impressed upon us when we lived in Africa. It was a cultural requirement to show hospitality to strangers. I was always impressed at the hospitality shown to me when I was in a strange home. Another situation presented itself to us while there. There were a great many men who would come by our house in town asking for food because they were hungry. Judy and I determined to show them hospitality. We never turned anyone away, but fixed a large cup of tea with sugar in it and bread with butter on it. If I was home I would visit with them as they ate. They were always grateful accepting the hospitality as if it were normal as it was in their culture. We never had people who abused this hospitality. I've noticed that people asking for food here in the 'States are a whole lot different from the people who asked for food there.

I've always wondered if we entertained angels not being aware of it. The exhortation is that if we show hospitality to strangers God promises will bring guests into our lives which will be a thing of honor to us. We have the example of Abraham in Genesis 18 and Lot in Genesis 19. Both entertained angels.

2. CHRISTIANS ARE URGED TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO THOSE IN PRISON AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MISTREATED (13:5).

Just as Christians are to love strangers and not shun them, we are also told to love those who are suffering. Some suggest that in Hebrews when this book was written this might have been an exhortation to show kindness to brothers and sisters who had fallen victim to the persecution which was coming upon the church from Rome which was punishing Christians for not worshipping Caesar as a god. If this was the case it was an exhortation not to sit on the fence concerning our loyalty to Christ. This is an apt exhortation to us today as Christian values are being demeaned and holding to them labels us a bigoted.

There is a fellowship of suffering being suggested here. **“Remember those in prison as though in prison with them.”** Jesus suffered because of sin. Most suffering suffered by anyone in this life is because of sin. If there was no sin there would be no suffering. Because God placed us into the body of Christ when one member hurts every member hurts. Our faith in Jesus will manifest itself in our hospitality and service to others around us who are hurting.

D. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN PURE MARRIAGES (READ 13:4).

Marriage is a sanctified place where the most beautiful part of human expression of love for two people can be kept safe. It sanctifies these God given urges by mutual honor and protection. Sexual expression outside of this protection dishonors God's creation and will be judged by God. Marriage is to be honored. Celibacy practiced as holiness I believe dishonors marriage. Of course adultery and fornication dishonors marriage, but marriage is honorable.

There was a time that marriage was dishonored by Gnostic teachers who started the Catholic Church. They taught that any fleshly pleasure was unholy, and Christianity (false teaching) labeled the physical part of marriage as being unholy and shameful. This passage forever dispels this myth. **“Let marriage be held in honor by all!”** is the ringing exhortation of this verse! And **“let the marriage bed be undefiled”** lets us know that whatever occurs in the marriage bed is honorable and it is holy. Marriage makes it holy. Marriage is a covenant between two people. It sanctifies the most intimate form of the communication of love between a man and a woman!

Marriage is the most beautiful part of our society. It should not surprise us that Hollywood and the world constantly attacks it and will not portray it in a positive light. Unrestrained sexual expression floods

our society today. It is a lie and it builds up the wrath of God against all who fall victim to it. The saving faith of Christianity will hold up marriage as honorable and beautiful

E. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CONTENTED CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S POWER (READ 13:5).

Faith in God will illuminate itself in the lives of Christians in the form of contentment. Basic to faith in God is the fact that God is the ultimate provider. He feeds the birds and the beasts. He sends springtime and harvest and the refreshing rains that cause things to grow. Christians even know that our temporal employment and the ability to work are provided for us by God.

This was a constant teaching by Jesus. He said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (Matthew 10:29). "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). Did you notice that two sparrows are sold for a penny, and at a bargain five are sold for two pennies? What happened to that one sparrow worth nothing? Even its affairs are God's business.

The faith of Christians trusts God with contentment and that faith is a light to those who are afraid without God.

F. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN COURAGE TO TRUST GOD (READ 13:6).

The old ASV reads, "So we with good courage can say..." The ESV reads, "So we can confidently say..." Then the Hebrew writer uses David's words from various Psalms to say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" The word courage or confidence comes from the Greek word **θαρρέω** (tharreo) which can mean confidence, courage or boldness, but Thayer says the word's deeper meaning is confidence born of faith.

Faith gives us confidence in God and in His protection even in the face of persecution. It is not a boldness born of pride like Peter's when he told Jesus that he would not depart from Him even if everyone else did. We know what Peter did. This confidence is from our faith and will be present even when we fear and quake to express it. The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were about to be tested by the governmental power of Rome. Rome's persecution weeded out those who trusted in God to the point of suffering and those who would not stand in their faith against the terrible persecution which was coming.

G. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CONSIDERATION OF OUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS (READ 13:7).

Faith will cause Christians to be considerate with their spiritual leaders—elders—deacons—preachers. Faith causes Christians to respect those whom God entrusts with positions of leadership among His people. The KJV describes them as those who "rule" over you. The word used by the Holy Spirit in the Greek is **ἡγέομαι** (hegeomai). You can translate this word as "1. to lead, i.e. a. to go before; b. to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over; in the N.T....leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel...Acts 15:22..."

of the persons over whom one rules, so of the overseers or leaders of Christian churches: Hebrews 13:7, 17, 25" (Thayer, p. 276). The Hebrew writer describes these leaders as "those who spoke to you the word of God." These leaders have brought the message of salvation to us.

Then the Hebrew writer tells us that in the exercise of our faith we are to consider the way of life of our leaders. They are to be an example to the rest of the flock. Then we are to imitate their faith. Faithful leadership in the church results in faithful membership in the church which will insure that there will be faithful leaders coming up to replace the leaders as God calls them home.

Men who become elders learned about the eldership from observing their elders, deacons and preachers as their faith was being developed and matured in Christ.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURE:

I. AN EXHORTATION TO REMEMBRANCE AS TO GOOD WORKS AMONG MANY (13:1-7).

- A. Affection for brethren—*"Let brotherly love continue"* (13:1; John 13:24-25; 1 John 3:10-11, 16-19).
- B. Affection for strangers—*"Forget not to show love ('entertain'—KJV) unto strangers"* (13:2).
- C. Alert to the captive—*"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them"* (13:3; cf. 10:32, 34; 2 Timothy 4:16-18).
- D. Akin to the ill-treated—*"Remember...them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body"* (13:3b; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26; 2 Corinthians 11:29; Philippians 2:1-5).
- E. Adorn the marriage relationship—*"Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled"* (13:4a; cf. Genesis 1:27-28, 31; Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-7).
- F. Adulterer warned—*"For fornicators and adulterers God will judge"* (13:4b).
- G. Avoid covetousness and materialism (13:5).
- H. Assurance from the Almighty (13:6).
 1. Courage
 2. Co-worker
 3. Calm
- I. Adjust according to approved men (13:7). Whether we ever know who these men were, we know what they were. In knowing this we have a charge and challenge.
 1. Their position
 2. Their practice
 3. Their pattern

H. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN MIRRORING CHRIST'S CONSISTENCY (READ 13:8).

No one knows our trials and tribulation that come from life better than Jesus. He understands our problems and temptations. Yet He is our example for Christian living. When things were going well and many were following Jesus. When His popularity was rising He trusted the Father and set about doing the Father's will. Later when His popularity began to wane and less and less came to hear Him, and as the opposition from the Jewish leaders began to increase day by day; Jesus continued to devote Himself to doing the Father's will. He trusted the Father. Even when His world came apart—when His disciples scattered—when Judas betrayed Him—when Peter denied Him—when on the cross He was separated from the Father He consistently set about doing the Father's will trusting the Father.

This is the type of consistency God wants from us—total faith—total trust! We will have trouble doing the Father's will the way Jesus did, but we can trust God. God rewards such faith with total forgiveness and help to do the Father's will which has become our goal and desire.

F. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CONVICTION TO THE WORD (READ 13:9).

Verse 8 speaks of the consistency of faith, but verse 9 speaks of the conviction of faith. The central person in this system of faith is Jesus as we saw in verse 8. Now, Christians are being exhorted not to be led from Jesus by “diverse and strange teachings.” Consistency is born of faith in Jesus.

These diverse and strange teachings are any teaching which leads one from Jesus, or any teaching that seeks to minimize Jesus' authority as Lord. It could refer to Jewish traditions because of the reference to food which follows. Can you think of any teaching which might lead a believer from Jesus or from faith in Jesus? Can our opinions lead us from Jesus? Can our traditions lead us from Jesus? Wisdom and great care is to be given in determining what leads away from Jesus because the Lordship of Jesus is absolute.

“It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace.” From our study of Romans chapters 9-11 we learn that the Jews would not let go of trying to obtain righteousness through the law. Salvation by grace ran them up a tree. In the end many Jews rejected the righteousness which comes by faith in Jesus because they would not let go of the law. I believe this passage refers to that. Grace insures real righteousness which comes from the work of Jesus who is the center of our faith system. This knowledge will refresh the heart and remove the dread of failure replacing it with an assurance of salvation in Christ.

I know that is what is being discussed because of what is said next: “...not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.” We're talking about kosher food restrictions from the law. These restrictions did not strengthen the Jews nor did it provide comfort to the heart by providing righteousness. It all goes back to Jesus who provided what we need. He does not change!

This can apply to us as well. How much devotion do we give to eating which benefits the flesh? Is not the spiritual food provided by Christ of much more value?

I. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN COMMUNION WITH CHRIST IN SACRIFICIAL LIVING (READ 13:10-14).

Verse 10 implies our communion service in the church—the Lord’s Supper. By faith Christians share with Jesus’ sacrifice by eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine which represents the body and blood of Christ. Under the law the Jews were not allowed to share in this food. Priests could share in certain sacrifices, but never in the sacrifice of atonement. It was carried outside the camp and burned (v.11).

Now reading verses **12, 13 & 14** we get the following message. Jesus our atoning sacrifice (our altar from verse 10) took place outside of Jerusalem—outside of the city. Verse 13 exhorts us to have the faith to go with Christ and share His reproach. Verse 14 reminds the Jew that Jerusalem is not their city anymore—the city of the Saints. Our city is that city not made with hands—in heaven! So, the Hebrew writer is making a bold appeal to the Jewish Christians to have enough faith to suffer the shame and rejection Jesus suffered. That would include being kicked out of the Jewish traditions—being expelled from Jerusalem. This was a heavy cost to the Jews. They are being asked to give up their former religion completely.

But we can apply these same principles to ourselves who are not Jews by nature. How do we share with Jesus in His rejection and reproach today?

J. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN SACRIFICIAL CONSECRATION THROUGH PRAISE AND SERVICE (READ 13:15-16).

One of the manifestations which are seen in the life of one who truly believes is a consecration of that person’s life which issues in praise and service to God. When I think of consecration I think of Romans 12:1-2 where Paul says, “**I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**”

We could speak a great deal with this passage found in Romans 12, but this response to God’s love in a faith that issues in praise and service is something which our text states pleases God when it says, “**... for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**”

Romans 12:1 states that you and I are the living sacrifices which pleases God. Our text here in Hebrews 13:15-16 is almost the same. Romans 12:1 says that our giving of ourselves totally to God in our “**spiritual worship.**” Some translations say it is our “**reasonable service.**” Both are reasonable translations. The word in the Greek from which we get “**service**” is a word sometimes translated as “service” or “worship.”

Worship comes in two forms. One of the forms comes from the word **proskeneo** which means literally to “kiss towards.” The other is **letreuo** which means “to serve.”(this is the word used in Romans 12:1). So worship to God is the praise type of worship which says good things about the one we are praising. This comes from the word translated “to kiss towards.” And worship is also serving God with acts of service for Him which comes from the word translated “to serve.”

Although the two words for worship are not in our text, the type of consecration being demonstrated by our faith includes both these types of worship. Verse 15 says we are to continually offer up a sacrifice of praise which is referred to as the “**fruit of the lips.**” This is worship in praise. And the words in our songs of praise acknowledge God’s name. It is an act of confession. Did you notice that this worship is not a sacrifice of music (from a piano, organ or guitar) but the “**fruit of the lips**”—singing. The other type of worship is described in verse 16 which is worship in service to God. It is service to others and sharing with others.

We do not have to say that our acts of service are never intended as an inducement to God to have mercy on us, but it is an act of gratitude to God for His Son and His righteousness or for the mercy God has

already shown. Our worship to God in service pleases Him, and that is our desire. It also fulfills God's desire to make us a blessing to others.

K. FAITH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN AN OBEDIENT CONCERN FOR OUR LEADERS (13:17-19).

As the Hebrew writer is about to end his epistle he pauses here to exhort the Hebrew Christians to honor the leaders among them and to pray for the writer whom they obviously knew and who was quite possibly an elder among them.

1. THE MINISTRY OF THE ELDERS (READ 13:17).

“Obey your leaders and submit to them...” When he tells the brethren to obey their leaders he is asking them to recognize their authority over them as well as to honor them. Christianity is not a democracy in which the majority rules, nor is it anarchy where everyone does what pleases themselves. It is a theocracy in which Jesus rules His church.

The authority a church leader has is Christ's authority which is channeled through them. For example if the elders have given us an assignment—a bible class—a combined gospel effort to save sinners—or whatever, it is an assignment from Christ. And an elder or other church leader has no authority to make doctrine. Their authority is in implementing the stated will of God in Jesus Christ, and an elder or leader who runs rough shod over the wishes or desires of the whole congregation is asking for trouble. The wishes (in matters of choice) of the whole is really the wishes of the church, and wise elders will determine what that desire is, and when they choose what we will be doing they place the authority of Christ of the thing being done.

The church is told to submit and obey our leaders because “they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” This reminds leaders that they will be held accountable for their leadership. As we have already said in the last paragraph our leaders are not to lord it over those who are told to submit to them. Elders, deacons, preachers, teachers are all servants first in their leadership. We are all under the authority of Jesus “the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant!” (13:20).

There is a call for common sense here also. Since elders and leaders are held to a higher standard in our behalf, it would be foolish to hinder their work. So the Hebrew writer says, “Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” If our elders are going to give an account for our soul we should make their service easier because it is to our advantage. Never make it hard for them because they are serving for our salvation's sake! The reactions of our elders are two fold. They can react with joy or with sorrow. We are being exhorted to bring our leaders joy and not sorrow.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURE:

II. AN EXHORTATION TO REMEMBRANCE AS TO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REDEEMER (13:8-17).

- A. Strengthened to stand (13:8-9).

1. The person—Christ is the foundation stone on which redeemed souls rest (v.8; 1 Corinthians 3:10).
 2. The plan—*“for it is good that the heart be established by grace”* (v.9; Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:4-10; Romans 5:1-2).
- B. Sanctified to serve (13:10-12). The point in this section relates back to verse 9 and opens the door (as to incentives) for the suggestions in verses 13-16. The key word is *“grace”* for the heart in contrast to a fleshly visible sacrifice pattern of yesterday. Our hearts are to be established by grace, not meats. Meats do not profit (v.9).
- C. Sharing and seeking for security (13:13-14; 11:9-16; Philippians 3:20-21).
1. The course—*“Let us...go forth unto him”* (cf. John 14:6; Matthew 11:28-29; Acts 4:13).
 2. The condition—*“...without the camp, bearing his reproach.”* Christ was cast aside by the Jews. He was cast outside of Jerusalem as a token of His being rejected by all that Jerusalem represented (cf. Matthew 21:33-45; 27:22-26; John 19:17-18; Acts 7:51-53).
 3. The cause—*“for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come”* (v.14; 11:9-10; Galatians 4:21-31).
- D. Sacrifices offered through speech (13:15).
- E. Sacrifices offered through serving (13:16).
- F. Submitting our souls (13:17).

2. THE REQUEST FOR THE HEBREW BROTHER’S PRAYERS (READ 13:18-19).

Having almost finished this epistle having exposed the horrors of apostasy and revealed the glories of a future in Christ the Hebrew writer asks for their prayers. They obviously knew whoever wrote this epistle. Not only did they know him, but they understood his circumstances.

He asks stating the clearness of his conscience. You only ask people that love you and are close to you to pray for you. He wants to be restored to them. It could be that he was away. Was he in prison? We don’t know.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURE:

III. AN EXHORTATION TO REMEMBRANCE AS TO PRAYER AND PURE PRACTICES AMONG BRETHREN (13:18-19). This part is primarily personal. Yet, entwined within this Christian personality are several of the active principles for which he has pleaded in this epistle.

- A. Dependent—prayer; *“Pray for us”* (13:18; cf. Hebrews 4:16).

B. Devoted—pure practices: “...*we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things.*

And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this...” (13:18-19).

1. Cleansed
2. Consecrated
3. Consistent
4. Concerned