

Hebrews — Chapter One

Heb. 1:1 “GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,”

“GOD, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,” (ASV)

“GOD, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,” (NKJV)

“GOD, who in former times spoke to the fathers by the prophets in many parts and many ways;” (ESV)

“sundry times” — πολυμέρως — *“In many portions, i.e., variously as to time and agency (piecemeal)”* (Strong); *“By many portions, by many times and in many ways”* (Thayer); *“By or in many parts. Josephus applies the word to various parts of Solomon’s magnificent temple. The statement in Heb. 1:1 that God gave OT revelation polumeros refers to the incremental and progressive manner in which God disclosed Himself up until the appearance of the Son. It was fragmentary, piece by piece”* (Zodhiates); *“In many ways”* (Bauer, p. 687).

“divers manners” — πολυτρόπως — *“in many ways, i.e., variously as to method or form”* (Strong); *“In many manners”* (Thayer); *“In many ways, in diverse manners. The writer of Hebrews uses this word to qualify the manner in which divine revelation prior to the incarnation (i.e., the OT era) was given (Heb. 1:1). As such it points to the diverse media and mode through which God disclosed His word, such as dreams, visions, angelic visitation, et al”* (Zodhiates); *“Manifold, various, in many ways, in various modes”* (Analytical Lexicon, p. 336); *“In various ways”* (Bauer, p. 690).

Hebrews begins simply with the word “GOD” and is one of the most fascinating books in the New Testament, and indeed, in all the Bible. Only two other books begin the way this one does (with the word “GOD”); Genesis and John. Both simply make the bold statement that GOD is, without apology, without reluctance, without explanation of GOD’s existence. He exists and so it is simply stated.

“Yet this opening statement goes far beyond the fact of God’s existence, starkly magnificent though that fact appears, and enlightens men with some of the most significant information that is possible to have concerning God. Thus, he is a God who speaks; and, because only a person can speak, this reveals him as a personal God” (Coffman, p. 18).

This author believes the Spirit of GOD chose the apostle Paul as the human author of this book. As such it begins differently from any other book he was chosen to write. There are no opening remarks of greetings by Paul; he simply immediately wades into the meat of the matters before him and at the most crucial point. It must be

remembered that this letter was being written to Hebrew (Jews) Christians to show them the difference between the Old and New Laws. His goal was to encourage them to stay with Christianity (which they had accepted) and not return to the Mosaic Law (which they had left). To accomplish his goal, he immediately declared in the most forceful way that it was the same GOD Who gave both the Old Law and the New Law. It was the same GOD Who spoke to both dispensations of time (and one might add, to the patriarchal dispensation as well).

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

In the past, GOD spoke to mankind (particularly here to their forefathers) at **“sundry times.”** The prophets were sent to reinforce those laws and give guidance in understanding and application of those laws to the lives.

GOD also delivered these instructions in **“divers manners,”** i.e., in many different ways.

1. Direct communications — As an example, one could look at GOD’s communication with Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:1ff).
2. Dreams — As an example, notice the dreams of Pharaoh, and Joseph (Genesis 41:1ff; 37:5ff).
3. Visions — The book of Daniel has that prophet receiving a message through a night vision (Daniel 2:19).

Paul was about to show the contrast between the way GOD communicated to those who lived in past generations and the superior way He had now revealed His will to mankind through His Son.

The medium GOD used in the Old Testament is called the **“prophets.”** There is much misunderstanding regarding the word **“prophet”** in the minds of man. If one were to ask the average person on the street what the job of a prophet was, he would probably be told to was to reveal the future to mankind. But the job of the prophet was to reveal the mind of GOD to man. The prophet was simply a **teacher** who used the past, present and sometimes the future to communicate the mind of GOD to man. As one studies the Old Testament, it is striking that the prophets primarily used the present in whatever era they were in to accomplish this task. Of all the teaching they did, a small amount of it involved the future, and when the future was revealed, it was most often given as an encouragement, to let GOD’s people know of the coming victory of both GOD and His faithful people.

Heb. 1:2 “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds;”

“hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds;” (ASV)

“has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds;” (NKJV)

“In these last days has spoken to us by the Son, Whom He appointed heir of everything, and through Whom He made the worlds.” (ESV)

The phrase “**hath in these last days**” does not imply that the world was then coming to an end. It refers to the fact that this is the last dispensation (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian), the last period of the world before the end comes.

“They (Jews, RK) were want to divide all time into two ages, viz, ‘the present age’ (ho aion houtos) and ‘the coming age’ (ho aion mellon). By the former, they meant the age then existing before the coming of the Christ; and by the latter they meant the age subsequent to his coming. (Matt. 12:32) And hence it was, that in the Hebrew dialect ‘these days’ came to signify the Jewish age; and ‘the last days,’ the coming age” (Milligan, p. 52).

Thus, if one goes back to Acts 2:16-17, he can quickly see the claim being made by Peter which would be recognized by his hearers.

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD.”

In these “last days” GOD has not spoken to mankind over a vast expanse of time nor in many different ways. He has given His will to man through His only begotten Son.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

The implication of the statement that GOD has spoken through His Son Who lived on earth, puts the highest obligation upon mankind to listen to and obey His words. This new law was not given through prophets but by the Son.

In this last dispensation of time, GOD had spoken to man by His Son **“Whom He hath appointed heir of all things.”** The Bible often speaks of those who are heirs and even speaks of GOD’s children as being heirs.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD: And if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16-17).

But Christian’s being heirs is not the same as Christ’s being **the heir** of all things. Because He is **the** Son of GOD, He has received all power, all authority (Matthew 28:18); man will never receive this. Thus, this language *“is used to denote His rank and dignity as the Son of God”* (Barnes, p. 24). When the language is applied to Christ (as it is here), it means that He is the possessor of everything; everything belongs to Him. His superiority to the prophets (and all men), is solidified. Since this is true, then the law He gave is superior to the law given by the prophets.

The superiority of Christ is also shown in that it was through Him that GOD made the worlds. Christ is superior by creation. When one makes an object, whatever that object is, it belongs to him by right of creation.

“by Whom” in *“Common and classical usage of the word rendered by (dia), when it governs a genitive, as here, is to denote the instrumental cause; the agent by which anything is done”* (Barnes, p. 25).

Christ was the agent of GOD in the creation, the one Whom GOD used to create all physical things which exist. This simple, but profound truth, is taught in several other places in the New Testament (See Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9).

The word **“world”** is commonly thought of as this planet on which mankind lives. It is noticed that the word **“world”** in this text is plural. It goes beyond this planet which man calls home and includes every planet of the solar system in which he lives — and beyond that to every planet which exists anywhere. In connection with this thought, one should notice the following passage in Colossians 1:16-17.

“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

Not only did GOD use Christ to create all things, but every physical things continues to exist by His power.

Heb. 1:3 **“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”**

“Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” (ASV)

“Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” (NKJV)

“He is the radiance of GOD’s glory and the likeness of His essence. He is bearing all things by the power of His word. Having obtained the purification for sins He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high;” (ESV)

“brightness” — ἀπαύγασμα — *“an off flash that is effulgence: brightness”* (Strong); *“Reflected brightness...of Christ in that he perfectly reflects the majesty of God”* (Thayer); *“Effulgence, light or splendor emitted or issuing from a luminous body. The word is found only in Heb. 1:3 and refers to the person of Jesus Christ. The Son is the effulgence or shining forth of God’s glory and the likeness of the Father”* (Zodhiates); *“Radiance, effulgence; pass. Reflection”* (Bauer, p. 82).

“express image” — χαρακτήρ — *“the figure stamped that is an exact copy or representation”* (Strong); *“The mark stamped upon that instrument or wrought on it...a mark or figure burned in or stamped on, an impression...the exact expression (the*

image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect, i.e., facsimile” (Thayer); “The temr suffix signifies agency, hence the word originally denoted an engraver or engraving tool. Later it meant the impression itself, usually something engraved, cut in, or stamped, a character, letter, mark, sign. This impression with its particular features was considered as the exact representation of the object whose image it bore. In the NT, representation, express image” (Zodhiates).

Does one want to understand the glory of GOD as much as it is humanly possible? Then look to Christ, because He is the very glory of GOD. On one occasion Philip made a request of the Lord.

“Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?” (John 14:8-9).

Jesus was the perfect manifestation of the Father in all things.

“The rays or beams of the sun are its ‘brightness,’ or that by which the sun is seen and known. The sun itself we do not see; the beams which flow from it we do see” (Barnes, p. 26).

“No man hath seen GOD at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18).

Jesus declared the Father to mankind. In fact, He was the “**express image**” of the Father, i.e., the exact likeness of the Father This enabled the Lord to say, “**I and the Father are one**” (John 10:30). Again one notices John 14:9; “**He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.**” Not a likeness of the Father, but the Father’s image in His Son.

“If the Father is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinitely holy, wise, just, and good, then so is the Son” (Reese, p. 5).

All of the descriptions of Christ one reads in verses two and three declare the superiority of Christ. They declare His right to be worshiped and justify His demand for the obedience of all humankind to His commands.

The text declares that Christ is “**upholding all things by the word of His power.**” Barnes states that the phrase “**word of His power**” is a Hebraism which means “*His efficient command*” (p. 29).

“By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth...For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:6, 9; see Colossians 1:16-17).

It became popular with many pseudo intellectuals (and a good number of “religious leaders”) some years ago to proclaim “God is dead.” This reminds this writer of a cartoon he once saw, where someone had posted a sign in a rocky barren field which read, “*God is dead.*” Several frames later, one sees that a bush had grown up and covered the word “*dead,*” leaving the sign to read “*God is.*” The first chapter of Romans clearly shows that the existence of GOD can

easily be known and proved by the world in which one lives (Romans 1:18-20).

“The heavens declare the glory of GOD; And the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, And night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language; Their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world”
(Psalm 19:1-4).

Common sense and the Scriptures affirm that **“every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is GOD”** (Hebrews 3:4). The simple fact is that if Deity did not continue to uphold or maintain the world and the universe, there would not be a single human being to state such nonsense as “God is dead.”

Notice the next sign of Christ’s superiority: He **“by Himself purged our sins.”** This of course took place when Christ died upon the cross. The Old Testament is very clear that sacrifice is necessary for transgressions against GOD to be removed from one. It took blood from an atoning sacrifice (Leviticus 17:11). But the atoning sacrifice made by the Mosaic High Priest was but a shadow of the atonement which Christ made. The blood of Christ, like the cross beam of the cross, pointed back to all the centuries before this event and also forward to all the centuries until eternity (Hebrews 9:1). His blood flowed back through the centuries, cleansing every obedient, penitent person. His blood flows from that time forward to every obedient person.

Christians must remember that they are bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). The price was the precious, sinless, blood of Christ. Note the message given to the elders at Ephesus.

“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Although Christ came to this earth to teach and to be an example to mankind, He did not come merely to be a teacher or example. The primary need of mankind has always been a perfect sacrifice so that his sins could be forgiven.

After His atoning sacrifice was made, Christ **“sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

“The representation that Christ has ‘sat down’ is a testimony to the completed nature of His work. In the Jewish economy, the High Priest did not sit down when he went into the holy of holies, there being no provision for a chair, testifying to the prefatory and temporal nature of the atonement that he made; but not so with Christ who having accomplished all things is seated at God’s right hand” (Coffman, p. 25).

Where is Christ today? He finished His earthly mission and gone back to Heaven where He is sitting on the right hand of GOD. When speaking of the most valued and trustworthy associate one has, one sometimes hears the phrase **“right hand man.”** This is the position Joseph had with Pharaoh, a position which gave him almost unlimited power. Christ is at the right hand of the Father and has all authority to rule until the last enemy has been destroyed (Matthew 28:18).

“For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him” (1 Corinthians 15:25-27).
He reigns as the King over His kingdom!

Heb. 1:4 “Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”

“having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.” (ASV)

“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” (NKJV)

“Being so much greater than the angels, and having inherited a more excellent name than they.” (ESV)

“better” — κρείττων — “*better, i.e., nobler: best, better*” (Strong); “*More useful, more serviceable...more excellent*” (Thayer); “*Better, i.e., more useful, more profitable...better in value or dignity, nobler, more excellent*” (Zodhiates); “*More prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better...more useful, more advantageous*” (Bauer, p. 449).

“angel” — ἄγγελος — “*to bring tidings; a messenger*” (Strong); “*A messenger, envoy, one who is sent*” (Thayer); “*A messenger, one who is sent in order to announce, teach, perform, or explore anything...a celestial messenger, a being superior to man. God is represented as surrounded by a host of beings of a higher order than man*” (Zodhiates).

The great proposition of this verse, which leads one’s thoughts into the rest of the chapter, is that Christ is superior to the angels of Heaven. Christ’s superiority to the fathers and prophets of the past was declared in the first three verses. Since the angels are superior to the prophets, and since Christ is superior to angels, then Christ is superior to all human beings.

Why would this fact need to be stated and so many proofs offered in this letter to the Hebrews? It is because of the extreme importance which the Jews placed upon the functions of angels. GOD’s use of angels is mentioned quite often in the Old Testament. They were messengers who had superior power to human beings. They performed the tasks assigned to them by GOD, delivering His message to mankind (Hebrews 2:1-4). They had an important role in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament their role is diminished to make room for one greater than they. This is not to say they are no longer active or that they do not have an important role to perform. Instead their visibility faded from sight compared to what it had been in the Old Testament. All eyes are now to be focused not on the prophets, or Moses, or on the angels; but rather all eyes are to be focused on Christ, the Son of GOD (Matthew 17:1-5).

In the present text the term “better” does not refer to being morally better, but rather to the exalted rank of Christ in comparison to the angels. He is “the” Son of GOD, whereas angels have always been the servants of GOD. Their creation was probably by the Son Himself. Christ is “the firstborn from the dead;” He does have the “preeminence” in all things (Colossians 1:18); He is the “beginning of the creation of GOD” (Revelation 3:14).

Why does the text say, “having become so much better than the angels” (ASV, NKJV)? Was Christ not always superior to the angels? Notice the excellent thoughts of Reese regarding these questions.

“We might have expected the writer to describe Jesus as eternally superior to the angels, rather than as ‘becoming’ superior to them. But the writer words it this way because he was thinking of what the Son did in becoming man in order (to, RK) make purification of sins. While he was incarnate, He was made a little lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:7). But He is no longer lower. He was not lower in eternity before the creation, and He is not now lower (as Hebrews 2:9 will explain)” (Reese, p. 7).

One might consider the implications of Philippians 2:6-8 with regard to this subject. Since the word “better” refers to use and service, Christ is more useful to man than were the angels. They were limited in what they could (can) do — He is not!

Heb. 1:5 “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?”

“For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, This day have I begotten Thee? and again, I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son?” (ASV)

“For to which of the angels did He ever say: You are My Son, Today I have begotten You? And again: I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son?” (NKJV)

“For which of the angels did He ever say, You are My Son, this day I have begotten you? And again, I will be a Father to him, and he will be a son to me?” (ASV)

The term “sons of GOD” has been applied in the Scriptures to saints, etc, but the force of this passage seems to be that GOD had never singled out any particular being and called him “My Son” until He did so with Jesus. There is a particular relationship which exists between GOD the Father and GOD the Son which has never existed between GOD and any created being. This is the Messianic Son.

“That God the Father said this to Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1:20), is evident from the second Psalm, and also from Paul’s address at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:33-34). But never was this name in all its full and proper meaning (John 5:18) to any of the angels. True, indeed, they are all called the sons of God (Job 33:7); and so also are pious men and women called ‘the sons and daughters of the Lord

God Almighty' (2 Cor. 6:18). But no mere creature, how ever pure and exalted, was ever so singled out and distinguished from all others, by the Father of spirits. This is the peculiar honor of Him who is, not only with the Father (John 10:30), and who is himself God equal with the Father (John 5:18), but who is also the Firstbegotten from the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5). On him this title was repeatedly bestowed by the Father, both reference to both his incarnation and his resurrection. See Psalm 2:7; Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 13:33; etc. But in this case, the Spirit refers particularly to his resurrection from the dead..." (Milligan, pp. 64-65).

"have I begotten Thee" As indicated in the quote below, there are several views on what this phrase has reference to – whether the resurrection, ascension or incarnation of Christ.

"Dods takes 'have I begotten thee' to refer to the resurrection while others refer it to the incarnation" (Word Pictures of the New Testament – Vol. 5, p. 338).

The phrase itself is quoted from Psalm 2, which almost all scholars agree is an entirely Messianic Psalm. About the only ones who say this Psalm is not Messianic are the modern Jewish scholars because they wish to deny the fact that Jesus fulfilled it perfectly (These are the same fellows who changed **"virgin"** in Isaiah to *"young woman"* in the RSV.). But Jewish scholars from earlier times have agreed that Psalm two is indeed a Messianic Psalm.

"Pierce affirms that the second Psalm belongs wholly to Messiah; and proves by passages from the writings of the ancient Jewish doctors, that they applied it to Messiah; and that some of the later doctors have acknowledged 'it advisable to apply the Psalm to David, in order to better answer the heretics' (meaning Christians)" (McKnight, p. 510).

One should also notice the statement of the apostle Paul as he defended the resurrection of Christ.

"GOD hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts 13:33).

Since the text quotes from Psalm 2 and since divine inspiration affirms it was spoken about the resurrection, then it is at that time that GOD **"begat"** Him. The resurrection of Jesus proved all of His claims, and that is why critics look for some way to discount the importance of the second Psalm. The resurrection of Jesus further affirmed His Deity as nothing else could have done. Speaking of Jesus, Paul stated He was **"declared to be the Son of GOD with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"** (Romans 1:4).

Heb. 1:6 "And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of GOD worship Him."

"And when He again bringeth in the firstborn into the world He saith, And let all the angels of GOD worship Him." (ASV)

“But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: Let all the angels of GOD worship Him.” (NKJV)

“But again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, All the angels of GOD are to worship Him.” (ESV)

“again” — πάλιν — *“Anew, again...joined to verbs of all sorts, it denotes renewal or repetition of the action...again, i.e., further, moreover (where the subject remains the same and a repetition of the action or condition is indicated)”* (Thayer); *“Back, back again as simply implying to return to a former place, state or act...Hence a continuative particle, connecting circumstances which refer to the same subject again, once more, further”* (Zodhiates); *“Back...again, once more, anew...furthermore, thereupon...on the other hand, in turn”* (Bauer, p. 606).

“worship” — προσκυνέω — *“to kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand; to fawn or crouch to that is (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to adore): worship”* (Strong); *“to kiss the hand (toward) one, in token of reverence”* (Thayer); *“To worship, do obeisance, show respect, fall or prostrate before. Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in respect or homage. The ancient oriental (especially Persian) mode of salutation between persons of equal ranks was to kiss each other on the lips; when the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek; when one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees and touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, throwing kisses at the same time toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that Gr. Writers express by proskuneo. In the NT, generally, to do reverence or homage to someone, usually by kneeling or prostrating oneself before him. In the Sept. It means to bow down, to prostrate oneself in reverence, homage (Gen. 19:1; 48:12)”* (Zodhiates); *“Used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground, etc.; the Persians did this in the presence of their deified king, and the Greeks before a divinity or something holy; (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully”* (Bauer, p. 716).

“But to what bringing in of the first-born does the apostle here refer? (1) Some say to his incarnation; (2) some to his entering on his public ministry, after his baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and the Father himself proclaimed from heaven in the audience of the people, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;’ (3) Some say the reference is to his resurrection from the dead; (4) some to his coming in power to set up his Kingdom on Earth, on the Pentecost which next followed after his resurrection, and (5)

some again, to his second personal coming, when he will raise the dead, purify the Earth by fire, judge the world, and deliver up the Kingdom to the Father” (Milligan, p. 69).

Milligan believes number four is the correct understanding; Zerr believes number one is the correct understanding; Coffman believes the correct understanding is number three. One should not lose sight of the fact that the text is primarily dealing with Christ's superiority over the angels.

“Great and glorious as angels assuredly are, Christ is infinitely above them” (Coffman, p. 30).

The term **“firstborn”** is used in Colossians 1:18 and The Revelation 1:5, where in both cases it can only refer to Christ as the firstborn from the dead. As in those cases, there is no need to think that the term is used differently here. Christ arose from the dead to die no more — thus, He is the firstborn from the dead. Lazarus and others had arisen from the dead before Him, but they all had to suffer death a second time. The term **“firstborn”** is without a doubt used to show the preeminent and superior position which Christ holds.

“world” — the inhabited earth.

What passage from the Old Testament could possibly be the quotation upon which this text rests? There are some who think it is Deuteronomy 32:43, where the Septuagint reads as does this present text. More than likely, Psalm 97:7 is more closely related to the present text in Hebrews, where the Septuagint translates “god” as “angels” (Reese, p. 11).

Heb. 1:7 “And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.”

“And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels winds, And His ministers a flame a fire:” (ASV)

“And of the angels He says: Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” (NKJV)

“And of the angels He says, He makes His angels spirits, and His ministers flames of fire.” (ESV)

It seems to this writer that Milligan had the right thought here when he noted that all which is said concerning angels is said to exalt angels in the eye of the reader.

“The object of the apostle in this passage is to show that the angels serve God in a ministerial capacity – as the winds do; while the Son is Lord of all. The one serves him passively, as being wholly under his control; the other acts as sovereign, or as Lord over all, and is addressed and regarded as the equal with God” (Barnes, p. 38).

Everything said in this context is said to show that the angels hold an exalted position. However, their position does not come close to that of their Creator — the Son. GOD “owns” the angels as is testified to by the words **“His angels”** and **“His ministers.”** Angels are under

GOD's control. Christ on the other hand, is equal to the Father and set above the angels in authority.

The terms “angels” and “ministers” both refer to those created angelic beings who serve GOD. Their quickness in doing His bidding is seen in the figure of the “wind,” while their strength is seen by the “flame of fire.” This verse is a quotation of Psalm 104:4.

“Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire”

Heb. 1:8 “But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.”

“but of the Son He saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.” (ASV)

“But to the Son He says: Your throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.” (NKJV)

“But to the Son He said, Your throne O GOD, is forever and forever; and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.” (ESV)

“righteousness” — εὐθύτης — “*rectitude, uprightness*” (Strong, Thayer); “*straightness, rectitude; referring to a just attitude, it means devoid of hypocrisy*” (Zodhiates); “*Straightness*” (Bauer, p. 321).

This passage is quoted from Psalm 45:6.

This verse is an absolutely profound statement. Here, GOD (the Father) refers to Christ as GOD. It is beyond the ability of a reasonable man to try to understand anyone who would say that they believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of GOD and at the same time say that Christ is not GOD.

“The speaker in both verses (7 & 8) is, of course, God. God speaks to the angels as messengers, He addresses the Son as ‘God,’ who has an everlasting sovereignty. The angels stand before the throne; the Son sits on the throne” (Lightfoot, p.60).

GOD is speaking to GOD. Notice a few passages in the New Testament which bear evidence of His Deity: John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1.

Some have tried to make Psalm 45 fit Solomon, but that interpretation will not stand the acid test. Solomon's throne was not forever and ever; he did not hate iniquity, and he was a gross idolater (cf Coffman's comments, p. 31).

“The Son” is used in the sense of a special son in comparison of Christians as “sons of GOD.”

A “throne” is a seat of power, it is an emblem of authority. Christ is on a throne; He is therefore a ruler over a vast kingdom — the church. His throne is “forever and ever;” it is one of never-ending authority (Luke 1:33).

“As Mediator His kingdom will be given up to the Father, or to God without references to a mediatorial work, but His reign over His people will be perpetual” (Barnes, p. 40).

“A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy throne.”

“A sceptre of righteousness is a staff or wand usually made of wood, five or six feet long, and commonly overlaid with gold, or ornamented with golden rings. Sometimes, however, the sceptre was made of ivory, or wholly of gold. It was borne in the hands of kings as an emblem of authority and power”

(Barnes, p. 41).

A **throne** and a **scepter** show that Christ is a king, that He has the authority of a king — The King of kings. It should also be emphasized that one is not a king unless he has a kingdom — the church **is His kingdom** (Matthew 16:18).

The superiority of Christ is the continuing subject of this discourse – His superiority over **all** created beings.

Heb. 1:9 **“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore GOD, even Thy GOD, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.”**

“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore GOD, Thy GOD, hath anointed Thee With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” (ASV)

“You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore GOD, Your GOD, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (NKJV)

“You loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Because of this, GOD, your GOD, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.” (ESV)

“iniquity” — ἀνομίαθ — *“illegality, i.e., violation of law or (generally) wickedness”* (Strong); *“The condition of one without law, — either because ignorant of it, or because violating it. Contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness”* (Thayer); *“Lawlessness. In most cases in the NT it means not the absence of Law, i.e., transgression or lawlessness. In the NT, it places stress, not in a subjective law that we ourselves create for our convenience, but chiefly a divinely instituted Law”* (Zodhiates).

This passage is quoted from Psalm 45:7.

The reason that Christ received this throne and scepter of authority is that He **“loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.”** **When did Jesus love righteousness and hate iniquity?** It should be said that He has always loved righteousness and hated iniquity. This text speaks of a particular time, reference is to the time when He lived on the earth as a man; living a perfect life of obedience. The reward for His loving righteousness and hating iniquity was being anointed with oil of gladness. This was a symbol of celebration for His victory over sin and death. It indicates the joy with which the Father crowned Him as King as kings.

“In old times it was customary to anoint kings with oil at the coronation. Christ was figuratively anointed with the oil of

gladness or exultation” (Zerr, p. 210)

“The inauguration of the Messiah as king would be an occasion of rejoicing and triumph” (Barnes, p. 41).

“Above Thy fellows” is a phrase that has given many problems, and though this writer has an opinion, it must remain at least for the time being just that. It is thought that this term could refer to (1) the angels, (2) faithful disciples of the Lord, and (3) kings. This writer believes that it refers to the angels, as that seems to be the impact of the context. No matter which it might be, the lesson, the truth being imparted, remains the same. Christ is greater than any created being. He was anointed **“with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows”** no matter who the **“fellows”** are.

Heb. 1:10 “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands:”

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Thy hands:” (ASV)

“And: You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.” (NKJV)

“Also, You, Lord, in the beginning founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands” (ESV)

“laid the foundation” — θεμελιόω — *“to lay a basis for, i.e., (literally) erect or (figuratively) consolidate”* (Strong); *“To lay the foundation, to found...to make stable, establish”* (Thayer); *“Foundational, fundamental. To found, to lay the foundation of anything. Metaphorically, to ground, establish, confirm”* (Zodhiates); *“Found, ground, establish as well as lay a foundation. The sense of setting a foundation, both literal and metaphorical, is common to each reference”* (Renn, p. 413).

One should be reminded, *“lest we forget,”* that verses 8-13 are the testimony of GOD with regard to His Son. Verse ten is quoted from Psalm 102:25-27. Some see a problem here, in that this passage (Psalm 102) is assumed to belong exclusively to the Father. **Where is the problem? Cannot what is said about the Father be said about the Son or the Spirit?** In this text, Divine inspiration attributed what had been said about the Father as being said about the Son by the Father.

“In Gen. 1:1, for example, it is said that God (Eloheem) created the heavens and the earth; that is, the whole material universe. But in Rev. 4:8-11, the creation of all things is ascribed to the Father; in John 1:1-3, it is ascribed to the Son; and from sundry other passages, such as Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30; Matt. 12:28; Luke 1:35; John 6:63; and Rom. 8:11, it seems clear that the Holy Spirit was an agency in the working of all miracles” (Milligan, p. 79).

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit all had an agency in the creation. Why anyone would think it strange that the same thing is said with regard to any member of the GODHEAD regarding the same

occurrence is beyond this writer's comprehension. It is the excellence and supremacy of Christ which is being dealt with in this chapter, and it is the excellence of the Father which was dealt with in Psalm 102. GOD said this about His Son; **that settles it!**

"In the beginning," when the world was made, it was Christ who created with the power of His word. He did not arrange the world with pre-existing materials, He made the material itself (Hebrews 11:3). It is the whole universe (earth, heaven), which were created by Him.

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

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible GOD, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Colossians 1:14-19).

Heb. 1:11 **"They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;"**

"They shall perish; but Thou continuest: And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;" (ASV)

"They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment;" (NKJV)

"They shall perish but you will remain, and they shall become old as a garment," (ESV)

"perish" — ἀπόλλυμι — **"to destroy fully"** (Strong); **"To destroy, i.e., to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin"** (Thayer); **"To destroy, cause to perish"** (Zodhiates); **"Ruin, destroy...be destroyed, ruined"** (Bauer, p. 95); **"Perish, destroy, or lose...the meaning, 'destroy' for apollumi is causative in force with the literal sense of 'to cause to perish'"** (Renn, p. 725).

"remainest" — διαμένω — **"to stay constantly (in being or relation)"** (Strong); **"To stay permanently, remain permanently, continue"** (Thayer); **"To remain permanently or continue in the same place. Spoken of state, condition, circumstances, meaning to remain the same, continue, endure, not to change"** (Zodhiates); **"Remain continually with someone...remain somewhere permanently"** (Bauer, p. 803); **"The word 'remainest' is from diameno. The simple verb meno means 'to**

remain.’ The prefixed preposition *dia* is intensive in force, making the compound word mean ‘to remain permanently’” (Wuest, Vol. 2, p. 49).

“wax old” — παλαιόω — “to make (passively become) worn out or declare **obsolete**: decay, make (wax) old” (Strong); “To make ancient or old, to become old, to be worn out...to declare a thing old and so about to be abrogated” (Thayer); “To make old, render obsolete, abrogate” (Zodhiates); “Make old, declare or treat as obsolete” (Bauer, p. 606); “The words ‘shall wax old,’ are the translation of *palaioo* which means ‘to make ancient or old, to be worn out.’ The idea here is not that the heavens will become old so far as lapse of time is concerned, but old in the sense of wearing out. The Greeks had a word for ‘old in point of time’ namely, *archaios*” (Wuest, p. 49).

This earth, universe, cosmos will cease to exist, but Christ will continue on and on just as He is.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:10-13).

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

This creation, all made by Him, will cease to exist because GOD will cause it to cease existence. But Christ will continue, His existence being never ending.

When this writer thinks about this it reminds him of an exquisitely made watch which its maker holds in his hand. As time passes, the parts rub against each other and the watch gradually wears out. The watch becomes useless for the purpose for which it was created. Yet, its maker continues to exist. This earth will become useless because the eternal spiritual world will replace the physical. GOD will utterly destroy the physical, but the spiritual will remain. GOD will continue to exist, never ending.

Heb. 1:12 “And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.”

“And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up, As a garment, and they shall be changed: But Thou art the same, And Thy years shall not fail.” (ASV)

“Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.” (NKJV)

“And as a coat you will fold them up, and like a garment they shall be changed, but You are the same, and Your years shall never cease.” (ESV)

“**vesture**” — περιβόλαιον — *“something thrown around one that is a mantle, veil: covering, vesture”* (Strong); *“A covering thrown around, a wrapper”* (Thayer); *“A covering, cloak, wrap, cape, outer garment, or mantle”* (Zodhiates); *“Covering, wrap, cloak, robe or an article of clothing”* (Bauer, p. 646).

When a garment is no longer useful, it is folded up (“rolled up”) and put away. So shall it be with that which Christ has created. When the garment (all physically created things, i.e., earth, universe, etc.) has fulfilled its purpose it will be put away. In this case the “garment” will be destroyed.

“they shall be changed” (cf. 2 Peter 3:13). **Was not the physical universe designed as a temporary dwelling place for man (cf. Hebrews 11:16; 13:14; Philippians 3:20)?** It should not bother Christians that this world is going to be destroyed. There is a better world to come, a better world to be gained, a better dwelling place — Heaven. Christians need to remember that the body they have is simply a covering for what is most important — his soul. It is temporary.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know” (John 14:1-4).

This world will be done away with, but Christ will continue to exist. He will always exist because He has always existed. The Lord is superior to all which He has ever created. At the resurrection the bodies of all who have ever existed will be changed to exist for eternity in a spiritual world.

So many people place great value on that which is physical, that which is perishing, yet they place such a small value on their soul. The physical will be exchanged for the which is far better for the saved — the spiritual. Christians should look for that day with great desire and anticipation. But woe to those who have not prepared to meet GOD.

Heb. 1:13 “But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?”

“But of which of the angels hath He said at any time, Sit Thou on My right hand, Till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet?” (ASV)

“But to which of the angels has He ever said: Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?” (NKJV)

“But to which of the angels did He ever say, Sit on My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet?” (ESV)

The last part of this verse is quoted from Psalm 110:1. Note also that Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 with regard to Himself in Matthew

22:43-44.

Which one of the angels was ever told to sit on GOD's right hand? To ask is to answer – none. The notes in verse three should be considered when thinking of the “right hand.” Which angel was ever told his enemies would be made his footstool? None, but Christ sits on GOD's right hand and one day all of His enemies will be His footstool.

“Jesus is superior to any angel, not only by virtue of Who He is (God), but by virtue of where He is sitting! Angels may stand before God (Luke 1:19; Rev. 8:2; Daniel 7:10), but, no angel was ever invited by the Father to sit down at His right hand” (Reese, p. 16).

Christ is to be exalted until every foe of godliness, every enemy of truth is subdued. Notice 1 Corinthians 15:24-25 and Joshua 10:22-25.

“The phrase to make an enemy a footstool, is borrowed from the custom of ancient warriors, who stood on the necks of vanquished kings on the occasion of celebrating a triumph over them as a token of their complete prostration and subjection” (Barnes, p. 45).

So often it is forgotten by Christians that they are soldiers in a war.

How many forget that they are to fight the enemies of GOD (Ephesians 6:10-17; 2 Corinthians 10:1-5)? Too many Christians act as if there never has been a war, or if there was one, a truce presently exists. If Christian are not wielding the sword of the Spirit in battle, it is because they have tied the flag of surrender to their sword. They have thus laid their sword and shield down in defeat.

Heb. 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?” (ASV)

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (NKJV)

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” (ESV)

“ministering” — λειτουργικός — *“beneficent: ministering”* (Strong); *“Relating to the performance of service, employed in ministering”* (Thayer); *“Used of the activity of ministering, rendering service to others”* (Zodhiates).

As ministering (or serving) spirits, angels are all inferior to Christ.

“Here the writer sums up the function of the angels as compared to that of the Son” (Wuest, p. 50).

None of the angels has ever been elevated to a rank equal with Christ, but they are all His servants. They fulfill the task of ministering to the “heirs of salvation.” As Barnes notes, they serve in an humble office, which shows their inferiority to the One they serve (p. 45).

Who are the “heirs of salvation?” They are the saints, Christians. Notice that the text says “heirs” and not those who “earn their

salvation.” Salvation is a gift which may never be earned. It is fascinating to consider what the angels may have done and what they are doing to promote the welfare of Christians and their quests for eternity with the Father. Yet, **a warning** must be issued not to attribute to them what cannot be proved by the Scriptures. That angels in some way help Christians is beyond question because GOD says so. But how they minister to Christians is unknown. So many want to attribute the work of angels to what they call “*guardian angels.*” While that thought is appealing, **there is absolutely no basis for it in the Scriptures!** The text says they are **ministering** to the heirs of salvation — not protecting them. If it were true that angels protect GOD’s people and innocent children, then **how could a Christian ever be murdered by a drunk driver or in any other way?** Yet, they are. If angels protect the innocent; then there would be no innocent children raped, tortured, or murdered — **there would be no abortion.** If the angels are to be “protecting” spirits, and if one is protected and another is not, **would that not make GOD a respecter of persons through His agents — the angels?**

“There is no respect of persons with GOD” (Romans 2:11).

Angels are very important and prominent beings. If they were not, it would not be important for us to know how much greater Christ is compared to them. But no matter how prominent they are, the fact remains that they are vastly inferior to Christ.

“They are merely the King’s agents, the King’s messengers, the King’s servants” (Reese, p. 16).

Hebrews — Chapter Two

Heb. 2:1 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.” (ASV)

“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” (NKJV)

“Therefore we must more carefully observe the things we have heard, to keep from drifting away.” (ESV)

“**earnest heed**” — προσέχω — “*to hold the mind towards, i.e., pay attention, to be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to*” (Strong); “*to turn the mind to, attend to, be attentive*” (Thayer); “*To have in addition, to hold the mind or the ear toward someone, to pay attention. As a nautical term, it means to hold a ship in a direction, to sail towards. Intrans. it means to hold on one’s course toward a place*” (Zodhiates); “*Pay attention to what was said*” (Bauer, p. 714).

“**slip**” — παραρρῦέω — “*to flow by, i.e., carelessly pass (miss)*” (Strong); “*To flow past, to glide by...lest we be carried past, pass by*” (Thayer); “*To float by or drift past as a ship, or to flow past as a river. Figuratively to slip away, suggesting a gradual and almost unnoticed movement past a certain point*” (Zodhiates); “*Flow by, slip away, fig. be washed away, drift away, lest we drift away*” (Bauer, p. 622); “*The Greek word pararreo, translated drift away, has an interesting background. It is often used to refer to something that slips away (KJV), as an arrow that slips from its quiver, or a ring that slips from the finger, or an idea that slips from the mind*” (Lightfoot, p. 69).

The word “**therefore**” begins the chapter and tells the reader what has been written before (chapter one) is the basis upon which the conclusion (2:1-4) is written. Because it is Christ Himself who has spoken; because He is superior to all created beings; because He has made the cosmos and upholds it with His power; because He is GOD.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48)

Notice should also be given to Matthew 25:14-30. These passages, along with this text, emphasize that more is required of those who have been given much.

“**ought**” — δεῖ — “*This word marks a logical necessity and not a moral obligation: we must rather than we ought” (Wuest, p. 36).*

This is the same word used in First Timothy 3:2, where an elder

(bishop, overseer) “**must be blameless,**” and in Acts 9:6 where Paul (Saul) asked the Lord what He wanted him to do.

Because Christ has delivered this message, one must give “**more earnest heed**” to that which was spoken. A greater attention must be given to His words. It is possible for people to be indifferent to the words of Jesus, and it is possible for those who have run the course (race) of Christianity for many years to become indifferent to His teachings. The main reason that so many turn back to a life of sin, having once obeyed the Gospel, is because they have failed to pay attention to GOD’s Word, and thus failed to continuing applying it to their lives.

“At no time should we be indifferent to those things. They are always important to us, and we should never be in a state of mind when they would be uninteresting. At all times, in all places; and in every situation of life, we should feel that the truths of religion are of more importance to us than all other truths, and nothing should be suffered to efface their image from the heart” (Barnes, p. 53).

“**slip**” is a nautical term.

“The image is singularly expressive. We are constantly exposed to the action of currents of opinion, habit, action, which tend to carry us away insensibly from the position which we ought to maintain” (Westcott, p. 36).

When men turn away from following GOD’s directions for their eternal well-being, it does not happen overnight. It is a slow process of gradually moving away from GOD. The failure to think clearly about GOD’s Word and one’s eternal destiny results in the loss of one’s soul.

One of the central truths taught in this passage and many others is that one can be faithful to GOD for a time, even most of one’s life, and let eternity with GOD slip away through negligence (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Peter 2:20-22; John 17:12; Galatians 1:8-9; 5:4).

Heb. 2:2 “**For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;**”

“For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;” (ASV)

“For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward;” (NKJV)

“For if the word spoken through angels was valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment;” (ESV)

“**stedfast**” — βέβαιος — *“stable (literally or figuratively): firm of force, stedfast, sure”* (Strong); *“Stable, fast, firm...sure, trusty...valid and therefore inviolable”* (Thayer, p. 99); *“Fixed, sure, certain. Figuratively that upon which one may build, rely, or trust...In the NT not used of persons but objects, that which does not fail or waver, immoveable, and on which one may*

rely” (Zodhiates); *“Reliable, dependable, certain”* (Bauer, p. 138).

“transgression” — παράβασις — *“violation: breaking, transgression”* (Strong); *“To go past or to pass over without touching a thing; trop. to overstep, neglect, violate, transgress”* (Thayer); *“Transgression, wrong doing, lawbreaking”* (Zodhiates); *“Overstepping, transgression”* (Bauer, p. 611).

“disobedience” — βέβαιος — *“inattention, i.e., (by implication) disobedience”* (Strong); *“To be unwilling to hear, on hearing to neglect, to pay no heed to...to refuse to hear, pay no regard to, disobey”* (Thayer); *“In its strictest sense, it means a failing to hear or hearing amiss, with the notion of active disobedience which follows this inattentive or careless hearing”* (Zodhiates); *“Unwillingness to hear, disobedience”* (Bauer, p. 618).

In the Old Testament, GOD had often delivered messages to His people using angels. These Jews (Hebrew Christians) had a great deal of respect for “the law” (Mosaic law), believing — as they ought — that this law was absolutely confirmed. They could put their full trust in that law because it had been fully confirmed. The New Testament teaches that the law was given by GOD to Moses and the people through the agency of angels (Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53).

“If the word spoken by angels was steadfast” Since what was spoken under the law of Moses was reliable and worthy of their trust, **what does that say concerning the words spoken by the One who is greater than the angels?** The words of the One with all authority are just as reliable.

“The first testament was steadfast, inviolable, in that every overstepping of the line, every neglecting to hear, was punished” (Wuest, p. 52).

“The message that GOD spoke through angels was firm. Every person who broke God’s law or disobeyed it received fair punishment” (The Great Book, p. 431).

GOD’s Word, the law of Moses, was binding; it was unalterable. GOD gave the word to the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), Who gave it to angels, who gave it to Moses, who gave it to mankind in general. Yet, even though that law was given through a process of passing it from one to another, violation of that law received a just and fair punishment by GOD. **How much greater then shall be the punishment received by those who violate GOD’s law as delivered directly by His Son (Matthew 17:5)?**

Notice the two words used for man’s sins in this passage — **“transgressions”** and **“disobedience.”** **“Transgressions”** refers to the act of disobedience, whereas **“disobedience”** refers to a failure by inattention or neglect to do what GOD commands. Again, GOD **will** punish those who disobey Him, whether it is an act of sin or a failure to obey His commands.

Heb. 2:3 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;”

“how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;” (ASV)

“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,” (NKJV)

“How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was spoken at first through the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard;” (ESV)

“neglect” — ἀμελέω — “to be careless of: make light of, neglect, be negligent, not regard” (Strong); “To be careless of, to neglect” (Thayer); “Not to care for, to neglect” (Zodhiates); “To neglect, be unconcerned about someone or something” (Bauer, p. 44).

“confirmed” — βεβαιῶ — “to stabilize: confirm, stablish” (Strong); “To make firm, establish, confirm, make sure” (Thayer); “To make firm or reliable so as to warrant security and inspire confidence, to strengthen, make true, fulfill” (Zodhiates).

“If there was no way by which the Jews could escape under the Old Economy, then how shall we escape under the superior light and increased responsibilities of the New” (Milligan, p. 89)?

It does not matter which dispensation one may have lived in, there is no escape from punishment for disobedience to GOD’s law.

“the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them; for GOD hath shewed it unto them” (Romans 1:18-19).

The word “neglect” needs consideration. One does not have to openly violate GOD’s laws in order to be lost. All one has to do is carelessly neglect His law. When Christians stop reading His law on a daily basis, they open the door to letting it slip from their consciousness. As time passes by, that neglect of GOD’s will grows until faith dies. Further, a person can so neglect GOD’s Word until he does not remember in the slightest what GOD has said, and thus “chimney corner” scripture is quoted.

Negligence is just as corrupt as an active pursuit of evil deeds — it brings the same reward (punishment). One can (and usually does) slowly drift upon the tide until he finally crashes upon the reef of destruction. Some seem to feel that they do not really need to do anything where religion is concerned and they will still be saved. They seem to feel that as long as they do not steal, do not commit adultery, et cetera; and attend a worship service occasionally, that they will

gain the eternal reward. How sad to see that attitude manifested by so many today — even by those in the Lord's church. **Why is so hard to learn that nothing comes from nothing?**

“Salvation would be worth nothing if it cost no effort – and there will be no salvation where no effort is put forth” (Barnes, p. 55).

The Bible demands sacrifice by those who would live eternally in Heaven, not a half-hearted *“do it when it is convenient”* attitude.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

Remember the rich young ruler in Luke 18 who walked away sorrowfully because he was not willing to sacrifice his earthly wealth to gain eternal life?

The salvation which one is not to neglect is great because of (1) the greatness of the Savior, (2) the greatness of the disaster from which it rescues the sinner, and (3) the greatness of the reward.

The writer of Hebrews in the following paragraphs gave three proofs for the superiority and validity of the Gospel.

“(1) It was first spoken by the Lord (i.e., Jesus), (2) It was confirmed by those who heard Him; (3) It was certified as from God by the God-wrought miracles that accompanied its apostolic announcement” (Reese, p. 20).

“which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” This phrase defines Christianity as that which Christ brought to man. It draws a line, which is often drawn in this book between the Old Law (First Covenant/Testament) and the New Law (Second Covenant/Testament). Christ is the only source for the words of life (John 6:68). The Old Testament was given by angels (as they received it from GOD through the Spirit), while the New Testament was brought directly to man by Deity itself.

This word spoken by the Lord was **“confirmed”** by those who personally heard Him. **How was the word confirmed?** (1) By the testimony of eyewitnesses (the apostles). (2) By the miracles that GOD worked through them to prove that their message was His Word (Mark 16:17-20).

Before leaving this verse, it should be pointed out that it is one of the passages to which those who believe that someone other than the apostle Paul wrote this book turn as a proof. Their argument is that Paul received his knowledge of all things pertaining to Christ and His law directly from Christ according to Galatians 1:11-23. But in this text, the Hebrew writer says that he got his information from eyewitnesses. This writer believes that it was Paul who was commissioned to write Hebrews and that he was probably using the editorial “we” to make the point. At the same time, one should guard against being too emphatic about who wrote this book, for as Origen correctly said, *“Who wrote the Epistle, God only knows certainly.”*

Heb. 2:4 *“GOD also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?”*

“GOD also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.”

“GOD also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (NKJV)

“GOD bearing witness with them by signs and wonders and various miracles and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His will.” (ESV)

“**signs**” — σημειον — *“miracle, sign, token, wonder”* (Strong); *“A sign, mark, token”* (Thayer); *“A sign, mark, token, miracle with a special end and purpose”* (Zodhiates); *“A sign consisting of a wonder or miracle, an event that is contrary to the usual course of nature”* (Bauer, p. 748); *“A sign, a mark or token miraculous in nature”* (Wuest, p. 54).

“**wonders**” — τέρας — *“Something so strange as to cause it to be ‘watched’ or ‘observed’”* (Thayer); *“A wonder or omen”* (Zodhiates); *“The combination signs and wonders is found frequently in the New Testament, signs indicating the inner significance of the miraculous deed, wonders the astonishment evoked by the unusual nature of the deed”* (Lightfoot, p. 71).

Wuest correctly states that this passage deals with the fact that GOD used miracles to confirm His Word.

“after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:19-20).

“The primary purpose of miracles in the first century was not to alleviate distress and sufferings, but to prove that the one performing the miracles, spoke or wrote from God (John 3:2; Matt. 11:2-5)” (Wuest, p. 54).

“**divers miracles**” — These are different miracles. They are not all of the same class, which eliminated any possibility of pretense or deception. Examples: raising the dead, healing the sick, gave sight to the blind, et cetera. This shows the power behind the miracles. When one looks at all three of these terms, he quickly comes to the conclusion that all three of these terms apply to any of the miracles which were performed. They were all done to cause one to consider the validity of the message presented, causing amazement in those who witnessed them, and to consider the Power behind the miracles.

“**gifts of the Holy Ghost**”

“Distributions or impartations of the Holy Ghost” (Wuest, p. 54).

“In that age, the gift of the Spirit enabled the speaker to communicate in languages he had not learned, guided them in the execution of penalties upon the wicked, protected them from such things as poisonous serpents, empowered them to raise even the dead, and to heal all manner of diseases”

(Coffman, p. 44).

More likely the “**gifts of the Holy Spirit**” mentioned in this text deal with the gifts mentioned in First Corinthians 12:4-11. These gifts were imparted by the apostles by the laying on of hands, which ability the apostles received on Pentecost (Acts 2). What is spoken of here has nothing to do with “**the gift of the Holy Spirit**” in Acts 2:38.

“**according to His own will**” GOD acted as a sovereign in imparting these gifts as He saw fit, when He saw fit, to the degree He saw fit, and to whom He saw fit. These “**signs,**” “**wonders,**” “**miracles,**” and “**gifts**” were given with one purpose in mind, for the work of saving souls through confirmation of the message of the Savior to a dying world.

“**after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following**” (Mark 16:19-20).

Heb. 2:5 “**For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.**”

“For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak.” (ASV)

“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.” (NKJV)

“For He did not subject the coming world, of which we speak, to angels.” (ESV)

Remember the context in which this verse is found. Verses one through four primarily deals with man’s salvation being based upon not ignoring the Savior’s words and on obedience to His laws. The Hebrew writer was showing that even the humanity of Jesus proves His superiority to the angels in giving this salvation to mankind.

The angels have always been ministering spirits in this world. When the world was created, it was not created for angels but for man, who was made in the image of GOD. Man was placed on the earth to faithfully serve GOD and was given dominion over the things of the world. Christ (not the angels) came to this world as a man, to have dominion over it.

“The words ‘put in subjection’ are the translation of hupotasso, a military term used of arranging soldiers in order under the commanding general” (Wuest, p. 54).

The term “**world**” is from the Greek oikoumene, which means “*the inhabited or inhabitable world.*”

The “**world to come**” is speaking of the Christian era, over which it is not an angel which is to rule but Christ. Remember — had his chance and failed. This seems to be borne out by the phrase “**whereof we speak.**” In considering the context, it is the church (v. 12), brethren (v. 11), et cetera, which is being spoken about.

“Where has the writer spoken of the ‘Christian age’ before this, so that he can say ‘concerning which, we are speaking?’ He has called attention to ‘these last days’ and ‘heir of all things’

(1:2), 'sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high' (1:3), 'kingdom' (1:8), and 'sit at My right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet' (1:13). All these expressions are true of the Christian age. So, too, is the message spoken first by the Lord, and then confirmed to us by eyewitnesses (2:2, 3)" (Reese, p. 23).

One of the arguments which may have been made by the Jews against Christianity is that since human beings are lower than angels and since Jesus came to earth as a human being, then He could not be GOD. The answer to this objection is that He became a man temporarily for the purpose of showing mankind that they could be faithful and live righteous lives while in their mortal bodies. Before His incarnation He was superior to angels having created them. When He returned to Heaven, He returned to His rightful place as sovereign over all which exists. He is presently greater than them again.

Heb. 2:6 "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

"But one hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" (ASV)

"But one testified in a certain place, saying: What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?" (NKJV)

"But one, in a certain place said, What is man that you think of him, or the son of man that You visit him?" (ESV)

The Psalmist was amazed that the Creator of all things could take such a great interest in lowly mankind. Yet, GOD made man (not the angels) to rule over His creation.

"And GOD said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So GOD created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him; male and female created He them. And GOD blessed them, and GOD said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

Through sin man lost his position of dominion, which Christ reclaimed through His perfect life. Man is important to GOD, and so He takes care of (helps) His creation. In the ultimate sense, He did this by sending the Savior. Man has a spirit, and its needs are fully met through obedience to the perfect Son of GOD. Like the psalmist, man today should spend a great amount of time reflecting on how much GOD loves him and on all that GOD has done for his well-being. Such reflection cannot help but cause great awe, love, and obedience to GOD. **HE LOVES US!!!**

The passage under consideration should lead to a declaration and understanding of His glorification and supremacy. Christ came to save man, but in order to do so man must understand His superiority to all others, His love in providing a perfect law, and then render obedience to this loving Savior.

Heb. 2:7 “Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands:”

“Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor, And didst set Him over the works of thy hands.” (ASV)

“You have made Him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor, And set Him over the works of Your hands.” (NKJV)

“You made Him a little lower than angels, and crownest Him with glory and honor, and set Him over the work of Your hand.” (ESV)

First, notice the phrase “**thou madest Him a little lower than the angels.**” Angels have always been ministering spirits; they have served their Creator. **So when was it, or the better question would be, for what purpose was Christ made “lower” than the angels?** The answer is found in verse nine: it was for the purpose of suffering death on the cross. An angel cannot die. An angel could not offer himself as a sacrifice for man’s sins (Luke 20:36). Christ put on the fleshly robes of humanity in order that His sacrifice and death could be accomplished. Be it remembered that it was not intended that man should die (Genesis 3:22-24).

“**Thou crownest Him with glory and honour**” It must be emphasized that the entire book of Hebrews is meant to glorify Christ as superior to all beings who have ever, or will ever, exist. Again, depending on the view one has as to who is being spoken of, one may still recognize both man and Christ as the subject. In the beginning man was in essence crowned with honor and glory. He was made in the image of GOD, placed in a beautiful paradise, and given dominion over all of the earth (Genesis 1:26). On the other hand Christ came to this earth and did what the first Adam did not do. He lived a perfect life and was thus fitted for His role of prophet, priest, and king. He is presently crowned with glory and honor as He sits upon the throne. Shortly before His ascension, He told His disciples:

“**All power hath been given unto Me in Heaven and in earth**” (Matthew 28:18).

Christ has received the ultimate glory and honor. Refer back to chapter one. Again, though there may be a veiled reference to man in this, this writer believes the primary (if not the total) reference here must be to Christ Himself. To bolster this thought, the word “**crownest**” is used.

“**crownest**” — στεφανόω — “*to adorn with an honorary wreath (literally or figuratively): crown*” (Strong); “*To encircle with a crown, to crown: the victor in a contest*” (Thayer); “*To crown as a victor in the public games*” (Zodhiates).

Man can only be the victor through Christ; it is Christ Himself who

proved to be the victor over death and Satan.

Heb. 2:8 “Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him.”

“Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He subjected all things unto Him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him.” (ASV)

“You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him.” (NKJV)

You put all things in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to Him, He did not leave a thing that was not subject to him. But we do not yet see all things subject to Him.” (ESV)

If verse eight were meant to refer to man, it would seem to indicate the way things were meant to be, but man sinned and thus forfeit his rights of subjection. This is how many commentators view these passages. They further believe the dominion which was lost because of sin will be regained in the world to come — Heaven. But in Heaven it is not man who holds the place of dominion — **it is GOD!** If this passage refers to Christ (and it does), it shows an absolute dominion by Him. The objection some would have with regard to this thought is the phrase, “**but now we see not yet all things put under Him.**” This writer would meet that argument by stating that all things have been put under Christ’s feet so far as the church is concerned (Ephesians 1:22). Not every knee has bowed in subjection to Him, but they all will at some future date.

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD” (Romans 14:11-12).

The final victory is to come, and it will be a complete victory for Christ and in Christ.

Heb. 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of GOD should taste death for every man.”

“But we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even

Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of GOD He should taste of death for every man.” (ASV)

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of GOD, might taste death for everyone.” (NKJV)

“But we see Jesus, who was lower than the angels for a little while for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of GOD might taste death for everyone.” (ESV)

Why was it that Jesus was made — for a little time — lower than the angels? Let the Bible interpret itself. Who was made lower than the angels in verse seven? It was Jesus (v. 9). Why? To suffer death, for all of mankind. The angels could not suffer death for anyone because they are spiritual beings (Luke 20:36); therefore they could not accomplish what the Savior came to earth to do.

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me” (Hebrews 10:5).

“crowned with glory and honour” When did this take place? Did Jesus receive this honor and glory before or after His death? The context shows that He received these things after His death.

“being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:8-9).

Notice that it was after an obedient death that the Father exalted Him “by the grace of GOD” It is through the marvelous grace of GOD that His Son was sent to this earth and allowed to die for the sins of man. It is GOD’s grace which allows man to have remission of sins through the selfless sinless sacrifice made for him by Jesus.

“taste death for every man” “Taste death,” i.e., suffer death, experience death.

“Here is set forth the importance and centrality of the death of Christ, not merely for some, but for every man. Christ did come into the world merely to deliver noble teaching, nor to establish some kind of ideal, but to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world” (Coffman, p. 50).

Note that His death was/is for “every man.” Those who believe the doctrine of predestination, believe that before one is born, it has been decided by GOD where that one will live eternally. Predestinationalist further believe that one cannot do anything to change where he will eternally live. They believe that if one is born lost, then that one can never be saved. Question: Does it make any sense for Deity to come to earth, put on the mortal robe of humankind, and die for “every man” if one’s destiny has already been determined before He was born? Christ died so that “every man” who truly wants to be saved may choose to do so and be successful in his efforts.

“The death of Christ was sufficient for all, efficient for some” (Andrew Fuller, quoted by A.T. Robertson, p. 346).

It has been suggested that this passage could be arranged a little differently in the English language to show its true meaning.

“But we see Jesus (who was made a little lower than the angels, so that He might by the grace of God taste death for every man) crowned with glory and honor, on account of the suffering of death” (Milligan, p. 105).

One translator words this verse in the following manner:

“We see Jesus. He was made ‘a little lower than angels.’ But when Jesus suffered and died, he was ‘crowned with glory and honor.’ By God’s gracious love he did this to taste death for every person” (The Great Book).

Heb. 2:10 **“For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”**

“For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (ASV)

“For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (NKJV)

“For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things and through Whom are all things, in bringing many children into glory, to perfect the Author of the their salvation through suffering.” (ESV)

To the Hebrew mind, the idea of a suffering Savior (Messiah) did not fit their thinking at all (1 Corinthians 1:23; Romans 9:23, 33; 1 Peter 2:7-8). This was due to their misunderstanding of passages such as Psalm 72:7, 17; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Isaiah 9:7; et cetera. To their prejudiced minds the writer sought to show them that, rather than shame, Christ’s death on the cross was a glorious event.

“How marvelous are His ways. The cross itself, dark and terrible as it looms upon the horizon of human history, is clothed with glory and beauty that surpass the imagination; and, seeing this, Christ said, ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself’ (John 12:32)” (Coffman, p. 51).

Indeed, without suffering, how could Christ be identified with mankind? Without His suffering, how could the power of Satan be destroyed? Without suffering, how could He be man’s **“merciful and faithful High Priest?”**

“it became Him” **“To be becoming, seemly, fit”** (Wuest, p. 59). In view of GOD’s incomparable grace, it was fitting that He performed the act of giving His Son to the world and that His Son consequently endured suffering. It is in perfect accordance with the nature of GOD to provide the sacrifice which man needed. The penalty for sin must be paid, and it was!

“for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things” Cf. Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:2; Ephesians 3:9). Refer back to notes on Hebrews 1:2.

“in bringing many sons unto glory” While the first part of this passage spoke of the Father, this section refers to man, and the last

part of the verse refers to Christ. There are many sons (Christians), but they are all sons by adoption, while there is only one Son — the **Son** (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5). The suffering Savior fit the purpose of GOD in redeeming fallen man and was therefore an important aspect of His function while upon the earth.

“captain” — ἀρχηγός — *“a chief leader”* (Strong); *“Leading, furnishing the first cause or occasion: the chief leader, prince: one that takes the lead in anything and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter: the author”* (Thayer); *“In secular Greek writings it was used of a ‘hero’ who founded a city, gave it his name and became its guardian. Similarly, it denoted one who was ‘head’ of a family or the ‘founder’ of a philosophic school. The term also had a distinct military connotation (thus the KJV’s captain), referring to a commander of an army who went ahead of his men and blazed the trail for them. All these terms fit Jesus; but the idea of a leader who opens up a new way seems here to be uppermost in the author’s mind. As a pioneer the Son goes ahead of the saved, opening up a path”* (Zodhiates).

Not only is Jesus the leader — He is the road itself.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

“Salvation” can only refer to the forgiveness of sin; and it thus can apply only to man since Jesus had no sin.

“perfect” — τελειόω — *“to complete, i.e., accomplish or consummate: consecrate, finish, fulfil (make) perfect”* (Strong); *“To make perfect or complete...to bring to the end (goal) proposed: to raise to the state befitting him”* (Thayer); *“To complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal”* (Zodhiates); *“Complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish...bring to an end, bring to its goal or to accomplishment”* (Bauer).

“Ordinarily it means to bring to completeness or wholeness; to do a thing fully; to put into effect; to finish, for example, a tower or a work of art. But here its meaning is determined by the Septuagint, which regularly uses the term in the Pentateuch to refer to the consecration of priests (Ex. 29:9, 29, 33, 35, etc.). As in the Old Testament the priests were perfected or consecrated by various rites, so Christ in the New was perfected or consecrated or qualified. The thought is that, apart from suffering, Christ could not have been made a thoroughly effective, perfect Leader of His people” (Lightfoot, p. 76).

How was Christ made perfect?

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

In His humanity He was made perfect through suffering which was caused because of His obedience to GOD.

“If one recoils at the idea of God making Christ perfect, he should bear in mind that it is the humanity of Jesus that is under consideration. The writer does not say that Jesus was sinful, but simply that ‘by means of suffering’ God perfected His Son in His human life and death for His task as Redeemer and Savior” (Robertson, p. 347).

Heb. 2:11 *“For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,”*

“For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,”

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” (NKJV)

“For He Who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one, for that reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (ESV)

“sanctifieth” — ἀγιάζω — *“to make holy, purify or consecrate”* (Strong); *“to make holy, render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate”* (Thayer); *“To make holy, sanctify. To make clean, render pure...to consecrate, devote, set apart from a common to a sacred use since in the Jewish ritual, this was one great object of purifications...To regard and venerate as holy, to hallow”* (Zodhiates); *“Make holy, consecrate, sanctify”* (Bauer, p. 8); *“The word sanctify is a general term, meaning to make holy or pure; to consecrate, set apart, devote to God; to regard as holy, or to hallow”* (Barnes, p. 67).

“ashamed” — ἐπαισχύνομαι — *“to feel shame for something: be ashamed”* (Strong); *“To be ashamed”* (Thayer); *“To bring shame upon oneself, to be ashamed of”* (Zodhiates).

“He that sanctifieth” is the same One who partook of the sorrows and sufferings of man, even to the extent that He died for man on the cruel cross. Jesus made the atonement man could not make for himself, making it possible for man to be sanctified — made clean and set aside for GOD’s use.

“Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine...That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD’S” (Exodus 13:2, 12).

The **“sanctified”** are the same as the **“many sons”** of verse ten, i.e., Christians. This sanctification is made possible by the offering Christ made for His body/church/kingdom on the cross.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

“all of one” There are some who believe this is speaking of all being from one race or “all from Adam.” But this must refer to the fact that all are from one Father — GOD. It is true that Christians have

the same Father, though in a different sense than does Christ. Christ is what might call a “full” Son, while Christians are sons by adoption. It is also true that all Christians belong to the same family.

Why is He not ashamed? Because they are “all of one.” They have the same Father through obedience to Him.

“Not ashamed implies the superior order of the Son”
(Lightfoot).

He is superior, yet He is not ashamed for lowly man to be looked upon as His brethren (brothers). In context with Scriptural teachings, it would appear that His not being ashamed refers only to those who obey Him and thus submit themselves as sons of the Father. For Christ not to be ashamed of one, that Christian **must** “walk in the light, as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7) and **abide** “in the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9).

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of GOD the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Peter. 1:2).

Heb. 2:12 “Saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.”

“saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, In the midst of the congregation will I sing Thy praise.” (ASV)

“saying: I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” (NKJV)

“Saying, I will declare Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing praise to you.” (ESV)

The author offers three quotations from the Old Testament which give evidence for what he has just said. The first is found in Psalm 22:22.

“I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.”

David is believed to be the author of that psalm, and the setting is believed to be during the time of his hiding from Saul in the wilderness.

“The author of Psalm 22 is thought to be David who, as a type of Christ, came to his own throne through suffering which was followed by joyful fellowship. The second portion of the Psalm hails the triumph after rejection and sorrow” (Coffman, p. 52).

There is little doubt that this Psalm originally had reference to David, but it is also a Messianic Psalm having an ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. He is not ashamed to declare Christians to be His brethren and not ashamed to lead them to praise of the Father. He is not ashamed of association with them.

“in the midst of the church” or in **“the assembly of the congregation”** (The Great Book, p. 432).

“Our author uses the word ekklesia for congregation (the Hebrew of Psalm 22:22 has gahal). The employment of this word in a synonymous parallelism with ‘brethren’ in a Christian

context indicates that those whom the Son of God is pleased to call His brethren are the members of His church” (Bruce, p. 46).

*“The word **church** (*ekklesia*), in its Jewish sense, means the nation of Israel assembled in Jerusalem; where David and his brethren often celebrated the praises of Jehovah; but, in its Christian sense, as it is here used and applied by the apostle, it means the united body of believers under the mediatorial reign of the Messiah. The former use as a type of the latter, just as David himself was a type of Christ” (Milligan, p. 113).*

It is the members of the Lord’s body, His church, His kingdom, with whom He is in the midst. It would appear from the passage that when Christ’s followers are engaged in praising GOD as a group that they are not alone — Christ is with them “singing” praises unto the Father. This is not necessarily meant in any way other than in a spiritual presence.

Heb. 2:13 “And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which GOD hath given Me.”

“And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold, I and the children whom GOD hath given Me.” (ASV)

“And again: I will put My trust in Him. And again: Here am I and the children whom GOD has given Me.” (NKJV)

“And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Here am I and the children that GOD gave Me.” (ESV)

Within this verse there are two quotations from the Old Testament: Isaiah 8:17-18. They are used to express Christ’s complete trust in GOD and His willingness to associate Himself with GOD’s children. One might notice the following verses which teach one to put his complete trust in GOD.

“The GOD of my rock; in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; Thou savest me from violence” (2 Samuel 22:3).

“Behold, GOD is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2).

“In the first (Isaiah 8:17) the prophet declares his personal faith in GOD in the midst of judgments. In the second he stands forth with his children as representing ‘the remnant,’ the seed of the Church, in Israel” (Westcott, p. 51).

Notice the connection of **“children”** and **“brethren”** in the context. These terms refer to the same thing — Christians.

The author uses language which shows Christ to be *“one with His people, sharing their dependance and their piety...His only hope was in God; and he calmly and confidently committed his cause to him”* (Barnes, p. 68).

These passages from the Old Testament show that the humanity of Jesus was foretold through the ancient prophets. This would include everything about that humanity — His temptations, sorrows, joys, and even His death and resurrection. Therefore, these Jewish Christians could put their full trust in Jesus when under attack by those who followed the old law.

Heb. 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil;”

“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil;” (ASV)

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil,” (NKJV)

“So, since the children share in blood and flesh, He Himself also partook of them, that through death He might render ineffectual the one having the power over death, that is, the devil;” (ESV)

An essential Christian doctrine is spoken of and confirmed here. **CHRIST CAME IN THE FLESH!** He came to this earth and put on a mortal body just like the one which all human beings wear. About the second century, there came to be an error (the seeds of which John dealt with in First John) which basically taught that Christ could not have come in the flesh. John taught that if one denied the fleshly existence of Christ, then that one was antichrist (1 John 4:3).

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is GOD with us” (Matthew 1:23).

“The old creeds were altogether correct in their affirmation that Christ is both God and man and fully representative of both, being wholly God and wholly man” (Coffman, p. 54).

In becoming just like man, with all of man’s fleshly problems, Christ could then sympathize with man in a more complete sense. This is not doubt by this writer, but the purpose of His coming in the “flesh” is described in this passage as dying. He died for a purpose.

“That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil”

It was through the Devil, or Satan, that death came upon all men. When Satan deceived man, and man fell to his wiles, that death entered the lives of mankind.

“That Satan had the power of death means that, by tempting Adam and Eve to sin and causing them to fall, he was the means of bringing death upon all mankind; and this may be the reason that Satan is called a ‘murderer’ from the beginning (John 8:44)” (Coffman, p. 55).

While it is true that physical death came upon man when he sinned in the garden, the greatest death (separation) came at that time in the

spiritual realm — separation from GOD. Christ came to offer reconciliation with GOD to man through the atoning death He endured. Thus, the power of death to separate us from the Father was destroyed.

Satan's sole purpose toward man is destructive and as Westcott rightly observed, *"Death as death is no part of the divine order"* (p. 53). Satan tried to destroy man because he was trying to strike a blow against GOD.

Death has always seemed to have a frightening influence over man, but it need not anymore. Death cannot hold the terror over Christians because Christ came into this world in the flesh and by His death and resurrection (Romans 1:4) demonstrated that man cannot be held within its confines. Satan brought death into this world, but Christ counteracted this by bringing life to mankind.

"In one sense death is no more; in and through Him death is destroyed (2 Tim. 1:10). 'In another sense complete victory over death awaits the final consummation, for the last enemy to be destroyed is death' (1 Cor. 15:26; cf. Rev. 20:14)" (Coffman, p. 78).

Heb. 2:15 *"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

"and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (ASV)

"and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (NKJV)

"And free those who fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." (ESV)

"bondage" — δουλεία — "slavery: bondage" (Strong); "Slavery, bondage, the condition of a slave" (Thayer); "To be a slave, to serve. Servitude, dependence, the state of a doulos or slave. That state of man in which he is prevented from freely possessing and enjoying his life, a state opposed to liberty" (Zodhiates); "A spirit of slavery" (Bauer, p. 205); "A verb found four times meaning to 'bring into bondage, slavery'" (Renn, p. 131).

"through fear of death" — the dread of dying. What is it about death which causes such dread or fear? Milligan offered three reasons for man's fear of death.

"(1) because of the pain, misery, and dissolution, which attend it; (2) because of the darkness and corruption of the grave which follow it; and (3) because of the uncertainty of their condition and destiny beyond it" (Milligan, p. 120).

It may be that one will dread the physical pain of death. After all — no one, if he is in his right mind, would enjoy the prospect of pain in his life. But the *"darkness and corruption of the grave"* should have no hold over one. Physical death is a separation of body and soul. It is leaving this life on earth to enter into an eternal life. It is the lifeless body which enters the grave, but that which lives on does not

enter the grave.

Regarding the third of Milligan's reasons for fear, it seems to be a part of man's nature to feel uneasiness and uncertainty concerning the unknown. **But should a Christian fear that which is beyond the grave?** The saved should not fear the next life and therefore not fear death. For the Christian there is nothing to fear. It is not as if a Christian enters a realm of which he knows nothing. The Bible has given a beautiful glimpse of Paradise and Heaven and assured Christians that their beauties and wonderfulness are beyond human ability to understand. For Christians there may be uneasiness over what they must endure to cross the river of death — but not fear of death. **Why?** Because through Christ they have the eternal hope which was made manifest through His resurrection (Romans 1:4). Notice Luke 20:33-38, from which one can learn that there will be a resurrection in which those counted worthy will die no more (remember that the word "death" refers to a separation). Further, this passage states that GOD is the GOD of the living. **Which living?** Of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"I am the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob? GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32).

By using these examples, it is seen that the living are those which are faithful to GOD in this life but after physical death are still alive. But of those who have not lived as the servants of GOD, there can only be the fear and dread of death. For them there awaits a second death. This fear is especially noticed by those who know what waits on the other side of the veil of death.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (The Revelation 20:14-15).

Note the contrast shown in Matthew 25:34.

Victory over death was announced in Isaiah 25:7-8. **Where was this victory to be obtained? "in this mountain"** — Mt. Zion/Jerusalem. Christ put on the robes of flesh to die and be raised again, thus eliminating the **"fear of death"** for His servants.

"we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Corinthians 5:1-3).

Heaven — eternity with GOD — is something the Christian desires above all else. So, where is the fear of passing through the veil of death? Anticipation — **yes**. Fear — **no**.

Heb. 2:16 "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."

"For verily not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham." (ASV)

“For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” (NKJV)

“For surely it is not angels He is concerned with, but the descendants of Abraham.” (ESV)

“took” — ἐπιλαμβάνομαι — *“to seize (for help, injury, attainment, or any other purpose; literally or figuratively): catch, lay, hold (up) on, take”* (Strong); *“To take in addition, to take, lay hold of, take possession of, overtake, attain to”* (Thayer); *“To take hold upon, lay hold of in order to hold or detain oneself”* (Zodhiates); *“Take hold of, grasp, catch”* (Bauer, p. 295); *“The word used here is epilambano, which means ‘to take hold of;’ in a given context it can extended to mean ‘help’”* (Lightfoot, p. 79); *“The Greek word means (1) to take hold of anything as one’s own; and (2) to take hold of any person with the view of helping him. In this latter sense the word is used here by our author”* (Milligan, p. 121).

The phrase **“Him the nature”** is not found in the original text, Keeping this in mind, the margin gives this reading for the passage: *“He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.”*

Christ did not take upon Himself the nature of angels but the nature of mankind, because it is they whom He came to help — note verse seventeen.

It is helpful remind oneself that Jesus came into the world to die for mankind, but if He had come in the body of an angel, He could not have died (Luke 20:36). Thus, He came as a fleshly descendant of Abraham. He did not come to this earth to aid angels but man.

“Christ’s mission, he says, was not to take hold of angels and deliver them from slavery; but it was to take hold of man, and to free him from the bondage of sin and death” (Milligan, p. 121).

Heb. 2:17 *“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”*

“Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (ASV)

“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (NKJV)

“Therefore He had to become like the brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things relating to GOD; to make atonement for the sins of the people.” (ESV)

“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren,”

“behooved” — ὀφείλω ὀφείλω — *“to owe; figuratively to be*

under obligation (ought, must, should” (Strong); “to owe...metaphorically the goodwill due” (Thayer); “to owe, to be indebted...Metaphorically to be bound or obligated to perform a duty, meaning I ought, must” (Zodhiates).

The idea seems to be that there was an obligation to become like man in order to fulfill the role of being a merciful and faithful High Priest.

“merciful” — ἐλεήμων — *“compassionate (actively): merciful” (Strong); “merciful” (Thayer); “compassionate, benevolently merciful involving thought and action” (Zodhiates); “merciful, sympathetic” (Bauer).*

“faithful” — ΠΙΣΤΟΣ — *“objectively trustworthy; subjectively trustful” (Strong); “trusty, faithful; of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties” (Thayer); “Worthy of belief, trust, or confidence. Trustworthy...Faithful in duty to oneself and to others, of true fidelity” (Zodhiates); “Trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith” (Bauer, p. 664).*

“made like man” The key word here is **“like.”** This does not refer to His birth (as that was supernaturally induced) or His sinlessness. It refers to the fact of His being like man, have a human body like man’s with all of the weaknesses of such a body. When He took on this labor of love, why did He have to put on the humanity of man? **“that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest”** By becoming a man, enduring the problems human beings face with all of the temptations they face, He can sympathize with them. He was faithful in that He saw the plan devised by His Father for man’s salvation through to the bitter end, even when it meant His death on the cross. He showed man how to be faithful and that it was possible for a human being to be faithful.

Jesus’ being a **“High Priest”** is introduced for the first time in the New Testament here, but it will be taken up in more detail later in this letter. Jesus’ priesthood is spoken of here in general terms, He is **“merciful”** and **“faithful.”** Jesus proved Himself faithful in fulfilling the commands given Him by His Father. Because Jesus was **“in all points tempted like as we are”** (Hebrews 4:15), He can be merciful in considering the needs of each individual. Christians should be glad that He will judge them only by their own abilities and not the abilities of someone else.

“That He might be merciful: that is, compassionate. That He might know how to pity us in our infirmities and trials, by having a nature like our own” (Barnes, p. 74).

“to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” Through His sacrifice, man is allowed to once again approach the throne of GOD without terror. A just GOD demands a penalty, a price, for one’s sins. Christ paid the price so that man could be brought back into a covenant relationship with GOD.

“On the day of atonement, the High Priest had first to slay the victim, and then carry its blood into the Most Holy Place to

make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Lev. 16:15). And so also, Christ is said to have offered Himself on the cross, so that He might afterward enter heaven with His own blood, and there make expiation for our sins according to the Scriptures. Christ was therefore the priest as well as the victim in the offering of Himself on Calvary” (Milligan, p. 123).

Through the sacrifice of Himself, He opened the way for man to be reconciled to His Father.

Heb. 2:18 *“For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.”*

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” (ASV)

“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” (NKJV)

“For in that He Himself suffered being tempted, He is able to come to the help of those who are tempted.” (ESV)

“suffered” — πάσχω πάθω πένθω — *“to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful): feel passion, suffer, vex” (Strong); “To be affected or have been affected, to feel, have a sensible experience, to undergo...in a bad sense, of misfortunes, to suffer, to undergo evils, to be afflicted...in a good sense, of pleasant experiences” (Thayer); “To suffer, to be affected by something from without, to be acted upon, to undergo an experience...Used of good, meaning to experience, to have happen to oneself, to receive...Used of evil, meaning to suffer, be subjected to evil” (Zodhiates); “Experience, be treated of everything that befalls a person, whether good or ill. Yet its usage developed in such a way that pascho came to be used less and less frequently in a good sense, and never without some clear indication, at least from the context, that the good sense is meant” (Bauer, p. 633).*

“tempted” — πειράζω — *“to test (objectively) i.e., endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: assay, examine, prove, tempt” (Strong); “A trial, experiment, attempt: to attempt a thing, to make trial of a thing or a person” (Thayer); “To try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt, test by soliciting to sin” (Zodhiates); “Attempt, trial, experiment” (Bauer, p. 640); “A verb occurring around forty times meaning ‘test,’ ‘prove,’ ‘tempt.’ The latter sense is found explicitly in about one-third of these contexts, although there is some overlap in meaning between all three nuances” (Renn, p. 965).*

“succor” — βοηθέω — *“to aid or relieve: help, succor” (Strong); “To run to the cry (of those in danger); hence univ. to help, succor, bring aid” (Thayer); “To run on hearing a cry, to give assistance. Generally meaning to succor, help, aid”*

(Zodhiates); *“Furnish aid...help, come to the aid of someone”*
(Bauer, p. 144).

Jesus was tempted through His sufferings. Note the comment by Milligan here.

“As God, He knows of course all our wants, and is ever able and willing to supply them. But as a man, He had to experience all the trials, temptations, privations, sorrows and sufferings, which are common to our race, in order to fully qualify Him for the duties of His mediatorial office: and these, as the Divine record shows, He endured to the uttermost” (p. 126).

“we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

What is temptation? In it's evil sense, it is a solicitation to commit sin. **Why?** To get one to turn from following GOD in order to serve Satan. Temptation is an attempt to cause one to stop sacrificing and serving GOD, to get him to give up his pursuit of perfection, to give up his salvation. Christ was tempted by Satan in an effort to get Him to be unfaithful to His Father. Temptation was an effort to get Him quit His efforts to save man, to give up on man. Thankfully, Christ never wavered but marched steadily forward, determined to finish the course and goal set before Him. Did He do this for Himself? No! He did it for fallen mankind. His suffering were intense. So intense that He prayed that if it was possible, if there was any other way, that He would be spared the suffering of the cross.

“He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

“Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:42-44).

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

The Lord can help Christians because He suffered as a man. One can look to Him for help because He remained sinless, even while wearing the robes of flesh.

“One who has himself been called to suffer, is able to sympathize with those who suffer” (Barnes, p. 75).

Regardless of the temptations human beings might suffer, there are certain things he should remember.

“(1) that he suffered more — infinitely more — than we can do,

and that in all of our sorrows we shall never reach what he endured.

(2) Let us remember that he is to us a brother, for he 'is not ashamed to call us brethren.'

(3) Let us then, in all times of affliction, look to him" (Barnes, p. 76).

The question often arises, "Could Christ have sinned?" If He had sinned He could not be the Savior. But as to the possibility that He could have chosen to sin, the answer is yes! The Scriptures are clear that Jesus was tempted (Hebrews 4:15; 2:18; Matthew 4:1-11). Where there is no capability of falling, there can be no temptation. A man cannot be tempted to do that which he is not capable of doing. This chapter speaks to a great extent about the fact of Jesus' humanity and His brotherhood with man. Yes, He was tempted in all points like all human beings, with the same freedom to choose, with the point being that He chose not to sin. This implies that mankind can choose not to sin — **no one is ever forced to sin.**

After Jesus successfully resisted the temptations in the wilderness, the angels came to comfort Him (Matthew 4), How wonderful to know that He stands ready to help His saints in their time of need. "He is able to succor (come to the aid of – RK) them that are tempted."

Hebrews Chapter Three

Heb. 3:1 “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;”

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus;” (ASV)

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,” (NKJV)

“Therefore, holy brethren, sharers of the heavenly calling, consider the One sent, the high priest Whom we confess, Jesus;” (ESV)

“**holy**” — ἅγιος — “*sacred (physically pure, morally blameless or religious ceremonially consecrated): (most) holy (one thing) saint*” (Strong); “*Reverend, worthy of veneration...set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His; prepared for God with solemn rite, clean...in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy*” (Thayer); “*Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. It has a common root hag, with hagnos, chaste, pure. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God’s purity and abstaining from earth’s defilement*” (Zodhiates); “*Of human beings consecrated to God, holy*” (Bauer, p. 9).

“Wherefore,” because of the superiority of Jesus to all created beings, consider the Lord in the light of His being both “**Apostle**” (one sent) and “**High Priest.**” Because He is so superior, because of the deliverance which He alone has given through the great sacrifice He made, consider Him in this light as well — He is the Christian’s “**Apostle and High Priest.**”

The term “**holy brethren**” is a term of endearment meant to show the importance of brethren and their relationship to GOD. The term “**brethren**” designates a family relationship, those dear to the heart of GOD because they have been set aside (“**holy**”) for His purposes. They have consecrated themselves to His service.

“**consider**” — κατανοέω — “*to observe fully: behold, consider, discover, perceive*” (Strong); “*To perceive, remark, observe, understand...to consider attentively, fix one’s eyes or mind upon*” (Thayer); “*To observe, notice, consider, contemplate...to have respect*” (Zodhiates); “*Notice, observe carefully...consider, notice in a spiritual sense, fix the eyes of the spirit upon*” (Bauer, p. 415).

Those who are brethren in Christ are to carefully observe, fully observe the Apostle and High Priest Who has called them. The writer says brethren are “**partakers of the heavenly calling.**” They have been called by the Gospel to embrace the salvation offered to them.

“Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

They were not called by human agencies, but from the ultimate source which is in Heaven. Notice the definite article “**the**” — there is only one heavenly calling.

“*And this is denominated a heavenly calling because it came*

from Heaven, leads to Heaven, and fills with heavenly joys the heart of all who are made partakers of it (Milligan, p. 134).

The appeal the author makes is simply this: Look very closely at Jesus; examine carefully the claims made about Him and by Him. The author is urging his readers to fix their eyes attentively on Jesus in such a way that they see every minute detail of the One being viewed so that not a single detail of the object is missed.

This text is the only time in the New Testament where the word “Apostle” is used of Christ. However, the idea of His being sent is found a number of times. It was prophesied that He would be GOD’s messenger in Malachi 3:1 (also notice John 12:49). In First John 4:14, one learns that “the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” Jesus was sent by the Father on a specific mission with a specific message of salvation. Thus, He became the greatest of the “apostles.” *“Jesus represents God as Apostle to man”* (Sheerer, p. 985).

It seems appropriate and helpful to keep in mind that a comparison is about to be made between Christ and Moses (also Aaron). Moses was sent by GOD to the Israelite people to free them from the bondage of physical slavery to Pharaoh and to deliver GOD’s laws to them. Jesus was sent by GOD to free humanity from spiritual slavery to Satan and deliver GOD’s laws to the world. Yet, Christ is more than that; He is an Apostle and High Priest. Aaron was a High Priest, while Moses as an apostle (sent to give law), but neither was both. Understanding these comparisons cannot help but bring one to the conclusion that the worship of the New Testament is superior to that of the Old Testament.

“A priest is man’s representative in the presence of God” (Reese, p. 38).

“Jesus represents man to God as High Priest” (Sheerer, p. 985).

The Greek word for “our profession” means, “(1) an agreement or compact; and (2) an admission, acknowledgment, or confession” (Milligan, p. 135). These Hebrews had once acknowledged their faith in Christ. The author was urging the Hebrews to consider why they had first confessed Christ. Consider the evidence upon which they had originally based their compact with Him. *Since that evidence was still valid, why turn away from Jesus now?*

Heb. 3:2 “Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.”

“who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house.” (ASV)

“who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.” (NKJV)

“Who was faithful to Him Who sent him, even as Moses was in all his house.” (ESV)

Christ was faithful in proclaiming the message of His Father, in all

of His actions, and in His obedience even unto death. But in this comparison of Christ and Moses, Moses is not put down or slighted in any way, even though he was imperfect. Rather, it is his faithfulness which is emphasized. In doing this, the writer let the people to whom he wrote know that the system under which Moses served was very valuable. It must be kept in mind that Moses represents the Old Testament system, while Christ represents the New Testament system. This is not simply a comparison between two men (Jesus and Moses), it is a comparison between two systems. It should also be kept in mind to whom these things were being written — Hebrew Christians who were being tempted to go back to the inferior system of the Old Testament.

This method shows something about the proper way to teach. If the writer had approached the Hebrews by saying, *“The Mosaic system is absolutely worthless,”* would he have succeeded in doing anything except pushing his listeners away? Probably not. He showed them that this system (O.T.) was good, that it was valuable; **but** there was now something available which was better.

Christ was faithful in the tasks given to Him as Apostle and High Priest, just as Moses had been faithful in the tasks GOD gave him to do. When was the Lord appointed to be Apostle and High Priest? If He was a lamb slain from the foundation of the earth (The Revelation 13:8), then it would seem that the appointment was made then, while the actual accomplishment of these appointments came later. The Lord was faithful in fulfilling His task. The English translation does not quite give the complete sense of this passage. The tense of His faithfulness is the present tense, which shows continuing action. He was faithful, continues to be faithful, and will always be faithful in doing whatever the Father assigns Him to do.

The latter part of this verse is quoted from Numbers 12:7. It is interesting to note the context of that passage. Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman. *What was really behind their criticism?* They were questioning the authority of Moses (*“Is he the only one through whom GOD speaks?”*). They said that GOD had spoken through them too (and He had); so they thought they should be considered to be just as important as Moses. GOD showed Miriam and Aaron that Moses was indeed superior to them, that He (GOD) may have revealed things to them, but He spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth.” Yet, as will be seen, for all the superiority of Moses, Christ was far superior. GOD told Miriam and Aaron to listen to Moses because of his superiority to them; thus, the Hebrew writer was telling man to listen to the new law, to listen to Christ because He is superior to Moses, just as Moses was to Miriam and Aaron. It might also be noticed that GOD had previously made the point of Christ’s superiority to the disciples. This was done at the transfiguration of Jesus when Peter wanted to honor Moses and Elijah who had appeared with Jesus. But GOD told them to listen to Jesus — not Moses and Elijah.

“after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the

sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:1-5).

Heb. 3:3 “For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.”

“For He hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as He that built the house hath more honor than the house.” (ASV)

“For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.” (NKJV)

“For He Himself is worthy of more glory than Moses, even as the one who builds has more honor than the house.” (ESV)

Here is the point to which the author is leading, stated more clearly than it has been before — Christ is superior to Moses. The groundwork for this statement has been laid, and now more proof of the statement will be given. The Messiah is worthy of more glory than Moses because He built the house in which Moses lived (Jewish system, Jewish family). The Messiah built the house of Israel. (The idea is that the architect and builder is worthy of more respect than the house itself because They brought it into existence.)

Speaking of GOD’s Son, Albert Barnes wrote the following.

“He is the author of the universe; the source of all wise and well founded systems; the originator of the Jewish dispensation over which Moses presided. Whatever beauty or excellence there might have been, therefore, in that system, was to be traced to him; and whatever ability Moses displayed was imparted by him. Christ is really the head of the family over which Moses presided, and has claims, therefore, to higher honor as such” (Barnes, p. 80).

“by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:16-18).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

As in Hebrews 12:2, Jesus is “the Author and the Finisher of the faith.” Just as He is the author of “the faith,” so also was He the author of the Mosaic dispensation with its laws.

“The Father and the Son are both God; both included in the Eloheem Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the Lord God Omnipotent of the New; and that each of them, as well as the Spirit, has an agency in all that pertains to the redemption of mankind” (Milligan, p. 140).

“Here the force of the argument lies in the fact that Moses is identified with the system which was entrusted to him. He was himself a part of it. He did not originate it. He received it and administered it with absolute loyalty. But its author was God. And Christ as the Son of God” (Westcott, p. 76).

Faithfulness did not make Moses equal to the Lord; did not put him on a par with the Lord. Faithfulness allowed Moses to be a part of GOD’s plan, a child of GOD because he did what GOD told him to do. Faithfulness is a required attribute of every servant of the Lord. Therein is the point made in the text. Moses was merely a servant, whereas Christ was the founder of the house (Mosaic system). The faithfulness of the Lord dealt with doing all that the GODHEAD (of which He was a part), had determined must be done in order to provide mankind with salvation through the establishment of the place of safety — the church, the family of GOD.

Heb. 3:4 “For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is GOD.”

“For every house is builded by some one; but He that built all things is GOD.” (ASV)

“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is GOD.” (NKJV)

“Every house was built by someone, but all things were built by GOD.” (ESV)

The truth stated in this passage is so simple that even the very young can understand it. How many have heard a two year old ask, “Mommy/Daddy, who made this toy, or that car, et cetera?” That small child, who simply uses pure, uncorrupted reasoning — understands that things do not simply exist. There must be a maker for everything which exists! What does that say about the evolutionist who does not want to admit that GOD exists, and claims everything on this earth and including this earth, is a product of chance? It says that that two year old is smarter than he is with whatever degrees he may have from even the greatest university. What does the simple logic of that two year old say about the one who says that there is no GOD? The Bible answers that question for everyone.

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no GOD. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good” (Psalm 14:1, cf. Psalm 53:1).

Note that there is not a single fool who has said there is no GOD who is not guilty of “**abominable works,**” nor have they done any good.

“**The heavens declare the glory of GOD; and the firmament sheweth His handywork**” (Psalm 19:1).

As the Bible states, it takes a fool to say there is no GOD, and the simply wisdom of a child to understand that someone had to make something that exists.

The implication of this passage is that the Lord is GOD. He was not a part of the house; He built the house — therefore, He is GOD. Notice the following passages which affirm that all things were made by Christ.

“**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made**” (John 1:1-3, emphasis mine, RK).

“**Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds...And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands**” (Hebrews 1:2, 10, emphasis mine, RK).

“**And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, Who created all things by Jesus Christ**” (Ephesians 3:9, emphasis mine, RK).

“**For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him**” (Colossians 1:16, emphasis mine, RK).

Arguments For The Existence Of GOD

Ontological Argument

“The essence of this approach is that the existence of God follows necessarily from the idea of God, since God is a Being than which a greater cannot be conceived...the idea of God, who is infinite and perfect, could not be produced by any finite object and must, therefore, be caused by God Himself” (Trueblood, p. 91).

“Wherever man has been found, in whatever century and in whatever part of the world, he has been found to be a worshiping creator” (Baxter, p. 39).

“It is deeply significant that down through the centuries wherever men have been found they have exhibited some kind of religious faith and worship” (Ibid, p. 40).

“Whether by means of intellect or spirit, the fact is that man has almost universally recognized a greater all-encompassing intelligence

and order in the universe than could possibly be conceived from chance, haphazard events involving inanimate, unguided matter. That man universally accepts the need of extrapolation beyond his own intellect is in itself strong evidence for a superior intelligence” (Monsma, p. 59).

Extrapolate — expansion of known data or experience into an area not known or experienced in order to arrive at new knowledge.

“In order for the fool to say ‘God,’ he had to have a concept of God in his mind. To start out to deny God is a kind of implication that God exists” (Baxter, p. 42).

There would be no concept of GOD unless GOD exists and told man about Himself. Further, if man is not GOD (and he is not), how can he definitively say there is no GOD?

Cosmological Argument

Plato said, *“that every created thing must be created by some cause”* (Trueblood, p. 92).

“In our experienced world all events are preceded by causes. If two trees stand side by side in the forest and one dies while the other lives, all agree that there were different causal factors in the two situations. The dead tree had a disease, but, in turn, there was a cause of the disease, and so on. Thus, among all finite things, the chain of causality runs back, step by step. But an infinite chain of cause is logically impossible...there must be a first cause, itself uncaused and self-existent. To say that such a first cause exists is to say that God is” (Trueblood, p. 92).

The Causal Argument:

1. Nothing comes from nothing.
 - a. Because something exists, it had to have an origin.
2. Origin of life.
 - a. There are only two possibilities:
 - (1) Matter, or
 - (2) Mind
3. Mind is obviously superior to matter.
 - a. Matter has never created anything.
 - b. All matter had its origin in the mind and creative force of GOD.
 - (1) Hebrews 3:4

Teleological Argument

“This argument...argues from the presence of order in the universe to an adequate source of that order...The order is taken as a token of design and the conclusion is that God must be the source of that design” (Trueblood, p. 93).

This argument proves that an architect of the world exists!

“It has been calculated that if the twenty-six letters of our alphabet were tossed into the air by chance, they would all fall together in their normal order (A through Z) only once in five hundred million, million,

million times” (Shelly, p. 7).

What would the odds then be of throwing the letters up and getting a telephone book, a history book, math book, et cetera?

“If we omit God from our explanation of the universe we must assume that the elements of our physical universe were just tossed into space and fell together in their present orderly fashion by chance” (Ibid, p. 7).

But then, who tossed them up again and again?

“Our universe exhibits intelligent design and orderliness...It is totally unreasonable to believe that all this came about in our world by means of the blind forces of nature all acting independently of each other. But it is reasonable to believe that this orderly design points to a single intelligent God who is the Cause and the Creator of this order” (IBID, p. 8).

Heb. 3:5 *“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;”*

“And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken;

“And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,” (NKJV)

“And Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of things to be spoken later.” (ESV)

“servant” — θεράπων — *“a menial attendant: servant”* (Strong); *“To hold, have about one...an attendant, servant”* (Thayer); *“Servant, attendant, minister: it denotes a faithful friend to a superior, who solicitously regards the superior’s interest or looks after his affairs, not a common or domestic servant. One who serves willingly regardless of whether he is a free man impelled by love or a slave bound by duty”* (Zodhiates); *“An attendant, a servant, a minister”* (Littrell, p. 271); *“The particular word he uses for ‘servant’ deserves special study. It is therapon. This word is used in the LXX of angels and prophets. There is an ethical character attached to the word. It speaks of service of an affectionate nature, and of a hearty character, performed with care and fidelity. Therapon speaks of a service that is of a nobler and a freer character than that of doulos (bondslave)”* (Wuest, p. 71).

Moses served, not as a bondslave, but rather as a loving and faithful servant (Numbers 12:7).

“Moses was not the great lawgiver through any power and ability of himself alone, but it was in his capacity as God’s representative and as a vessel for the conveyance of God’s message that his noble work was achieved” (Coffman, p. 72).

Further, it should be noted that it was not Moses’ house. The house belonged to GOD! Moses voluntarily and lovingly served GOD in that house. Christ presides over His Father’s house, which also belongs to Him. Moses faithfully delivered to Israel the laws and ceremonies which were given to him by Deity. Christ gave mankind the laws

which He, as part of the GODHEAD planned for mankind.

The use of the particular word “**servant**” (therapon), in this passage gives special honor to Moses. He was not a bond-servant who was being forced to deliver the message and wait upon his Master. Moses served his master out of an abounding love. He faithfully fulfilled the tasks he was given.

“**For a testimony of those things which were spoken of after**” What Moses did as a servant was to prepare the way for One Who was greater than himself. This was the role of all of the Old Testament prophets and also the prophets of the New Testament (John). Moses was preparing for the time when a better covenant would take the place of the one he was giving the Israelites. Moses was a faithful “**schoolmaster**” (teacher) who pointed the people to the Messiah and His kingdom.

“**The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken**” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

“**Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster**” (Galatians 3:24-25).

Heb. 3:6 “**But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.**”

“but Christ as a Son, over His house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end.” (ASV)

“but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” (NKJV)

“But Christ is faithful over all his house as a Son; whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and boasting of the hope to the end.” (ESV)

“**confidence**” — παρρησία — “*all out spokenness, i.e., frankness, bluntness; by implication assurance*” (Strong); “*Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, freely, openly, frankly, i.e., without concealment...free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance*” (Thayer); “*Freedom or frankness in speaking, NT meanings: freedom in speaking all that one thinks or pleases; confidence or boldness, particularly in speaking; plainness or exactness of speech; openness, speaking publicly; freedom, liberty*” (Zodhiates); “*Out spokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing*” (Bauer, p. 630).

“**firm**” — βέβαιος — “*stable: firm of force, steadfast, sure*” (Strong); “*Stable, fast, firm*” (Thayer); “*Fixed, sure, certain. Figuratively that upon which one may build, rely, or trust*” (Zodhiates); “*Firm, permanent*” (Bauer, p. 138). The same

word is translated “**stedfast**” in verse fourteen and in Second Corinthians 1:7).

The faithfulness of Moses and Christ is seen in different respects. Moses’ faithfulness was in administering the house which another owned. Christ was faithful in administering the house He owned.

“**whose house we are**” Christ is the head of His house and Christians are that house(hold). It is the house as a whole which is being spoken of, and that house is His “**body**” (Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Ephesians 4:4), “**the church**” (Acts 2:47; 14:27; 1 Corinthians 14:19), “**the family of GOD**” (Ephesians 3:14-15), which makes up His house. What a great encouragement these words would be to those to whom the writer corresponded and to Christians today. Christians are His house “**IF.**” This is a warning for Christians to be faithful. The word “**if**” shows the final reward is conditional. **What is the condition?**

“**If we hold fast...unto the end**” “*We are God’s house if we do not play the traitor and desert*” (Robertson, p. 355).

“**be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**” (The Revelation 2:10).

“**confidence**” The meaning of this word is different from what one normally thinks it is used. This word refers to freedom to speak, which speaks of a boldness in telling the message. The requirement then seems to be that one must proclaim the message he has been given in an open, fearless way. Christians are to courageously proclaim the truth to the world around them. GOD has given us the freedom to proclaim His Son and the New Covenant which He has given through Him, and He expects faithful servants to speak out.

“**rejoicing**” Should not this hope cause rejoicing in the hearts of all who belong to GOD’s house?

“*There is an old saying about ‘whistling to keep up the courage;’ and there is no doubt that in things spiritual the spiritual secret of courageous and stedfast living is to be bold and to glory constantly in our Christian hope*” (Thomas, p. 41).

The believer himself has an obligation to keep his faith strong and firmly committed to the Christ. One cannot simply believe he is saved, cannot simply believe he is a member of the Lord’s body. If he is truly a part of GOD’s house, it will show in his actions. His Christianity will continue to show itself “**firm unto the end.**”

The “**end**” spoken of here is death itself (could be the end of time if one is alive when the Lord returns).

“**he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved**” (Matthew 24:13).

“**ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved**” (Mark 13:13).

Heb. 3:7 “**Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice,**”

“Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, To-day if ye shall hear His voice,”

(ASV)

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice,” (NKJV)

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice,” (ESV)

This passage is cited from Psalm 95:7-11. Notice that writer attributes the psalm to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of GOD was/is speaking through the written word.

The word *“Today’ is from semeron, today; this very day”* (Littrell, p. 273). “Today” (now) is the day in which one should listen. By quoting what was said by inspiration through the psalmist, one should get the idea that when man hears GOD’s truths, it is at that very moment that he ought to obey what he hears. The stronger one’s faith is the more apt he is to immediately obey anything he learns from GOD’s Word. No matter what generation one may belong to, it is his obligation to obey when he has knowledge of GOD’s wishes. The Hebrew writers appeal is for action **now**.

“(For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Coffman offers the following list as to why today is the time to obediently listen to the Lord.

- “1. Men have waited long enough already.*
- 2. There may never be a tomorrow for any man.*
- 3. The difficulty of obedience is only multiplied and compounded by delay.*
- 4. God has commanded obedience now.*
- 5. The impulse to respond or obey may diminish or disappear.*
- 6. Subsequent obedience (even if it comes) may not be as effectual and fruitful.*
- 7. There is no better time than now to do the Father’s will”* (p. 75).

GOD has never told anyone to obey Him tomorrow; it is always today.

“The word ‘wherefore’ reaches back into the epistle to the three preceding arguments. In view of the fact that Messiah is better than the prophets, the angels, and Moses, the warning is, not to harden your hearts in renouncing their professed faith in Messiah and returning to the sacrifices” (Wuest, p. 74).

Notice the phrase *“if ye will hear His voice.”* Again, one sees the conditional aspect of salvation. *“If”* one listens (with the additional thought of obeying what he hears), then that one will not harden his heart in departing from Christianity and the Messiah who authored Christianity. One will not (as in the Hebrews’ case) be tempted to return to Judaism, or to denominationalism, or any other religion. Consider the thought that today, anyone who follows the law of Moses to any degree, who claims to be a Christian, is part of a denomination.

Heb. 3:8 “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:”

“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, Like as in the day of the trial

in the wilderness,” (ASV)

“Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,” (NKJV)

“Do not harden your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness;” (ESV)

“**provocation**” — παραπικρασμός — *“irritation: provocation”* (Strong); *“Provocation: when they provoked (angered) me by rebelliousness”* (Thayer); *“A bitter provocation, exasperation”* (Zodhiates); *“Embitterment, then revolt, rebellion against God”* (Bauer, p. 621).

What is a hard heart? Barnes gives this very good definition of what a hard heart is.

“A hard heart is that where the conscience is seared and insensible; where truth makes no impression, where no religious effect is produced by afflictions; where preaching is listened to without interest; and where the mind is unaffected by the appeals of friends” (p. 83).

The hardening of the heart is something which happens every time one hears the truth and refuses to obey it. It is knowing truth but purposely ignoring it in disobedience.

The Hebrew writer went back to Israel’s history to show it was possible for these Hebrew Christians to do the same thing their forefathers had done. Not only was it possible for them to do so, but the Spirit is showing it is possible for anyone who reads the Scriptures to return to a way which cannot save them. The warning is clear: **Do not allow this to happen at any time.** What was true with those to whom the apostle wrote then is just as true today. If one is the hear the voice of GOD, he must not let his heart become hardened. It is also implied that one can keep his heart from becoming hard; it can be kept soft and pliable. When someone hardens his heart, he refuses to listen, and there can then come a time when he will no longer be able to listen (Pharaoh of the exodus). Coffman states:

“Men’s hearts are hardened by continuing to sin, procrastination, and by the gradual atrophy of spiritual perception brought on by the practice of disobedience” (Coffman, p. 76).

It must be remembered that the continuing emphasis in this text is on whatever day it may be (this very day). In this present world there is no tomorrow; there is only right now.

“as in the provocation” The warning for these Hebrews was not to do as their fathers had done, not to provoke the anger of GOD as their fathers had done through their rebellion in the wilderness. The time of this provocation seems to refer to the murmuring in Exodus 17:1-7 for water. (Massah means *“temptation,”* and Meribah means *“strife.”*) It was not very long after this event that GOD **“sware in His wrath, they shall not enter into My rest”** (v. 11). The people to whom the apostle spoke could look back and see what happened when GOD became angry with His people, and they were to learn from this example so that it did not happen to them. No matter in what year

one may live, this truth still holds true. Look back in GOD's Word to learn what attitudes anger GOD, and then do not do what will bring our His wrath.

Heb. 3:9 "When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years."

"Where your fathers tried Me by proving Me, And saw My works forty years."
(ASV)

"Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years."
(NKJV)

"When your fathers tempted and tried Me and saw My works forty years."
(ESV)

"tempted" — πειράζω — *"to test, endeavor to scrutinize, entice, discipline"* (Strong); *"To try, make trial of, test"* (Thayer); *"To try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt, test by soliciting to sin"* (Zodhiates); *"The Bible also speaks of a trial of God by man. Their intent is to put Him to the test, to discover whether He really can do a certain thing, esp. whether He notices sin and is able to punish it"* (Bauer, p. 640); *"The Greek words translated 'tempted' and 'proved,' are peirazomai and dokimazo respectively. They are an interesting contrast. Peirazomai means 'to put to the test to see what good or evil may be in a person: Dokimazo means 'to put to the test for the purpose of approving the person if he meets the test'" (Wuest, p. 75).*

"proved" — δοκιμάζω — *"to test (literally or figuratively); by implication to approve: allow, discern, examine, prove, try"* (Strong); *"To test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not) as metals"* (Thayer); *"To try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve. It has the notion of providing a thing whether it is worthy or not"* (Zodhiates); *"Put to the test, examine"* (Bauer, p. 202).

"your fathers" Their Israelite ancestor who lived during the days of Moses in the wilderness wanderings. Their fathers had "proved" and "tempted" GOD. They put the patience of GOD to a thorough trial. They acted like little children who will test a parent to see if he really means what he says. Many times children will continue to push until they reach the maximum limitations of the parents patience. They push until it is too late; then they get their spanking. The Israelites pushed GOD until He told them, *"Enough is enough, you have gone too far."* The Israelites had not learned from their past experiences, they kept on pushing GOD, and consequently kept getting put in their place by Him. This continued for most of the forty years of wandering until a new generation arose and followed GOD as directed.

Their rebellious conduct was without cause since GOD had shown them over and over that He was able and willing to take care of them under any and all conditions. The plagues brought upon the Egyptians should have been enough of a warning that GOD could

take care of or punish depending on the need of the situation. Again, the warning is sounded that one should look back to GOD's Word, learn from it, and refuse to repeat the mistakes of the past.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“works” *“The Hebrew is singular. The many works of God in the wilderness were all one work, one in essence and aim, whether they were works of deliverance or works of chastisement”* (Westcott, p. 81).

Heb. 3:10 **“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways.”**

“Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, And said, They do always err in their heart: But they did not know My ways;” (ASV)

“Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.” (NKJV)

“Therefore I was angry at that generation and said, They always wander in their heart, and they have not known My ways.” (ESV)

“grieved” — προσοχθίζω — *“to feel indignant at: be grieved with”* (Strong); *“To be wrath or displeased with”* (Thayer); *“To be burdened, grieved, indignant, to be grieved toward someone, angry...to be very angry, highly displeased”* (Zodhiates); *“To be angry, offended, provoked at someone”* (Bauer, p. 717); *“It is the translation in the LXX of Hebrew verbs meaning ‘to loathe, be disgusted, to spur out, to exclude, reject, abhor, repudiate’”* (Wuest, p. 76).

“err” — πλανάω — *“go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way”* (Strong); *“To cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way...through ignorance to be led aside from the path of virtue, to go astray, sin”* (Thayer); *“To cause to wander, lead astray, with the acc. in the passive: to wander, go astray”* (Zodhiates); *“Do astray, be misled, deluded...their minds are going astray”* (Bauer, p. 665).

The word **“grieved”** (as seen in the above definitions) is a very strong word, which shows the strong feeling these erring Israelites caused in GOD. In the New Testament, the word is found only here and in verse seventeen. The Israelites vexed GOD over and over with their multiplied transgression of His laws, and finally He became disgusted with them. In The Revelation, note what GOD told the Laodicians.

“because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth” (3:16).

“they do always err in their heart” Here was the root cause of their sin, the root cause of GOD's anger toward these Israelites. **They had wandering hearts!** The heart is the seat of man's will and understanding. The word **“heart”** is often used figuratively in GOD's

Word to describe, not the physical pump in one's chest which pushes blood through the body, but that which is the seat of the emotions, that which is the seat of his moral character — **his mind**. The heart of man, is what makes him what he is — in short, his brain and its thinking process is the heart of man.

“known” — *“The distinctive word ‘to know’ here is ginosko which speaks of knowledge gained by experience”* (Wuest, p. 76).

They should have known GOD, not just what might be called “book knowledge,” but they should have known Him by experience. They had heard His word, they had witnessed His mighty actions on their behalf and against those who were His (their) enemies. They were utterly without any possible excuse for their rebellion to Him. So the author next tells what GOD did with those “heart wanderers.”

Heb. 3:11 **“So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.”**

“As I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” (ASV)

“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’” (NKJV)

“As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest” (ESV)

“wrath” — ὀργή — *“desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind) that is (by analogy) violent passion; by implication **punishment**: anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath”* (Strong); *“The natural disposition, temper, character, movement or agitation of soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion... The orge attributed to God in the New Testament is that in which God stands opposed to man’s disobedience, obduracy (esp. in resisting the gospel) and sin, and manifests itself in punishing the same”* (Thayer); *“Wrath, anger as a state of mind”* (Zodhiates); *“Anger, indignation, wrath”* (Bauer, p. 578).

The Israelites wandered into sin repeatedly through wilful ignorance of knowledge which they had available to them (Moses). Because they would not be obedient to His will, it was perfectly natural that GOD should punish them. It was perfectly natural that in His disgust to hold them accountable for their transgressions. Let it be perfectly understood that GOD has not changed. He still feels the same way about sin, and always will. Sin which is not repented of will not escape eternal punishment.

Historically, this text deals with the events of Numbers chapter fourteen. The spies had been sent out to view the promised land. Ten of them convinced Israel that they could not do what GOD said they could do. This was the proverbial “last straw” with GOD. He declared that none of the men of war (Joshua and Caleb excepted) would enter the promised land — the land of rest. He kept His word then and will keep it today and tomorrow.

That rest in Canaan (that physical rest) was a type of that which was to come. The rest in Canaan was the type of the eternal rest in Heaven which awaits the faithful of all ages. That is not to say that all those who died in the wilderness are eternally lost. If they repented of their sins and returned to walking under the guiding hand of GOD,

then they could enter the eternal abode with Him. The example which illustrates this is Moses. Because of his transgression, he could not enter the physical land of rest, but **who would say that he did not gain the eternal rest when one considers Matthew 17?**

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:1-5).

Heb. 3:12 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living GOD.”

“Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living GOD:” (ASV)

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;” (NKJV)

“See to it, brethren, that there not be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in turning from the living GOD.” (ESV)

“take heed” — βλέπω — **“to look at...take heed”** (Strong); **“A look, glance: in seeing and hearing”** (Thayer); **“To see. To be able to see, i.e., to have the faculty of sight, and as spoken of the blind, to recover sight...In the sense of to perceive as with the eyes meaning to discern, to understand...Metaphorically to perceive with the mind, be aware of, observe”** (Zodhiates); **“Be seeing to it constantly, keep a watchful eye every upon, is the idea”** (Wuest, p. 77).

“evil” — πονηρός — **“hurtful, i.e., evil (properly in effect or influence)”** (Strong); **“Bad, of a bad nature or condition”** (Thayer); **“Evil in a moral or spiritual sense, wicked, malicious, mischievous”** (Zodhiates); **“Wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate”** (Bauer, p. 690); **“The particular word for evil here is not *kakos*, evil in the abstract, but *poneros*. Evil in active opposition to the good. When Satan was spoken of as the evil one, the word used is *poneros*”** (Wuest, p. 77).

“unbelief” — ἄπιστία — **“faithlessness, i.e., (negatively) disbelief (want of Christian faith) or (positively) unfaithfulness (disobedience): unbelief”** (Strong); **“Want of faith and trust, unbelief”** (Thayer); **“Faithlessness or uncertainty, distrust, unbelief”** (Zodhiates); **“Unfaithfulness, unbelief, lack of belief”** (Bauer, p. 85); **“*Apistias* is more than mere unbelief, here**

rather disbelief, refusal to believe, genitive case describing the evil heart marked by its belief" (Robertson, p. 358).

"departing" — ἀφίστημι — *"to remove, i.e., (actively) instigate to revolt; usually (reflexively) to desist, desert, etc.: depart, draw (fall) away, refrain, withdraw self"* (Strong); *"To stand off, stand aloof...to fall away, become faithless"* (Thayer); *"To withdraw, remove oneself, forsake, desert, retire, cease from something"* (Zodhiates); *"Go away, withdraw, keep away"* (Bauer, p. 126); *"They were standing aloof from the living God"* (Wuest, p. 78).

Coffman states that there are five facts which may deduced from this verse.

- "1. That it is possible for Christians to fall away from the living God.*
- 2. That such a disaster is due to an unbelieving heart.*
- 3. That an unbelieving heart is evil (not merely 'smart').*
- 4. That God is not a mere influence but a living person.*
- 5. That there are adequate grounds upon which a Christian may avoid falling away"* (p. 78).

Man ought to be able to profit from the mistakes of others, learn from them, and refuse to make the same mistakes themselves. The record of events such as one sees in verses seven through eleven, as well as the entire Old Testament, is there for man's benefit.

"take heed" One must constantly be on guard. Salvation and the keeping of what GOD has given are not things to be trifled with.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Why should one "take heed?" Because there is something valuable which can be lost. This should cause serious students of the Bible to sit up and take notice. There are many today who advocate that a saved person can never be lost. But if it is impossible for a saved person to be lost, then **why does the Holy Spirit warn that it can happen?** The advocates of the impossibility of apostasy and the Holy Spirit cannot both be right. **Which one of the two will the reader of Hebrews believe?** This passage (and others like it in this book) should forever still the tongues of those who profess such a doctrine, the idea of which never appears in GOD's Word. The apostle was speaking to Hebrew Christians and warning them not to leave Christianity, not to go back to Judaism. Those **Christians** who turned back to Judaism fell from GOD's grace.

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

What would cause a Christian to fall from GOD's grace? An **"evil heart of unbelief."** What will an evil heart do? Cause one to **"departing from the living GOD."** The person who turns away from the truths of GOD's Word will become an active enemy of GOD.

"Apostasy is the ultimate consequence of unbelief; and unbelief, as the next verse indicates, is brought on by the heart that is hardened through sin. Thus, the logical order of the downward process is sin, a hardened heart, unbelief,

apostasy” (Lightfoot, p. 90).

“Men who have accepted the truth and are actually in the faith of Christ, if they do not live up to the moral requirements of that faith, become alienated from it, grow to despise and hate it, and at last find themselves in rebellion against God” (Coffman, p. 79).

GOD is a **living** GOD. Considering the context, if one turns away from Jesus, he turns away from GOD the Father. One cannot have one without the other. One cannot turn from one without turning from the other. Since GOD is living and not dead, one’s reaction toward Him (whether in faith or unbelief) will bring the same reaction from GOD that it brought to the ancient Hebrews.

Heb. 3:13 *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

“but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin:” (ASV)

“but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (NKJV)

“But encourage one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (ESV)

“exhort” — παρακαλέω — *“To call near, i.e., invite, invoke”* (Strong); *“Admonish, exhort”* (Thayer); *“To aid, help, comfort, encourage”* (Zodhiates); *“Appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage”* (Bauer, p. 617); *“The compound word means ‘to call urgently,’ thus, ‘to exhort.’ Paralaleo means therefore, ‘to beg, entreat, beseech, exhort”* (Wuest, p. 79).

“hardened” — σκληρύνω — *“To indurate, i.e., (figuratively) render **stubborn**: harden”* (Strong); *“To be hardened, i.e., become obstinate or stubborn”* (Thayer); *“To make hard or stiff, make obdurate. In the NT applied only figuratively to the heart or mind”* (Zodhiates); *“Pass, be or become hardened, harden oneself”* (Bauer, p. 756).

“deceitfulness” — ἀπάτη — *“delusion: deceit”* (Strong); *“Deceit, deceitfulness”* (Thayer); *“In the pass. sense spoken of anything which is deceptive, seducing”* (Zodhiates); *“Deception, deceitfulness”* (Bauer, p. 82); *“the word ‘deceitfulness’ is the translation of apate which refers to a trick, stratagem, or deceit rather than to the quality of deceitfulness. The recipients are warned against being hardened by a trick which their sin may play upon them. The definite article precedes the word ‘sin,’ identifying that sin with the one spoken of in the context, namely, the sin of apostasy”* (Wuest, p. 79).

“exhort one another daily” Two things of importance are seen in this phrase. Christians are to **“exhort”** one another, and they are to do

it **“today”** and **everyday**. This passage shows that it is the duty of Christians to encourage their brethren on a continual basis.

“let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

“comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16).

When one considers his obligation to exhort one another, such an obligation should be viewed from three vantage points: (1) First it is a privilege to be able to encourage one another, (2) The faithful should exhort the faithful by encouraging them to remain faithful, and (3) the faithful ought to exhort their brethren who go (or are going) astray to return to faithfulness. All of these areas are very important. So often it is the sad case that Christians see someone going astray but do nothing to try to prevent their brother from being lost.

Why do Christians fail to exhort one another daily as opportunities arise? When they see a brother departing why do they not make an opportunity to exhort them to faithfulness?

1. Perhaps some fail to exhort one another because they are naturally timid. This is a weakness that can be overcome.
2. Some do not exhort one another because they are ashamed of Christ.
3. Some have the idea that it is impolite, or that one may embarrass another (political correctness gone astray), if we exhort a brother to faithfulness.
4. Too often one is **afraid** of making the erring one angry.

Some try to excuse their failure to exhort a brother or sister to faithfulness by saying something like this: *“I did not have an opportunity.”* **Why not make the opportunity? Who says one has to wait for a casual contact between individuals in order to help someone go to Heaven? Why not initiate an opportunity as Nathan did with David? Does one really love the soul of the one sliding into Hell if he does nothing to halt the slide?**

To help a brother who is moving toward his old sins (or a new one) is indeed a Christian obligation which cannot be done anyone except a Christian. But it should also be viewed as a privilege. Because one is a Christian, he has the privilege of serving GOD by attempting to save his fellow-Christian from apostasy. It is not a matter of saying, *“Oh well, I have to do it because GOD said do it, even though I really do not want to.”* It is a privilege which is based on love for GOD and the souls He loves.

“while it is called today” This phrase emphasizes the urgency involved in obeying GOD. There is no tomorrow, only today, therefore one should exhort today and not put it off until tomorrow.

“Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” The hardening of the heart comes because of the deceitfulness of sin.

“Sin promises the transgressor happiness, only to plunge him into sorrow. It promises joy, but delivers wretchedness, shame, misery, and remorse. It promises liberty, but binds the sinner with the most disgusting chains of slavery. It promises light, but submerges the soul in outer darkness. It promises knowledge, as in the case of Adam and Eve, but provides with that knowledge a devastating sense of shame, guilt, and bitterness” (Coffman, p. 82).

One must allow his brothers and sisters in Christ to become hardened in sin through his negligence in exhorting them. It is the responsibility of the elders to help one who is in danger of falling under the weight of sin. But it is just as much the responsibility of **every** Christian to halt their slide. Christians cannot excuse their responsibility by laying it at the feet of someone else. Unfortunately, Christians often fall short in the area of exhortation.

“the wages of sin is death; but the gift of GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

“the deceitfulness of sin” Satan is tricky! He will use every tool available to make sin look attractive without any consequences. The bait he uses is like that used to catch a fish. To the fish, that worm is extremely attractive. But “All of Satan’s worms have hooks in them” (Elliot, quoted by Reese, p. 49). Satan will indeed do all he can to make sin look attractive, but in the end his bait only brings capture and death.

Heb. 3:14 “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;”

“for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end:” (ASV)

“For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,” (NKJV)

“For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our undergirding faith firm to the end;” (ESV)

“are made” — γίνομαι — *“to cause to be...to become (come into being)”* (Strong); *“To become”* (Thayer); *“This verb is middle deponent intransitive, primarily meaning to begin to be, that is, to come into existence or into any state”* (Zodhiates); *“The perfect tense in Greek speaks of an action that was completed in past time, having present results. The translation reads, therefore, ‘For we became partakers of Messiah with the present result that we are partakers of Him’* (Wuest, p. 80); *“The perfect tense is employed, showing that this partnership with Christ began in the past and continues into the present”* (Lightfoot, p. 91).

“partakers” — μέτοχος — *“participant, i.e., a sharer; by implication an associate: fellow partaker, partner”* (Strong); *“Sharing in, partaking of...of the thing...of his mind, and of the salvation procured by him”* (Thayer); *“Partaking, participating.*

As a noun, a partaker, partner, companion, fellow worker” (Zodhiates); “Sharing or participating in...sharing in Christ” (Bauer, p. 514); “The verb means literally ‘to hold with;’ the noun, ‘one who holds with another.’ Here the word means ‘participators’” (Wuest, p. 80).

“confidence” — ὑΠΌστΑσις — *“A setting under (support)” (Strong); “Confidence, strong trust, assurance” (Thayer); “In general, that which underlies the apparent, hence, reality, essence, substance; that which is the basis of something, hence, assurance, guarantee, confidence” (Zodhiates); “The word ‘confidence’ is the translation of hupostaseos. Its primary meaning is ‘that on which anything is based...The word was used, in secular manuscripts, of the documents bearing on the ownership of a person’s property. Deposited in the archive, and forming the evidence of ownership” (Wuest, p. 81).*

“for we are made partakers of Christ” The time under consideration here was when one rendered initial obedience to Christ in the watery grave of baptism.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).

But as can be seen, there is more to it than that initial act. The word **“partakers”** signifies a continuing participation in Him, i.e., continued faithfulness. One becomes a partaker and then continues participation with Him. The condition then is set forth as to how one continues to be a participant with Christ.

“if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end”

The word **“if”** is so often overlooked by all, and yet, it is often an extremely important word, a conditional word. One’s eternal well-being is conditioned upon whether or not he continues a faithful walk with the Lord until the last breath leaves his earthly tabernacle.

“be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (The Revelation, 2:10).

Verse six and this verse have a similar wording. The word **“fast”** in verse six is the same as **“stedfast”** in the present verse. In the English version, one has the word **“confidence”** in both of these verses, but in the original they are not the same. In verse six, **“confidence”** has to do with boldness or freedom in speech. In this passage, **“confidence”** deals with the foundation upon which one’s faith rests, the assurance one has. This assurance rests in Christ. If one holds fast to his basis of strength and hope, he has full assurance, a guarantee.

True “religion is something that lasts through life. It goes with a man everywhere. It is with him in trial. It forms his plans; regulates his temper; suggests his words; prompts his right actions. It lives with him in all his external changes; goes with him through the dark valley of death; accompanies him up to the bar of God, and is with him for ever” (Barnes, p. 89).

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (The Revelation 3:11).

The term “unto the end” is not defined in the text, i.e., it has no specific reference to a point of time. It may mean the end of time, the end of the age, or the end of one’s life. Which ever the exact meaning, the results are the same. No matter what age or year one lives in, the requirement is to remain faithful.

Heb. 3:15 “While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”

“while it is said, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.” (ASV)

“while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (NKJV)

“Heeding the saying, Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation.” (ESV)

“harden” — σκληρύνω — **“Render stubborn: harden”** (Strong); **“To make hard, to harden; to render obstinate, stubborn”** (Thayer); **“To make hard or stiff, make obdurate. In the NT applied only figuratively to the heart or mind”** (Zodhiates).

“For He is our GOD; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Psalm 95:7-8).

This admonition to faithfulness is not always going to be given, just as it was not in the day of Moses. GOD admonished them to faithfulness until they hardened themselves — then the admonition to faithfulness ceased. Therefore, today is the time to obey — before the heart becomes so hard it cannot be reached with truth. It would also seem to carry the idea that one should persevere as long as life exists — do not give up. It may also carry the idea of listening while one is still capable of listening. Do not let the time come when the Master’s voice means nothing to one.

The provocation was during the wilderness wanderings of Israel. Time after time the people provoked GOD until finally He said, **“I will tolerate this no more.”** **Could such a thing happen again to either a nation or individual?** Most certainly, and the Hebrews being written to in this letter were in danger of GOD’s wrath coming upon them because of hardened hearts. One might consider that this has happened on a world wide scale and will happen again as long as man exists on this earth. The flood of Noah’s day and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrate this. There have been many of every generation who do not believe that GOD will punish the evil dead for eternity. They harden their hearts to such a concept. But their unbelief will not stop it from happening.

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by

the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:1-4).

Heb. 3:16 “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.”

“For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses?” (ASV)

“For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?” (NKJV)

“For some, after they heard His voice did provoke, but not all who came out of Egypt by Moses.” (ESV)

“**provoke**” — παραπικραίνω — “*To embitter alongside, i.e., (figuratively) to exasperate: provoke*” (Strong); “*To provoke, exasperate; to rouse to indignation*” (Thayer); “*To provoke unto bitterness or anger, to exasperate, make bitter with or towards anyone, treat with bitterness*” (Zodhiates); Used in the Septuagint primarily as “*embitter, make angry, provoke*” (Bauer, p. 621).

This is a warning not to trust in the majority or whatever the popular movement of the day may be. By far the majority rebelled against GOD, and so the writer used a hyperbole (exaggeration for the sake of emphasis), to express this great failure. If a great leader such as Moses could be leading, yet the people as a whole rejected that leadership and failed to reach their intended destination as a result, could not the same thing happen again? And whose fault would it be? Moses did not sin against GOD and thus cause their destruction. The people could not blame Moses in any way for their failure — they could only blame themselves. So it is today; Christians have the greatest leader of all time, but that does not of itself mean that they will gain the eternal reward. One can do just what the Israelites did, rebel against their leader and be lost. Their failure was unbelief (v. 19). If one fails today it will be for the same reason, **his own unbelief**. The majority does not rule in the kingdom of GOD or the world. GOD, through His word, ever rules in the affairs of men.

One should also keep in mind that those who could not enter the land, who came out of Egypt with Moses, were those twenty years old and above (Numbers 14:28-32). Many of those under that age would be able to enter the land. Only two of the men of war were able to go into the land (Caleb and Joshua).

There is some discussion on the word “**some**” as is found in our English Bible. Does it mean “**who**” or “**some**?” For a good discussion of this, read Milligan’s comments on pages 155-156 of his commentary on Hebrews.

They heard GOD through Moses, heard His instructions, yet they provoked GOD’s anger for refusing to obey Him and their active

rebellion against Him.

Heb. 3:17 “But with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?”

“And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?” (ASV)

“Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?” (NKJV)

“But with whom was He vexed forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?” (ESV)

Numbers 14:28-32, gives the final decree of GOD to the rebellious Israelites of the wilderness wanderings. This writer has often thought of those people and tried to place himself in their shoes after GOD made this decree. **How many times in those years did they feel regret?** When considering that, one thinks of being in eternity regretting having not obeyed GOD while on earth for a few short years. **How many times during those years did those Israelites emphasize to their children the importance of believing GOD when He spoke?** How often one would probably have heard them admonish their children to obey GOD and never question His authority. How often they must have looked off into the distance and wish they had obeyed GOD so that they too could have entered that land of milk and honey. As one thinks about them, his thoughts necessarily go to another day, the great day, the day of judgment. From the rich man of Luke 16, one knows that he is conscious after death and could see Lazarus across the great gulf in the bosom of Abraham. **How many who have obeyed the Gospel will think back after the great judgment that they too could have been with GOD for eternity — if they had just obeyed Him?**

An interesting thought springs to mind just here. **Why did GOD choose the number nineteen as the cut-off mark for those who could or could not enter the promised land? Is it possible that those under the age of twenty were not yet considered accountable in some way? Or was this an arbitrary number based simply on the age when a young man was considered old enough to be in the army?**

Only those who sinned were punished. Only those who did not sin (Joshua and Caleb), enjoyed the promised reward.

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them GOD was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Corinthians 10:1-6).

One thing which should be emphasized here is that they lost the physical blessings but not necessarily eternity with GOD. If they truly

repented after their apostasy, and then remained faithful until the end of their life, they could enter Heaven. Moses is a good example of this truth.

Heb. 3:18 “And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?”

“And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that were disobedient?” (ASV)

“And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?” (NKJV)

“To whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest, if not those who disobeyed?” (ESV)

“sware” — ὀμνύω — *“To swear, i.e., take (or declare on) oath: swear”* (Strong); *“To affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath”* (Thayer); *“To take or make an oath”* (Zodhiates).

“believed not” — ἀπειθέω — *“To disbelieve (willfully and purposely): not believe, disobedient, obey not, unbelieving”* (Strong); *“Not to allow one’s self to be persuaded; not to comply with...to refuse belief and disobedience”* (Thayer); *“Not to allow oneself to be persuaded or believe, to disbelieve, be disobedient”* (Zodhiates).

GOD affirmed in strong, unchanging language that those who had purposely rebelled against Him would not enter the rest He had prepared for them. **What rest was this?** This rest had reference to the land of Canaan and not to the sabbath rest of which they already partook in the wilderness. They had heard Moses tell them they were going into the land. They had heard the impassioned pleas of Joshua and Caleb not to listen to the other ten spies who gave a negative report. Yet, they chose to listen to the ten instead of GOD’s representatives. They purposely chose to disobey GOD.

The questions the author of Hebrews was asking were all questions based on information that these Hebrew Christians already knew. They were well-versed in the Old Law and did not have to have these transgressions of the fathers spelled out to them — merely mentioned. These questions alone were enough to bring the author’s point home to his hearers. This particular style of address is known as the “interrogative style of address.” These were questions which led to inevitable conclusions.

Those who did not enter into the promised rest were those who did not **“believe.”** As can be seen above, this is not the usual word rendered **“believe”** in our English Bible.

“The word used is more descriptive of the character of the generation that refused to enter Canaan. They were that non-persuadable type that will not listen to reason, stiffnecked, obstinate” (Wuest, p. 82).

These were people who refused to believe the evidence placed before them, even though they knew the evidence was accurate.

All the desire they may have had to enter the land of Canaan after

GOD made His decree could not overcome the sin they had committed. They, like many today, wanted the reward without obedience on their part. They wanted the reward without any cost to themselves. Look around today at how many people say they desire to go to Heaven but refuse to give up the things GOD condemns. Many seem to think GOD means what He says about providing a reward, but do not believe He means what He says about rebellion to Himself.

“For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of GOD overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:3-4).

Heb. 3:19 “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

“And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.” (ASV)

“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” (NKJV)

“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” (ESV)

“So we see” is a transitional phrase which means “we see in the details just mentioned.” The Israelites refusal to believe led them to outright rebellion not against Moses — but against GOD. They knew what was right, and they knew what was wrong. They intentionally chose to do what GOD said not to do. Therefore they were excluded from the land of Canaan. If GOD would not spare them because of rebellion, will He excuse Christians who rebel against Him today?

Absolutely not!

“if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Hebrews 2:2-3).

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD” (Hebrews 10:26-31).

This chapter began with the faithfulness of Christ and ends with the lack of faith exhibited by the Israelites. Their history is clear and plain, and the warning today should be just as clear. Do not let go of one's faith, as they did, for the results will be the same. It was not

their enemies which caused them to fail, nor any unforeseen event, but their own lack of faith which caused their downfall. They could not blame anyone but themselves for their failure to enter the land. Any one who is eternally lost will only be able to blame themselves for such.

Chapter four will forcefully show that what happened to the unfaithful Israelites will also happen to unfaithful Christians.

Hebrews — Chapter Four

Heb. 4:1 "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of

entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

“Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.” (ASV)

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” (NKJV)

“Therefore, while the promise of entering into His rest remains, let us fear lest some of you should seem to come short of it.” (ESV)

“fear” — φοβέω — *“To frighten, i.e., (passively) to be alarmed; by analogy to be in awe of, i.e., revere: be afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence”* (Strong); *“To put to flight by terrifying (to scare away). To be put to flight, to flee. To fear, be afraid; to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm”* (Thayer); *“To put in fear, terrify, frighten. In the Classical Greek, to cause to run away. In the NT, only in the middle phobeomai (contracted phoboumai), aorist passive ephobemtheMn and future passive phobeMthemsomai, meaning particularly to become fearful, afraid, terrified”* (Zodhiates); *“Phobeo is a verb found nearly one hundred times with the principle meanings ‘to fear,’ ‘be afraid’”* (Renn, p. 373).

“Let us therefore fear” There is not much which a Christian should fear, i.e., the average things in life which most people tend to fear (tomorrow, death, their fellow man, etc.).

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34).

“Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34 – ASV).

There is One whom man must learn to fear, yet, this is not an abject (resignation or hopelessness) fear. If one is to gain eternal Heaven there must be a certain fear of offending the One who can destroy him.

“fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Matthew 10:28).

There is also something Christians should fear — failure to enter into the eternal rest GOD has prepared for those who obey Him. Milligan corrected pointed out that *“the proper object of fear is danger.”* These Hebrew Christians were in danger of apostasy. Therefore, fear was in order. Fear is an emotion of warning, i.e., fear is a signal that danger is near, that harm is possibly about to befall one. Fear will cause one to draw back from the edge of a cliff lest he fall over the edge. Likewise, proper fear can help one draw back from the cliff of apostasy.

Israel was not allowed to enter physical Canaan, but that did not end GOD’s promise of rest. The rest was still available for those who remained faithful to GOD as evidenced by Joshua and Caleb entering the rest of Canaan. But that was not the extent to which rest was offered. Their physical rest was but a type of the eternal rest GOD

has promised.

“God’s promise of rest has neither been fulfilled nor withdrawn; it is still open and prepared for men. The proof of it is found in verses 2-10” (Lightfoot, p. 95).

As will be seen in verses 7-9, David, well after the time of Joshua and Caleb, spoke of a rest that was still available.

“For He is our GOD; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways: Unto whom I swear in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest” (Psalm 95:7-11).

The entrance into Canaan, along with the rest it afforded, was a type of the eternal rest which awaits the faithful of each dispensation (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian).

It should be carefully observed that the vast majority of Christians who fall away (apostatize) do not do so intentionally. Most apostasy happens like the frog in a pan of cold water. The heat can gradually be turned up, and the frog will sit there until the water becomes so hot it kills him. So the warning of the apostle — *“Do not allow yourself to come short of the promise that GOD has made to you.”*

“Therefore, while the promise of entering into his rest remains, let us fear lest some of you should seem to come short of it” (Littrell).

Heb. 4:2 *“For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”*

“For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard.” (ASV)

“For indeed the Gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” (NKJV)

“For the good message was preached to us even as to them; but the message they heard did not profit them because the faith did not permeate those who heard.” (ESV)

“gospel preached” — εὐαγγελίζω — *“To announce good news (‘evangelize’), especially the gospel”* (Strong); *“To bring good news, to announce glad tidings”* (Thayer); *“To evangelize, proclaim the good news, preach the gospel”* (Zodhiates); *“Bring or announce good news”* (Bauer, p. 317).

“profit” — ὠφελέω — *“To be useful, i.e., to benefit: advantage, better, prevail, profit”* (Strong); *“To assist, to be useful or advantageous, to profit”* (Thayer); *“To be useful, profitable, to profit”* (Zodhiates); *“Useful, beneficial, advantageous for*

someone or something” (Bauer, p. 900).

The word “**Gospel**” is often misunderstood in this context. The apostle was speaking of a promised rest which in its various forms applied to both the Israelites of old and the Israelites (Christians) in the last age. Both announcements were deemed good news by both groups. They received the good news of rest in the land, yet they failed to enter into it because of unbelief — a lack of faith. The apostle warned that the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote had also received good news about the rest which remains after this life is over (Heaven). Both had the good news of rest proclaimed to them.

“the word preached did not profit them” The Israelites in the wilderness did not put their full trust in GOD and His word. To have saving faith, they needed not only to hear — they needed to act on what they heard. They believed the land of promise was there; they did not believe enough to take it when GOD told them to take it. They looked only at their own abilities and did not factor in that GOD is all powerful and would give them what He promised if they did their part.

Because they rebelled against the good news they were given, they did not gain the reward. **How many today believe in Heaven but refuse to do what GOD tells them in order to receive it?** They believe that salvation is offered by GOD, but will not be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20). They may believe GOD’s promise to wash away their sins in the blood of Jesus, but will not accept the terms GOD has set so that the blood may be applied to them. Instead, they be baptized, but for the wrong reason.

“And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (The Revelation 1:5 – emphasis mine, RK).

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16 – emphasis mine, RK).

The text implies; *Will you Christians refuse to act upon the good news you have received and thus suffer the same consequences of unbelief that your forefathers received?*

Heb. 4:3 **“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”**

“For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as He hath said, As I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” (ASV)

“For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” (NKJV)

“For we who have believed enter the rest, as He said, As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest; although the works were finished from the creation of the world.” (ESV)

“sworn” — ὀμνύω — *“To swear, i.e., take (or declare on) oath”* (Strong); *“To swear; to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath”* (Thayer); *“To take or make an oath”* (Zodhiates); *“Swear, take an oath”* (Bauer, p. 566).

Two groups are contrasted in this verse: those who enter rest and those who do not. As has already been shown, those who by faith obey what GOD has said will enter the heavenly rest *“finished from the foundation of the world.”* Those, who like the Israelites, did not believe enough to obey will not enter the rest of Heaven *“finished from the foundation of the world.”* The unbelievers, instead of entering rest, will enter a place of eternal torment. The language used in this text is quite positive, indicating the promised rest is a surety, and it is a certain fact, it exists and awaits the faithful.

Wrath is again mentioned. GOD’s wrath is real, and it will be exercised by His refusing the heavenly rest to those who rebel against Him. This wrath is a firm promise of GOD which has been true from the beginning of time, the evidence of which was the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the “Garden of Rest.” This promise has been sealed by GOD’s Word, His oath, before the beginning of time. He has remained steadfast in His promises (both positive and negative) and will never change them.

“But the LORD is the true GOD, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (Jeremiah 10:10).

“GOD is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies” (Nahum 1:2).

“although the works were finished”

“A rest period implies a preceding one of work, and that took place in the beginning of creation. Hence the rest after the labor was established, which was to serve as a type of the next rest; the one in Canaan after the wandering in the wilderness” (Zerr, p. 214).

GOD worked for six days in the creation and then rested, and He has been at rest ever since from the creative mode. Implied in this text is that the rest spoken of is an eternal **edict** of GOD. It was not one which was promised only to a particular generation, but it was offered to the faithful in the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations of time. The confirmation of this promise is that GOD “rested” from His labors of the creation. Consider that each of the six days of creation ended with the words, *“evening and morning.”* The seventh day is not shown to have ended, i.e., GOD’s “day” of rest.

One might be tempted to think it did not matter what the different things were which were commanded in each dispensation. But the means of obtaining the blessings have always been the same. The one who faithfully does (works) what GOD commands is the one GOD rewards. All others receive only His wrath. Notice the following examples in each dispensation.

1. **Patriarchal** — Cain and Abel. Abel acted by faith and was rewarded. Cain did not and suffered for it. Noah acted by faith and was saved in the ark, while the rest of the world drown because of unbelief.
2. **Mosaic** — Joshua and Caleb acted by faith, and the rest of their generation died in the wilderness. Rahab acted by faith and saved her household, while the inhabitants of Jericho perished.
3. **Christian** — Barnabas acted by faith and was praised, while Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead. Peter acted on faith, while Judas hung himself.

Heb. 4:4 “For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And GOD did rest the seventh day from all His works.”

“For He hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, And GOD rested on the seventh day from all His works;” (ASV)

“For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: And GOD rested on the seventh day from all His works;” (NKJV)

“For somewhere He spoke of the seventh day like this: And GOD rested in the seventh day from all His works.” (ESV)

“And GOD blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which GOD created and made” (Genesis 2:2).

“GOD did rest” This rest continues to point back to the rest already mentioned in this chapter, but especially to verse three as an explanation of the latter part of the verse. GOD did not rest because He was weary, but He rested by ceasing His work in the creation. GOD, so to speak, sat back and beheld His completed actions. Implied in this are the completed plans for man’s salvation which were finished before the foundation of the world and the conditions set for either salvation or destruction.

“He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:33-34, 41).

The rest GOD entered into is different from the rest which man enters. For instance, the sabbath rest was temporary in nature; the Israelites labored six days and rested one, after which they labored six more days, et cetera. The land rest was temporary in nature, and still they labored wearily in the land. The rest which GOD took is a present reality, it is an on going reality, He has never created anything since. Further, it is a never-ending rest in which He is involved. This is the key to understanding the “rest” which is spoken of in this passage.

It should also be remembered that every dispensation of time has had “rest” held out to it by GOD. The point being made by the author

is that the rest is still available, so do not throw it away by unfaithfulness.

Heb. 4:5 “And in this place again, If they shall enter into My rest.”

“and in this place again, They shall not enter into my rest.” (ASV)

“and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” (NKJV)

“And in the same place again, They shall not enter into My rest.” (ESV)

The rest spoken of cannot be the rest in Canaan, for if it was, there would not remain a rest which one could enter. Further, when David wrote the ninety-five Psalm (v. 1), Israel was in the land of rest. Therefore the rest he spoke of was yet future. The reference points to the rest of GOD, that rest which has been in progress ever since the end of His days of creative activity — **an eternal rest**. It is the rest of the faithful from their labors on earth.

Heb. 4:6 “Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.”

“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience,” (ASV)

“Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,” (NKJV)

“Since therefore it remains that some are to enter into it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience;” (ESV)

“it remaineth” — ἀπολείπω — “to leave behind (passively remain): by implication to forsake” (Strong); “To leave, leave behind...it remains, is reserved” (Thayer); “To leave behind...Metaphorically in Heb. 4:6, 9; 10:26, apoleipetai. There remaineth” (Zodhiates); “Leave behind” (Bauer, p. 94); “A verb translated ‘leave,’ or ‘remain,’ in the six occurrences of the term” (Renn, p. 803); “Old verb to leave behind, to remain over” (Robertson, p. 361); “The idea is ‘remains over from past times’” (Wuest, p. 86).

The purpose of this passage seems to be an assurance that the rest spoken of in verses one and three still remains and will continue to remain for all those who faithfully believe and act upon the promises of GOD. Just as Joshua and Caleb entered into rest (Canaan) because of their continued faithfulness, even in the face of grave danger, so also will all the faithful enter into GOD’s rest. Just as in Joshua’s time, unbelief (manifested by disobedience) will result in GOD’s refusing that eternal rest to the unbelieving ones.

Because some failed in time past to enter that promised rest does not mean that the rest is no longer available — **it is!** All who will faithfully accept the invitation GOD holds forth may enter the prepared rest.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Let one never forget that Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Heb. 4:7 “He again defineth a certain day, To-day, saying in David so long a time afterward (even as hath been said before), To-day if ye shall hear His voice, Harden not your hearts.”

“Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” (ASV)

“again He designates a certain day, saying in David, Today, after such a long time, as it has been said: Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” (NKJV)

“Again He sets a certain day: Today, (saying after so long a time in David, as it was said); Today if you will hear His voice do not harden your hearts.” (ESV)

What is now said is offered as further evidence that the rest spoken of previously is not the rest spoken of with regard to the rest in Canaan.

David wrote approximately five hundred years after the entrance into Canaan. He said that the rest was not entered into in the sense that there was not more rest available. If the only rest contemplated were the “Canaan rest,” then there would have been no more rest available some five hundred years later nor now in the Christian age. The Hebrews writer said that rest is still available today (would include the entire Christian dispensation).

This chapter is a classic example of repetition used to drive a point home. *“Do not give up the rest that is available to you, do not give up your reward.”*

Heb. 4:8 “For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day.”

“For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” (ASV)

“For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.” (NKJV)

“For if Joshua had given them that rest, GOD would not have spoken of another day later.” (ESV)

The words **“Jesus”** and **“Joshua”** are translated from the same Greek word (Ἰησοῦς). The quotation referred to is still Psalm 95:7-11, which makes it obvious that this should read Joshua instead of Jesus as it is rendered in the KJV.

If physical rest were all that was obtainable, then David would not have talked of a rest which was still future. The rest that Joshua gave was temporary at best; the one offered by Jesus is eternal.

“If entrance into the land of Canaan exhausted all that was promised in ‘rest,’ God would not have used the word ‘rest’

again when speaking to David's generation. That He could promise 'rest' to people already living in the promised land indicates that 'rest' must include heaven too" (Reese, p. 60).

One should also consider that Joshua told the "east bank" Israelites that they had received the rest promised to them.

"Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, and have hearkened unto my voice in all that I commanded you: ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of Jehovah your GOD. And now Jehovah your GOD hath given rest unto your brethren, as He spake unto them: therefore now turn ye, and get you unto your tents, unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave you beyond the Jordan" (Joshua 22:1-4).

If everything GOD meant by the word "rest" had been fulfilled at the time Israel subdued Canaan, then there would not have been a rest for David's generation. Yet, David spoke of a future rest which could only be Heaven. The apostle is declaring that rest is still available for Christians.

Heb. 4:9 *"There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of GOD."*

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of GOD." (ASV)

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of GOD." (NKJV)

"Therefore there remains a rest to the people of GOD." (ESV)

The apostle assured his readers that there is still the promise of GOD held out to all who become His people. A place of rest from all the evils and toils of this life has been prepared for those who are GOD's servants.

"I heard the voice from Heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (The Revelation 14:13).

Heb. 4:10 *"For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as GOD did from His."*

"For he that is entered into His rest hath himself also rested from his works, as GOD did from His." (ASV)

"For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as GOD did from His." (NKJV)

"For He who has entered His rest has Himself rested from His labors as GOD did from His" (ESV)

"ceased" — καταπαύω — "to settle down, i.e., (literally) to colonize or (figuratively) to cause to desist" (Strong); "To rest, take rest" (Thayer); "To make to cease" (Zodhiates); "(cause

to) stop, bring to an end something” (Bauer, p. 416).

“works” — ἔργον — “an act: deed, doing labor, work” (Strong);
“Business, employment, that with which any one is occupied...any product whatever, anything accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind...an act, deed, thing done” (Thayer);
“Work, performance, the result or object of employment, making or working” (Zodhiates).

Note how the writer narrowed down the “rest” of which he spoke, so that there can be no misunderstanding. Notice that he spoke of the one who entered “His rest.” Whose rest? GOD’s rest! The one who enters GOD’s rest, the rest that GOD has prepared for “His people” (His children), ceases from his own works, just as GOD ceased from His creation works (The Revelation 14:13).

Thayer’s last definition of “works” (“thing done”) gives the meaning in this verse, although the other definitions above give insight into the actions of work.

Above all other verses in this chapter, this one nails down the fact that he was speaking of an eternal rest.

“Rest is a universal human longing; and, although in youth the desire for rest might not be so urgently felt, its need and urgency, with increasing rigor, appears more and more as life unfolds. The promise of it, like a fleeting mirage, beckons beyond each pressing complex of frustrations, problems, duties, and sorrows; and for countless travelers from time to eternity, there must be the frequent emotion, if expressed or not, which contains the cry of the Psalmist, ‘O that I had wings like a dove! For then would I flee away and be at rest’ (Psalm 55:6); or the hope of Job to be where ‘the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest’ (Job 3:17)” (Author unknown to this writer.)

While what has just been written is true of the believer, this writer believes that this verse is offered as a proof that Christians can enter this rest by using the example of Christ. It is this writer’s view that the word “He” in this passage refers to Christ Himself. He finished His earthly mission of redemptive work which culminated at His death and resurrection. At His ascension He entered into “His rest.” His redemptive work was done! Since He did this, it shows that the Christian who faithfully finishes the work assigned to him in this life may also enter into that eternal rest. This does not mean that our Lord is not doing anything today, for He is still a Christian’s mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Let one also introduce this thought. When the faithful get to Heaven, there will be something for them to do. They will at the least be involved in the eternal worship of GOD, and maybe much more.

Heb. 4:11 “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

“Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience.” (ASV)

“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” (NKJV)

“Let us then put forth every effort to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.” (ESV)

“**labor**” — σπουδάζω — *“To use speed, i.e., to make effort, be prompt or earnest: do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavor, labour, study”* (Strong); *“To exert one’s self, endeavor, give diligence”* (Thayer); *“To be diligent, earnest, or eager”* (Zodhiates).

“**unbelief**” — ἀπειθεία — *“disbelief (obstinate and rebellious)”* (Strong); *“Disobedience, obstinacy, and in the N.T. particularly obstinate opposition to the divine will”* (Thayer); *“Disobedience, unwillingness to be persuaded, willful unbelief, obstinacy”* (Zodhiates).

GOD has a perfect rest, and He offers that perfect rest to mankind. But man, for his part, must labor — he must strive to gain that rest. There is no sense of obligation on GOD’s part to pay for man’s labor — **because man cannot earn salvation**. The simple concept is that something is required of man if he wishes to enter the eternal rest — **he must obey GOD’s commands**. How could man appreciate the rest which GOD offers if he does not know what it means to labor in the first place? How can man have a desire for rest if he does not do that (labor), which promotes the desire for rest?

“This demands that the Christian make every effort to present himself acceptable to God (2 Tim. 2:15), that he pursue intensely the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3), that he give diligence to confirm his calling (2 Pet. 1:10)” (Author Unknown to the writer.)

The Hebrew author told his Christian readers to **strive** for this promised rest so that they do not fall by the same example of disobedience that characterized those who fell in the wilderness. As long as one is “striving” in the Lord’s work, he does not have time to be disobedient. If one is working, he does not have time to plan obstinate rebellion to the Divine will. It is the idle who generally get into trouble. The idle person does not necessarily have to be the one who sits idly in his rocking chair while the world passes by. A person can be idle in the Lord’s work while being extremely active in many other pursuits of this life. The results will be the same — LOST.

How can there be any doubt in a logical mind that this passage teaches that those who were once saved can be lost for eternity? The Israelites were saved from Egyptian bondage and were heading for the land of rest (Canaan). GOD even told them to go up and take the land. Their disobedience caused GOD to refuse to give them that rest. A Christian is someone who has been saved from the bondage of sin through obedience to GOD’s plan for his salvation. He has set out on a journey that leads him to the land of rest (Heaven). But if he refuses to obey GOD during that journey, He justly will be refused entrance into Heaven.

Littrell made the following comment about Matthew 15:7-9.

“They had not followed his word, his doctrine, but rather had worshiped and worked ‘in his name,’ but they followed the doctrines and commandments of men” (p. 282).

Heb. 4:12 “For the word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

“For the word of GOD is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (ASV)

“For the word of GOD is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (NKJV)

“For the word of GOD is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow; and is a judge of the thoughts and purposes of the heart.” (ESV)

“**quick**” — ζάω — “A primary verb; to live (literally or figuratively)” (Strong); “To live, be among the living, be alive (not lifeless, not dead)” (Thayer); “To live, have life, spoken of physical life and existence as opposed to death or nonexistence, and implying always some duration” (Zodhiates).

“**powerful**” — ενεργής — “Active, operative: effectual, powerful” (Strong); “Active” (Thayer); “Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective” (Zodhiates); “Effective, active, powerful” (Bauer, p. 265).

“**dividing asunder**” — μερισμός — “a separation or distribution: dividing asunder” (Strong); “A division, partition...a separation” (Thayer); “The act of distribution, separation, or that which is distributed” (Zodhiates).

“**piercing**” — διϊκνέομαι — “To reach through, i.e., **penetrate: pierce**” (Strong); “To go through, penetrate, pierce” (Thayer); “To stand apart, go or pass through, pierce through” (Zodhiates); “‘Piercing’ is the translation of *diikneomai* which means ‘to go through.’ The words ‘The dividing asunder of soul and spirit’ do not mean, ‘the dividing asunder of soul from spirit.’ Nor is it the dividing asunder of joints from marrow.’ The case in Greek is the genitive of description, defining the action in the verb in this case. It is a going through the soul, a going through the spirit. Joints and marrow are not in contrast with one another, and cannot therefore be said to be divided asunder: The preposition prefixed to the verb is *dia* which means ‘through,’ in the sense of ‘the sword pierced through the heart.’ The dividing asunder here is not that of one thing from another, but of one thing in itself by the action of something

separating its constitution elements from one another by piercing it. Vincent says, 'The form of the expression is poetical and signifies that the word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being as a sword cuts through the joints and marrow of the body. The separation is not of one part from another, in each department of the spiritual nature' (Wuest, p. 89).

"soul" — ψυχή — "1. Breath a. the breath of life: the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing: 2. The soul a. the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions. b. The (human) soul in so far as it is so constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life. c. The soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death" (Thayer); "Soul, that immaterial part of man held in common with animals. One's understanding of this word's relationship to related terms is contingent upon his position regarding biblical anthropology. Dichotomists view man as consisting of two parts (or substances), material and immaterial, with spirit and soul denoting the immaterial and bearing only a functional and not a metaphysical difference. Trichotomists also view man as consisting of two parts (or substances), but with spirit and soul representing in some contexts a real subdivision of the immaterial" (Zodhiates).

"spirit" — πνευμα — "The spirit, i.e., the vital principal by which the body is animated...the rational spirit, the power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, decides; the soul" (Thayer); "The spirit as a part of the human personality: a. when used with sarx, the flesh, it denotes the immaterial part. b. As the source and seal of insight, feeling, and will, generic as the representative part of the inner life of man...spiritual state, state of mind, disposition" (Bauer, p. 675).

"discerner" — κριτικός — "Decisive (Critical), i.e., **discriminative**: **discerner**" (Strong); "Relating to judging, fit for judging, skilled in judging" (Thayer); "Able to discern or decide, critical, skilled in judging" (Zodhiates).

"intents" — έννοια — "Thoughtfulness, i.e., moral **understanding**: **intent, mind**" (Strong); "Mind, understanding, will; manner of thinking and feeling" (Thayer); "What is in the mind, idea, notion, intention, purpose" (Zodhiates); "Thought, knowledge, insight" (Bauer, p. 267).

"For the word of GOD" That which has been written from the very mouth of GOD for man's learning.

"every Writing is GOD-breathed, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for setting aright, for instruction that is in

righteousness, that the man of GOD may be fitted--for every good work having been completed" (2 Timothy 3:16-17 — YLT).

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

This text is not dealing with Christ as such, although one would recognize these qualities and abilities in Him. In keeping with the context, however, one must equate this with the word which the Father has given man, which is now found in written form.

GOD's Word is not a dead letter which needs energizing by the Holy Spirit in an individual's life. GOD's Word, as delivered to the writer's of the New Testament, is completely sufficient for all of one's spiritual needs. From the words "quick" and "powerful," one sees that GOD's Word is not only "alive," but it is "active." His word has a purpose, and it is actively accomplishing that purpose.

"When it is absorbed as spiritual food its effect should be to make one a living and active servant of the Lord" (Zerr, p. 215).

To put it another way:

"The word 'active' shows that the word does not lie inert and dead but at all times carries within itself the mighty power of its divine author" (Coffman, p. 96).

This is why Jesus referred to "the word" as "seed" in Luke 8:11. A grain of seed may appear (by a casual glance) to be lifeless, without any ability to reproduce; yet, within it is the power to multiply many times over. To the casual observer, GOD's Word may appear to be just another book, lying on the shelf or coffee table with no power, yet, its readers know (and GOD claims) that it has a **tremendous power** to transform lives.

"This word 'is living and powerful,' because it is always supported by Him who is Himself the fountain of life (Psalm 36:9) and the source of all power (Rom. 13:1)" (Milligan, p. 170).

"sharper than any two-edged sword" The word "sharper" came to be applied to the sword because it seemed to "devour" all that came before it, all of its foes (Barnes, p. 104). It is the sword which is pictured as being the only offensive weapon the Christian has. **What is this sword which the Christian is to use offensively?** The word of GOD.

"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD" (Ephesians 6:17).

These two-edged swords were used by the Romans because they could cut in either direction and because they were perfect for the thrusts which could quickly penetrate to the vital organs of the enemy. Thus, the sword is a fitting symbol of GOD's Word. His word is designed to slash and cut error in every direction and penetrate to the very heart of the sinner. It will always do its job if man will use it as GOD has dictated.

"piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" GOD's

Word is portrayed as being able to penetrate the most complex areas of man. There is no place in man's mind where His Word cannot penetrate; there is nothing which can be hid from this powerful word. His word is fully able to show one his sin, even to reveal one's hidden motives. GOD's Word *"lays open the secret places of men's lives"* (Lightfoot, p. 99).

Pythagoras (500 B.C.) and Plato (350 B.C.): *"These philosophers both taught, in substance, that man consists of a material body (soma), an animal soul (psuche), and an immortal spirit (tineuma). The soul was by them regarded as the seat of animal life, together with its several instincts, passions, and appetites; and the spirit was supposed to be the seat of the higher intellectual and moral faculties"* (Milligan, p. 171).

"discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart" This reminds one of the words of Jesus.

"He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"** (John 12:48, emphasis mine, RK).

GOD's Word, the truth of that word, is able to lay bare one's every thought, his very manner of thinking. This should remind one that it is not his thoughts which determine rightness or wrongness — it is the truth of GOD's Word which determines if a thing or thought is right or wrong. As one studies GOD's Word, it will cut away at the error in his life, the error of his thinking — **if he will let it**. It will lay sin bare for the scalpel of the Great Physician to remove it. GOD's Word is fit and able to make the necessary judgments in our lives, whether one lets it or does not let it into his life. And of course there is a time to come when it will judge one, whether he wants to let it or not, and determine his eternal home. With that understanding of the role of GOD's Word in judging, the following words by Lightfoot take on significance when the attempt is made to teach people the truth.

*"The true way of preaching is, to feel that truth is adapted to the end in view: to select that which is best fitted for that end: to preach as if the whole result depended on getting that truth before the mind and into the heart — and **then** to leave the whole result with God"* (p. 105).

"With its clear and convincing insights, the word of God can distinguish between the person who lives in the realm of the spiritual (soul and spirit), and the person who lives only in the realm of the physical (joints and marrow)" (Reese, p. 64).

This "surgeon" (the Word of GOD) knows exactly where to cut!

Heb. 4:13 **"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."**

"And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."
(ASV)

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.” (NKJV)

“No creature is hidden from His sight, but all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to Whom we are accountable.” (ESV)

“**creature**” — κτίσις — *“The act of founding, establishing, building, etc. 1. The act of creating, creation: 2. Creation, i.e., thing created”* (Thayer); *“Something founded, i.e., of a city, colonization of a habitable place. Creation, in a passive sense, what has been created, the sum total of what has been created”* (Zodhiates); *“Creation. Of the act of creation...that which is created as the result of the creative act”* (Bauer, p. 455).

“**manifest**” — ἀφανής — *“non-apparent”* (Strong); *“1. Of occupied place: in that place which is before, or over against, opposite, any one and towards which another turns his eyes...d. before the eyes of one, i.e., if he turn his eyes thither”* (Thayer); *“Not appearing, not manifest (Heb. 4:13, hidden, concealed)”* (Zodhiates).

“**naked**” — γυμνός — *“Nude (absolutely or relatively literally or figuratively): naked”* (Strong); *“Naked, not covered...metaph. Naked, i.e., open, laid bare”* (Thayer); *“Stark naked”* (Zodhiates); *“Naked, stripped bare”* (Bauer, p. 167).

“**opened**” — τραχηλίζω — *“To seize by the throat or neck, i.e., to expose the gullet of a victim for killing (generally to lay bare): opened”* (Strong); *“To seize and twist the neck or throat...to bend back the neck of the victim to be slain, to lay bare or expose by bending back; hence trop. to lay bare, uncover, expose”* (Thayer); *“To expose or lay open. The word was used of the bending back of the neck of wrestlers by their opponent. The bending back of the neck was used also on an animal to be slaughtered for an offering in order to expose the throat; hence. Figuratively to lay bare or open, in the pass. part. (Heb. 4:13, ‘open to sight’)”* (Zodhiates); *“Everything is open and laid bare to the eyes”* (Bauer, p. 824).

The author now proceeded from speaking about the Word of GOD to GOD Himself, the author of that word.

“**Neither is there any**” If GOD’s work is able to look into the innermost depths of a man, then surely He Who created all things is able to see all. Nothing can be hidden from His sight; all is open to His gaze.

Wuest commented on the three words “**manifest,**” “**naked,**” and “**opened.**”

“Possible metaphors in this case seem to be first, the athlete grasping his opponent by the throat; second, the bending back of the malefactor’s neck, and the exposing of his face to the spectators: and, third, the drawing back and the exposing of

the neck of the sacrificial victim at the altar" (Wuest, p. 90).

The "Him with Whom we have to do" is of course GOD. If there is a flaw in our character GOD will see it. Man needs to know and understand that GOD will see it. Not even the smallest sin can be hidden from him. Because GOD can see all, because He can judge every motive in everything one does, it behooves man to mold his life into the image GOD desires. Because all things are open to Him, one ought to run to that "throne of grace," that the mercy so desperately needed might be obtained (v. 16).

"The range of GOD's scrutinizing eye covers all creation. He reduces all things to their basic elements. His judgment is infallible" (Lightfoot, p. 99).

Since one cannot conceal anything from GOD, it is foolish to try to deceive oneself into believing that he can. The choice then comes down to either rebellion or obedience. If one is going to rebel against GOD's will, he might as well not be a hypocrite about it and do it openly, for in the end it will be revealed and he will lose eternity anyway. Since nothing can be hid from Him, *is not conforming one's life to the mold He gave the wise course of action?* Truly, the only important thing that can be done in this life is to please "Him with Who we have to do."

Heb. 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold fast our profession."

"Having then a great High Priest, Who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold fast our confession." (ASV)

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold fast our confession." (NKJV)

"We have a great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD. Let us hold firmly to the confession," (ESV)

"hold fast" — κρατέω — *"To use strength, i.e., seize or retain (literally or figuratively): hold"* (Strong); *"To hold fast, i.e., trop. not to discard or let go; to keep carefully and faithfully"* (Thayer); *"To take hold of, grasp, hold fast, followed by the gen. of person meaning to have power over, rule over"* (Zodhiates); *"Take into one's possession or custody...arrest, take into custody, apprehend someone...take hold of, grasp, seize forcibly and also without the use of force"* (Bauer, p. 448).

"profession" — ὁμολογία — *"acknowledgment: con- (pro-) fession, professed"* (Strong); *"Profession — of what one professes"* (Thayer); *"A confession, profession, or recognition"* (Zodhiates); *"Confessing as an action...confession, acknowledgment that one makes"* (Bauer, p. 568).

This verse begins the argument of the Divine author (Holy Spirit) that Christ is superior to the Levitical lineage. This argument is a lengthy one compared to those which have preceded it and runs

through 10:18 of this book.

The term “**High Priest**” was found in the Scriptures for the first time in Leviticus 21:10. There it referred to Aaron and would henceforth be used of his descendants who became the “top priest,” or the “supreme priest” of that ancient system which GOD gave. In this text, the term “**great**” is used with reference to Christ, which shows His superiority to all who held that office under the Old Covenant. The term “**great**” was never used of any High Priest before Christ.

The greatness of Christ, His superiority over all other priests, is shown in that He did not pass through a material building to offer an atonement to GOD; He went directly into the presence of GOD in Heaven, something which the Aaronic priesthood could not do.

“In Israel the atonement was not complete at the brazen altar. Not until the high priest had carried the atoning blood into the Holy of Holies, and had sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat, was the atonement complete. Likewise, our Lord’s atonement was not complete at the Cross. Not until He had entered Heaven as the High Priest having made atonement for sin, was His atonement complete” (Wuest, p. 91).

When the Levitical High Priest made the atoning sacrifice he walked through the Holy Place, passed through the veil, and offered it on the Mercy Seat. Christ also passed through a veil (the heavens) and entered Heaven where His blood was offered for the sins of mankind. The sins of mankind could not be removed until the Lord accomplished all of this.

“**let us hold fast**” Notice the following thoughts on this phrase. *“Throughout Hebrews, the weight of responsibility for faithfulness is made to rest upon the diligence and the alertness of the believer himself; and he is repeatedly admonished to hold it fast, to glory in it, and to exhort others to constantly to the same effect. He is not to be passive at all, but active in claiming the promised redemption”* (Coffman, p. 98).

How tightly would a drowning man hold to a rope which was cast to him and being drawn toward a boat? That is exactly the effort which every Christian must make to gain the safety of Heaven.

“As it is the same sun that melts the wax which hardens the clay, so it is the same Word of God that leads some on to salvation, and turns others who will have none of it away into outer darkness” (Wuest, p. 94).

Heb. 4:15 “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

“For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (ASV)

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

“For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One Who was tempted in every respect just as we are, yet without sin.” (ESV)

“touched” — συμπαθέω — *“To feel ‘sympathy’ with, i.e., (by implication) to commiserate: have compassion, be touched with a feeling of”* (Strong); *“To be affected with the same feeling as another, to sympathize with...in reference to the wretched, to feel for, have compassion on”* (Thayer); *“To sympathize with, be compassionate, have compassion upon”* (Zodhiates); *“Sympathize with, have or show sympathy with”* (Bauer, p. 778); *“The compound word means ‘to suffer with’ another person, thus to sympathize with him to the extent of entering into his experience and feeling his heartache yourself”* (Wuest, p. 94).

“infirmities” — ἀσθένεια — *“Feebleness (of body or mind); by implication malady; moral frailty: disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness”* (Strong); *“Want of strength, weakness, infirmity”* (Thayer); *“Weakness, sickness. In the NT, this word and related words, asthenems, weak, sick, and asthenom, to be sick or weak, are the most common expressions for illness and are used in the comprehensive sense of the whole man. However, it can also refer to a special form of bodily weakness or sickness... The noun occurs only seven times in the gospels. In Matt. 8:17, a quotation from Isaiah 53:4, He (Christ on the cross) took our infirmities (astheneias), which means that, in His manhood, He took upon Himself the consequences of our sins without sinning Himself. He became mortal so that He could die for us. That is the first meaning”* (Zodhiates).

“tempted” — πειράζω — *“To test (objectively), i.e., endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: assay, examine”* (Strong); *“To try, make trial of, test, for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself...in a bad sense: to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof of his feeling or judgment...to try to test one’s faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin; hence acc. to the contest i.q. to solicit to sin, to tempt”* (Thayer); *“To try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt, test by soliciting to sin”* (Zodhiates). *“Try, make trial of, put to the test, to discover what kind of person someone is”* (Bauer, p. 640).

A Christian’s High Priest is able to comfort him, to understand what he goes through in this life, because He did put on the fleshly robes of humanity. He did not observe man from the outside or from a sterile environment. He came into this sin-filled world and withstood every temptation which was placed before Him. Jesus knows all about “human” problems, and from that vantage point He told man that he can withstand sin.

“The believer is invited to see that Jesus the Son of God knows all about human problems, even temptation, and that

He is thereby qualified to provide the utmost sympathy and understanding for human weakness” (Coffman, p. 99).

Jesus (as a man) knew what pain was, He had the same kind of desires. He had the same kind of emotions. For example: “Be ye angry, and sin not” (Ephesians 4:26). Anger is an emotion which can and should be expressed in a proper way over proper events. And can also be shown improperly and over things that have no merit for such anger. When the Lord cleansed the Temple, the Lord showed **controlled anger** which did not carry over into a sinful action. Our Lord sympathized with those in pain, He felt the agony of those who lost loved ones. He understood the mental anguish of a friend’s betrayal. Yet, He refused to sin.

“**tempted like as we are**” Satan thoroughly tried Jesus in every way possible; he solicited Jesus to sin through the avenues of the lust of the flesh and eyes and through the pride of life (Matthew 4:1-11). Yet, Jesus did not sin (7:26; 9:28; John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)! From His example one ought to learn that temptation and sin are not the same thing. Jesus was tempted, but He never allowed Himself to enter into sin — He did not yield to the temptations He suffered. Joseph did not yield to the temptation Potiphar’s wife constantly put before him (Genesis 39:7-18). She sinned in offering the temptation, but Joseph did not give in — he did not commit sin. He refused the temptation placed before him, he did not yield, he did not sin in this matter. All human beings have weaknesses, but these weaknesses must not be allowed to overcome them.

“**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death**” (James 1:12-15).

Could Christ have sinned? How can one be tempted to do that which it is impossible for him to do? Yes, Jesus could have chosen to sin. If He had sinned (like the Levitical High Priest did), then He could not be one’s Great High Priest. If He had given in to the temptations placed before Him, then He could not have been the perfect sin offering. It should be kept in mind that Jesus became both the sin offering and the High Priest who offered it to GOD.

One should ponder the fact that Jesus faced the temptations placed before Him (the same temptations everyone faces) without His divinity interfering on His behalf. **So how was He able to withstand these onslaughts by Satan? Can human beings withstand the temptations they face in the same way Jesus did?** When the Devil tempted (tried, tested) Jesus (Matthew 4), Jesus relied upon GOD’s Word to withstand every assault — **“IT IS WRITTEN”** (vv. 4, 7, 10). If man will immerse himself in the Word of GOD, relying upon it for knowledge and strength in time of trial, he will **always** win the victory of Satan.

“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

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

“Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.” (ASV)

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

“Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace for timely help.” (ESV)

“boldly” — παρρησία — “All out spokenness, i.e., frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication **assurance: bold**” (Strong); “Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech...free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance” (Thayer); “Freedom or frankness in speaking. NT meanings: freedom in speaking all that one thinks or pleases; confidence or boldness, particularly in speaking; plainness or exactness of speech; openness, speaking publicly; freedom, liberty; being in the public eye rather than being concealed” (Zodhiates).

Because Christians have such a High Priest which is above every being ever created, and because He endured all that anyone can possibly face, then man ought to be able to boldly approach His throne of unmerited favor. Christians ought boldly to look for the mercy they need, the help that is available when they plead their case; seek the help they need in times of trouble or temptation. Christians should feel free to approach the throne of GOD, speaking freely of the temptations they face and asking unabashedly for help in overcoming them. At the same time, one should feel the freedom to speak to GOD about his own sins and ask for forgiveness, knowing that He is willing to forgive. Christians are able to approach the “throne of grace,” the throne of unmerited favor because of what Christ did for mankind. Why does one need to approach the “throne of grace?” Because he needs mercy for his transgressions.

“Precisely because it is a throne of grace and not a judgment seat, this is why it can be approached with **confidence** (*parresia*). *Parresia* (from *pan* + *resia* = full story) in ancient Greece denoted the right of a full citizen to speak his mind on any subject in the town assembly – a right the slave did not have. In the Epistle it stands for freedom to approach God on the basis of the blood of Jesus (10:19)” (Lightfoot, p. 101).

Human beings cannot save themselves, but they can have confidence to approach the One Who can save them. Therefore one should often seek help at the “throne of grace.” Who can deny that he does not often need His help? The Israelites relied on their High Priest to make intercession for them. Should not Christians rely upon the “Great High Priest” to intercede for them? This throne may be approached in full assurance.

“If verse 15 gave evidence that our High Priest has perfect

knowledge of the help required, verse 16 gives the assurance that the help shall be given as needed, and in the time of need”

(Reese, p. 70).

Help is available as Christians face the trials of this life. Let us reach out for and accept that help!

Hebrews — Chapter Five

Heb. 5:1 “For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to GOD, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:”

“For every High Priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to GOD, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:” (ASV)

“For every High Priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to GOD, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” (NKJV)

“For every High Priest taken from among people is appointed in behalf of people for the things relating to GOD, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.” (ESV)

The office of the High Priest was glorious and held a very special meaning to the Jews.

“In this and following verses, the author of Hebrews analyzes the high priesthood of Christ in such a manner as to prove that Christians who had given up the priesthood of Aaron and his successors had, in Christ, received far more than they had lost” (Coffman, p. 103).

Christ is absolutely superior to the Aaronic priesthood in every respect.

When looking ahead at verse four, it is apparent that the context is speaking of the priests who came through the family of Aaron. Further, the priests (Christians) of the new covenant are superior to those of the Mosaic law. It would be wise to go back to Exodus twenty-nine and notice the sacrifices and ceremonies with which the priests were appointed to their office. This was indeed a very solemn time in the religious affairs of the nation and these sacrifices and ceremonies were meant to impress upon the people and the priests the importance which GOD ascribed to this office.

In comparing the old to the new, the writer of Hebrews gave some of the qualifications for one to be a High Priest in the Jewish dispensation. First, the High Priest had to be a male, specifically an Israelite male from the tribe of Levi, and the family of Aaron. Second, he was ordained not for the benefit of GOD, but for the benefit of man. Third, it was GOD who did the choosing. Fourth, the purpose of the High Priest was religious in nature. Aaron was not chosen to be a political leader, nor was it a secular position — it was a religious position. Fifth, he was appointed to offer sacrifices on behalf of himself and the people for their sins.

These offerings consisted of “**gifts and sacrifices.**”

*“The words **gifts** (*dora*) and **sacrifices** (*thusiai*) are sometimes used interchangeably, as in Gen. 4:3-5. But when constructed, as they are in this case, and also in 8:3; 9:9, the former is used for bloodless offerings, and the latter for such as required the life of the victim”* (Milligan, p. 185).

The “**gifts and sacrifices**” of this text refer to those which were offered for sins. If the word “**gifts**” refers to bloodless sacrifices, how does one justify such when offerings for sin required blood? Reese offers this observation.

“Meal offerings could serve as sin offerings for the very poor, and on the Day of Atonement the unbloody sacrifice formed part of the ceremony of expiation (Num. 29:7-11)” (p. 72).

Regarding the words **“he may offer,”** Robertson states that the *“Greek tense translates, ‘that he keep on offering (from time to time)’”* (p. 566). This then would be a contrast between the offerings made under previous dispensations and the offering made for sin by Christ. Christ offered Himself once for sin, never to be repeated (Hebrews 9:12).

Heb. 5:2 “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

“who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity;” (ASV)

“He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.” (NKJV)

“He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and the erring ones, since he himself is beset by weakness.” (ESV)

“compassion” — μετριοπαθῶ — *“To be moderate in passion, i.e., gentle (to treat indulgently): have compassion”* (Strong); *“Of one who is not unduly disturbed by the errors, faults, sins of others, but bears with them gently”* (Thayer); *“To act with moderation...to moderate one’s anger towards, to pardon, treat with mildness or meekness”* (Zodhiates); *“Moderate + to feel or suffer”* (Robertson, p. 566); *“To hold one’s passions or emotions in restraint; hence, To bear gently with, feel gently towards”* (Earle); *“Moderate one’s feeling, deal gently”* (Bauer, p. 514).

“Transferred from the language of the schools to general literature, it (“compassion” – RK) signifies the disposition of mind which keeps the right mean between excessive feeling and sheer indifference; and here it indicated a pathetic judgment which is neither too severe nor too lenient; but reasonable, sober, indulgent, and kind” (Milligan, p. 186).

As a man the High Priest could understand the infirmities that other men had and thus could sympathize with the ignorant (unknowing). The argument set forth is that a man would sympathize with his fellow man. **But could a “superior being” sympathize with him when he faced these infirmities?** Later the argument will show that Christ is indeed able to sympathize with man, not because He sinned, but because He was **“in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”** (4:15).

One should not forget who was to receive this “sympathy,” it was those who had sinned through ignorance. The law was clear on these matters, as is stated in Numbers 15:28.

“the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to

make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.”

It was the sin committed in “ignorance” (“*unwittingly*” – ASV), which was to be forgiven on the part of the penitent person. Sins committed in ignorance would also seem to indicate that those which were committed in a moment of weakness or sudden passion. But the case was different for another type of individual. Notice Numbers 15:30.

“But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”

There were sins that demanded the death penalty and sins that demanded compassion. The High Priest had to be able to distinguish in each case. If the High Priest judged a person as having sinned presumptuously, his sacrifice would not be accepted for a sin offering and he would be put to death. It was thus very important that the High Priest be a compassionate man. *Why would he tend to be a compassionate man?* Because he recognized his own weaknesses, his own infirmities.

This points out the fact that all men need to examine themselves to see if they remain in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). One should never ignore his own weaknesses. He should be aware of them in order to protect himself from the subtle temptations placed before all by Satan. Being aware of one’s own weaknesses prepares him to defend himself against sinning. There should also seem to be a lesson here for the High Priest to err (if he did) on the side of leniency rather than on the side of harshness. Yet, one must carefully guard against being so lenient that he ignores sin.

Heb. 5:3 “And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”

“and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.” (ASV)

“Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.” (NKJV)

“An so he ought to offer sacrifices for sins, not only for the people but for himself also.” (ESV)

“On account of the infirmity which constantly beset him, and which rendered imperfect even his most solemn services, the High Priest was required to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as the sins of the people” (Milligan, p. 187).

As Coffman stated, this is truly one of the great differences between the High Priest of the old dispensation and that of Christ, the High Priest of the New Testament dispensation. The Aaronic priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer an atonement for the sins of the people (Leviticus 9:7). They were imperfect (as are all human being), but Christ was perfect. He had no sin (Hebrews 4:15), therefore His blood was not offered for Himself, but instead He offered it once for man.

The Old Testament High Priest *“needs the same atonement;*

he offers that same sacrifice for himself which he does for others, Lev. 9:7. The same thing is true of the ministers of religion now. They come before God feeling they have need of the benefit of the same atonement which they preach to others; they plead the merits of the same blood for their own salvation which they show to be indispensable for the salvation of others” (Barnes, p. 113).

Heb. 5:4 “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of GOD, as was Aaron.”

“And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of GOD, even as was Aaron.” (ASV)

“And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by GOD, just as Aaron was.” (NKJV)

“No one takes this honor to himself except the one who is called by GOD, as Aaron was.” (ESV)

The office of High Priest was not to be a political (elected) office; it was not one that a person usurped without severe penalty. The office of High Priest was divinely appointed and it could only be filled by those chosen by GOD. By GOD’s decree. Only those who came from the lineage of Aaron could hold this earthly office (Exodus 28:1ff; Numbers 16:40). In studying Numbers 16-18, it is clear that Aaron did not seek this office – GOD appointed him to it.

“Only God had the right to appoint such a thing as a high priest who would represent his people before the presence on high; and only God has a right to name a High Priest for all of mankind” (Coffman, p. 106).

Notice some examples of those who tried to usurp this office and the office of a priest and the punishment they received.

1. Korah (Numbers 16:1-35).
 - a. Tried to take authority which did not belong to him and his followers (vv. 7, 10).
 - b. Ground opened and swallowed the leaders and their families.
 - c. Fire destroyed the 250 followers.
2. Saul (1 Samuel 13:9-11).
 - a. Saul, a Benjamite, made a burnt offering.
 - b. His kingship and dynasty were taken away from him.
 - c. Eventually in hopelessness took his own life.
3. King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16-23).
 - a. Went into the Temple attempting to burn incense on the altar of incense.
 - b. Stricken with leprosy, lost his kingship.

Over the years some have tried to appeal to Hebrews 5:4, to say that ministers today must have a divine call to preach (It has always been interesting to this writer that their so-called “calls” are in private where no one else can testify as to whether they were called or not.). Others have misused this passage to claim that there must be a line of succession today in the perpetuation of ecclesiastical authority.

This passage in no way implies or states any such thing. The subject of this text is the priestly office of the Messiah in comparison to that of the Mosaic dispensation. It must be remembered that the old was a shadow of the which was to come (Hebrews 10:1). Under that system there was a High Priest who offered the necessary sacrifices, who was the religious leader of his day **by the appointment of GOD**. But that office and the Mosaic dispensation it served was not intended by GOD to last forever. GOD planned on replacing it with a permanent spiritual leader above all who had lived or would live. GOD replaced the Aaronic priesthood with the priesthood of His Son, a Son that no one could match nor follow into the office of High Priest.

This should have been especially meaningful to the people to whom Hebrews was written, because the office of High Priest in the time of Jesus had degenerated to the point of total corruption, and was even worse by the time Hebrews was written. Further, it is observed that the Romans appointed men to this office who did not meet the GOD-ordained lineage for it (Luke 3:2).

Heb. 5:5 “So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee.”

“So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that spake unto Him, Thou art My Son, This day have I begotten Thee:” (ASV)

“So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” (NKJV)

“So Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but the One Who said to Him, You are My Son, today I have begotten you;” (ESV)

“Jesus answered, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing: it is My Father that honoureth Me; of Whom ye say, that He is your GOD” (John 8:54).

It was very important to show the qualifications of Christ as High Priest, because He did not come from the Levitical family. To the Jewish mind, if one could prove that the priesthood had changed from the Levitical family to another, one had proved that a change had also taken place in the law. This point is stated clearly in Hebrews 7:12.

Christ did not exalt Himself to this office; He was appointed to it by His Father. Neither did Jesus assume this office by reason of default, which sometimes happens in families and in congregations when those who should be in charge neglect their responsibilities. **The Father GOD appointed Him to this office!** It was the Father who said, **“Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee”** (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5).

One of the interesting things to remember is that Messiah would be both King and High Priest at the same time, just like Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:1-3). Since Jesus lived and died under the Mosaic law and therefore could not be a priest under the law, **when was He made a priest and king?** It was after His resurrection. Notice also the prophecy of Zechariah regarding the dual office of Christ as Priest and King.

“Even He shall build the Temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and he shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:13).

If Christ’s kingdom does not presently exist, then He cannot be a priest to man today! Messiah had to be both priest and king at the same time. For one to insist that the kingdom has not been established, he must also insist that he does not have a High Priest who intercedes on his behalf before the throne of GOD. To insist that either position does not presently exist is a denial of the Bible as being GOD’s Word.

Heb. 5:6 “As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

“as He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek.” (ASV)

“As He also says in another place: You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek” (NKJV)

Said also in another place, You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” (ESV)

Two of the distinguishing characteristics of Christ’s priesthood are that it is eternal and universal.

“Having already argued from Psalm 110:1-2 for the universal kingship of Christ the Messiah (1:5), at this point in the epistle he returned to that same Psalm to bring in the fourth verse from which he also proclaimed the universal high priesthood of Christ, showing him to be not of Aaron’s line, but an independent high priest of universal dominion ‘after the order of Melchizedec’” (Coffman, p. 107).

Coffman went on to add the following.

“Modern religious people would not find that problem an impediment to their believing in Jesus Christ, but it was a powerful deterrent to Christians of Jewish background in the first century. ‘You cannot accept Christ as your high priest,’ the Pharisees said, ‘because, since he does not belong to the posterity of Aaron, he is disqualified from being any kind of a priest whatever!’ And the only verse in the Bible that clears that up is Psalm 110:4. The Pharisee’s should have known this; but it was true of them, as it was the Sadducees, that they did err ‘not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God’ (Matt. 22:29)” (p. 108).

For the time being, note this passage as an introduction to Melchizedek, which represents Christ’s qualifications for the office of High Priest. Christ was not to be a High Priest after the order of Aaron and his sons, but after the order of Melchizedec, who came before that of Aaron. Further, in Christ, the office of High Priest is to be one that never ends or suffers a disruption of any kind. Aaron and his sons died, whereas Christ continuously lives to make intercession

for His brethren. Christ has no need of a successor.

For a great discussion on Melchizedec, refer to the book, Studies in Hebrews, edited by Dub McClish, Valid Publications, Denton, TX, p. 123ff.

One should keep in mind that one of the keys to understanding the priesthood of Christ is the phrase “**after the order of Melchizedec**” (Emphasis mine, RK). The priesthood of Melchizedec was unique, it was one of a kind, which was to typify the one which Christ would hold — one of a kind. There was no successor to Melchizedec and there will not be one for Christ.

Heb. 5:7 “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared;”

“Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear,” (ASV)

“who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,” (NKJV)

“In the days of His flesh, with strong crying and tears, He offered up prayers and supplications to Him Who was able to save Him from death; and He was heard because of His reverence.”

“**supplications**” — ἰκετηρία — “**entreaty: supplication**” (Strong); “*Pertaining to a supplicant, fit for a supplicant*” (Thayer); “*Supplication. Equivalent to a supplication or humble and earnest prayer*” (Zodhiates); “*“To come to one’ and suggests one coming with an olive branch*” (Robertson, p. 566).

“**feared**” — εὐλάβεια — “*properly caution, i.e., (religiously) reverence (piety); by implication dread (concretely): fear*” (Strong); “*reverence toward God, godly fear, piety*” (Thayer); “*The word for ‘fear’ in the Greek text is not phobos, the ordinary word for fear, but eulabeia. The verb of the same root means ‘to act cautiously, to beware, to fear.’ The picture in the word is that of a cautious taking hold of and a careful and respectful handling. Hence, it speaks of a pious, devout and circumspect character, who in his prayers, take unto account all things, not only his desire, but the will of the Father*” (Wuest, p. 100).

“**In the days of His flesh**” speaks of the time when Jesus put on the fleshly robes of man; the time when He walked as a man on the face of the earth.

“**When He had offered**” speaks of a particular event in time. It can hardly be denied that the event spoken of must have been Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46).

“**prayers and supplications**”

“*The Greek words rendered **prayers** and **supplications** are often used interchangeably for prayers in general. But when used together, as in this instance, the former denotes such*

petitions as flow from a sense of our wants; and the latter, such as are prompted by a deep sense of our own helplessness” (Milligan, p. 194).

These “**prayers and supplications**” in the garden of Gethsemane were accomplished “**with strong crying and tears.**” The word “**crying**” is not speaking of tears which might flow down one’s cheeks, but of a verbal crying out in His agony. This why the two words (“**crying and tears**”) are both used here. That the agony He brought forth in crying out also brought tears is not denied.

There are those who say a man should not cry. But here is the greatest of all men who has or ever will live, shedding tears. If a man does not shed tears, then there is something wrong with him, and it is called LACK OF COMPASSION and FEELING.

When Jesus prayed that “**this cup**” might pass from Him, for **what was He praying (Matthew 26:39, 42)?** The Hebrews writer says that it was about His approaching death. This has caused many people problems over the years. They advocate that “*If Jesus prayed to be spared from death, yet He was not, then GOD did not hear the prayer of the most righteous man who ever lived.*” There is a major fallacy in this argument. Those who make this argument need to look closely at the words of Jesus in Matthew 26. Jesus said, “**If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt**” (emphasis mine, RK). Again, notice verse forty-two where Jesus continued by saying, “**If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.**” When Jesus prayed, He did not do so arbitrarily or demandingly. Jesus did not have the attitude that because this was what He prayed for, that this was the way it had to be or it meant His prayers had not been heard or answered. Man must recognize that he does not always know what is best for himself.

“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

One may pray believing that a certain thing would be best for him, but GOD truly knows that what he sincerely prayed for is best for him or not. It may be that GOD has something even better for one than that for which he prayed. Therefore, one must learn from the example of Jesus to pray that GOD’s will be done in all things.

It is interesting that GOD said “No,” to a petition from His Son.

“This gives Christians courage today when they face crisis when it seems that God says no to their prayers. He said, no, to his Son, but he did not forsake him, nor will God forsake his children today” (Reese, p. 991).

In His humanity, it would have been natural for Jesus to desire not to die such a horrible death. It would then have been natural for Him to pray for relief from this coming burden and to pray that He would not have to suffer in this way. Couple the physical agony which He knew He would endure with the mental agony, and one sees even more reason to desire that this event should not happen. He willingly submitted to His Father’s will, even when it meant more suffering than any other has ever endured.

“and was heard in that He feared” In connection with this, notice that the prayer of Jesus WAS HEARD, even though it was not

answered in the initial way Jesus prayed. He began by praying that death would not have to be endured in this manner. GOD heard His request but did not grant that request. Because of the reverential feeling that Jesus had for GOD, one is reminded that He also prayed, **“not My will but Thine be done.”** GOD did not grant His first request because it did not fit His plan for man’s salvation, but He gave Him something else.

“Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him”
(Luke 22:42-43).

GOD did not grant the petition to remove the cup of suffering. He gave Him strength to endure it.

There are those who believe that Jesus prayed in the garden, not to be spared from physical death, but rather spiritual death, i.e., separation from GOD. It is this writer’s view that physical death was Jesus’ intention.

Because one’s prayers are not answered in the way he thinks they should be, does not mean that GOD did not hear them, nor does it mean He did not answer them. It may be that the one praying did not pray according to GOD’s will. Jesus totally subjected Himself to the Father’s will and one must any age do the same thing.

Heb. 5:8-9 “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him;”

“though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation;” (ASV)

“though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,” (NKJV)

“Although He is the Son He learned about obedience from the things He suffered, And being perfected He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him;” (ESV)

“perfect” — τελειόω — *“To complete, i.e., (literally) accomplish or (figuratively) consummate (in character): consecrate, finish, fulfil, (make) perfect”* (Strong); *“To carry through completely; to accomplish, finish, bring to an end...To complete (perfect), i.e., add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing fully...to bring to the end (goal) proposed”* (Thayer); *“To complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal...Particularly with the meaning to bring to a full end, completion, reaching the intended goal, to finish a work or duty...Metaphorically meaning to make perfect although not faultless but bringing to a state of completion or fulfillment”* (Zodhiates); *“A verb with the primary meaning ‘to make perfect,’ with the senses of ‘complete,’ ‘accomplish,’ ‘fulfill’”* (Renn, p. 723); *“Complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish...bring to an end, bring to its goal or to accomplishment”* (Bauer, p. 809).

“author” — αἴτιος — *“Causative, i.e., (concretely) a causer: author”* (Strong); *“That in which the cause of anything resides, causative, causing”* (Thayer); *“Cause or source, as of eternal salvation. The translation of aitios as ‘author’ does not fully convey the meaning. Jesus is spoken of as having reached the goal that He set for man’s salvation”* (Zodhiates); *“aitios is an adjective meaning ‘causing of’ or ‘responsible for’”* (Earle, p. 422); *“Responsible, guilty...the cause, source”* (Bauer, p. 26).

Often those who are in positions of power or privilege do not have to suffer some of the things that others in life simply because of their position. Christ was the Son of GOD, but He was not excused from anything that man must endure in the flesh. There were no special exemptions extended to Him so that He might escape human suffering (See Isaiah 53:3-12).

“yet learned He obedience” It was not that Christ has been disobedient in the past and must now learn to be obedient as a man must. It was through His suffering that He learned the consequences of perfect obedience.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

His suffering was part of what qualified Him to be man’s High Priest with a full understanding of suffering because of obedience. Because He lived in perfect submission to His Father’s will, the things He went through on earth were intensified.

“To learn obedience, as here, implies the tasting of every consequence of obedience. The savage antagonisms of a sinful and rebellious world against all truth and honor were pointed squarely against him who knew no sin. His perfect obedience was the cause of bitter hatred against him and provided the occasion for every blow that fell upon his person” (Coffman, p. 110).

What man would dare stand up and say that he has suffered as much as Christ suffered for His obedience to the Father? What man could stand before Jesus and say, *“Jesus, you do not understand what I have suffered in trying to serve You?”* Jesus does understand, and that is the point. He suffered more than any other man will ever suffer for His obedience. He understands the suffering that Christians endure and encourages them to **“keep on keeping on,”** and the eternal goal will be theirs. The Lord holds up the eternal goal of Heaven and says man can overcome the trials of this life to reach it.

When this writer was a boy, my father told me to plow the garden while he was at work. I had never done that before and was proud that he thought I was old enough and responsible enough to do the job. I plowed most of the day and finished shortly before he came home from work. When we went out to survey the work I had done, I was disappointed to hear him say I had not done it right. He pointed out that my plowed rows were not straight and looked somewhat like the letter “s.” He told me I would have to do it over the next day. He marked a place on the ground on one end of the garden and pointed to a post at the other end that marked the middle of the garden. He

told me to sink the plow into the garden where he had marked it and then stare at the post as I moved forward. He said when I got to the end of the row I should stop and look back. When I did as he said, lo and behold the plowed row was as straight as an arrow.

What is the point of the above account? When one keeps his eyes firmly set on Jesus as he journey's through life, he is less likely to stray left or right, to stray from the "strait and narrow" course which He has laid out for man to follow.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Obedience is not learned by doing what pleases himself. Obedience is doing what someone else **tells one to do**. Jesus did not come into the world to do His own will, but rather the will of His Father.

"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O GOD. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Hebrews 10:7-9).

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

"I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (John 5:30).

"For I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38).

"Christ being made perfect should not be understood in the sense that he was not previously perfect but as an emphasis upon the perfection of his qualifications of sympathy, love, mercy and understanding, which were so necessary in a high priest, and which could not be possessed fully by any person except one who had suffered" (Coffman, p. 110).

Because Jesus suffered and was made perfect (complete), He became the **"author"** or "source" of eternal salvation by His obedient sacrifice. This salvation is characterized in two ways: (1) It is eternal. It is not like the sacrifices which the Aaronic priests offered. Their sacrifices had to continually be offered, and yet, they did not satisfy GOD's requirements for forgiveness. It took the perfect Lamb of GOD's sacrifice ONE TIME to meet the requirements of GOD for ALL TIME. His sacrifice did not need to be continually offered, and (2) The salvation offered is realized only by those who obey Him.

"Christ as a Son had to obey the Father, and all who expect

salvation must first learn obedience as He did" (Lightfoot, p. 111).

One's motto then should probably be — *"GOD said it, therefore I must do it, no matter what it may cost me in this life."* When one renders this kind of total obedience to Christ, then Christ WILL give him eternal life.

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but He that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

One of the versions renders Hebrews 5:8-9 as follows.

"Even though Jesus was God's Son, Jesus learned to obey from the things he suffered. After Jesus was made perfect, he became the Source of eternal salvation for everyone who will obey him" (The Great Book).

Heb. 5:10 *"Called of GOD an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."*

"named of GOD a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." (ASV)

"called by GOD as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek," (NKJV)

"Being designated by GOD a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." (ESV)

"called" — προσαγορεύω — *"To address, i.e., salute by name: call"* (Strong); *"To send before, to make to precede...to go before one, of a leader"* (Thayer); *"To address, greet. In the NT, to designate, give a name to"* (Zodhiates); *"Call, name, designate. Westcott says that the verb 'expresses the formal and solemn ascription of the title (high priest) to Him to Whom it belongs'"* (Earle, p. 422); *"The word 'called' is the translation of presagoreuo which means 'to address or accost by some name, to give a name to publicly, to salute, to style.' He was addressed or saluted by God as a high priest after the order of Melchisedec"* (Wuest, p. 102).

The importance of this passage revolves around the fact that it was GOD who designated Christ as High Priest; He did not take the office upon Himself.

"If Christ is a high priest like Melchizedek, that can only mean, as the author will later show, that the Aaronic order of priests has passed away" (Lightfoot, p. 111).

Since GOD named Christ a High Priest, this title cannot be an invention of His disciples for Him. No man gave Him the title — GOD did.

The writer of Hebrews will later show (chapter seven), that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of the Levitical priesthood, just as that of Melchizedec was superior to the Levitical.

Heb. 5:11 *"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing."*

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye

are become dull of hearing.” (ASV)

“of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.” (NKJV)

“Concerning Whom we have much to relate but difficult to explain because you are dull of hearing.” (ESV)

“**hard to be uttered**” — δυσερμήνευτος — *“Difficult of explanation”* (Strong); *“Hard to interpret, difficult of explanation”* (Thayer); *“Difficult to explain, hard to explain”* (Zodhiates); *“Difficult to describe, hard to explain”* (Bauer, p. 209).

“**dull**” — νωθρός — *“Sluggish, i.e., (literally) lazy or (figuratively) stupid: dull, slothful”* (Strong); *“Slow, sluggish, indolent, dull, languid”* (Thayer); *“Lazy, sluggish, a lazy and careless workman”* (Bauer, p. 547); *“Slothful, sluggish, dull”* (Zodhiates); *“No push in the hearing, slow and sluggish in mind as well as in the ears”* (Robertson, p. 567).

The general theme of this section is **spiritual maturity**.

“The maturing process...cannot be hastened. It has to be developed at its own pace — naturally. We can teach a person, filling him full of facts and information. However, his ability to apply that knowledge depends on his own inward growth; and there is absolutely nothing that you, or I, or anyone else can do to hurry it” (Rice, p. 132).

“of whom”

“These words have been variously applied (1) to Melchizedec, (2) to Christ, and (3) to the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchizedec, as the leading and proper subject of this discourse” (Milligan, p. 204).

It is the latter view to which this writer holds, because it fits the context better than the other two.

“**hard to be uttered**” Why were these things which the author had to say “difficult to describe?” Was it because they could not be understood by man; like man’s inability to fully understand the beauty of Heaven or the complete horribleness of Hell? These things which he had to say were not impossible to be understood. But they would be hard to understand by someone who had become “**dull of hearing.**”

“Dullness of hearing is a metaphor for mental sluggishness and spiritual apathy. It is difficult to communicate with a deaf person, so the author finds it difficult to get his thoughts into the ear of their intelligence” (Lightfoot, p. 112).

The apostle says that it was hard to teach them the truths they needed because they were “*slow, sluggish, lazy and careless*” in their apprehension of New Testament teachings.

“But they had not always been in that condition, as is shown by the word translated ‘are.’ The word means ‘to become.’ It is the perfect tense which tense speaks of a process completed in past time having present results” (Wuest, p. 104).

They had become dull of hearing, but at one time they understood the

truth so that they could have gone on to the “meatier” matter of Christianity. Because of their laziness, their sluggishness, they now could not understand the more advanced knowledge which he wished to impart to them. In a very real sense, he was urging them to give up their sluggish ways and return to an active pursuit of the knowledge which would allow them to proceed to the “meat.” They needed, as do all, to be engaged in a systematic study of GOD’s Word. Such study yields deeper and deeper knowledge and understanding.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy GOD, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:6).

“in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:14-15).

When people become lazy with regard to studying GOD’s Word, they forget many of the things they previously learned. This prevents them from understanding the very thing they need to most — salvation. When a foundation of knowledge is carefully laid and then cultivate the resulting crop yields spiritual maturity.

This writer is reminded of a woman who years ago told brother Gus Nichols, “*I would give half of my life to know what you know about the Bible,*” to which he replied, “*Ma’am, that is exactly what it has cost me.*”

Heb. 5:12 “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

“For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.” (ASV)

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” (NKJV)

“For even you who should be teachers, because of the time, have need for someone again to teach you the basic principles of GOD’s word. You have need of milk and not of strong food.” (ESV)

“first” — ἀρχή — “beginning corner (at the) first (estate)”

(Strong); *“Beginning, origin”* (Thayer); *“‘The first principles’ or elements of faith as also in Hebrews 6:1”* (Zodhiates).

“principles” — ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΟΝ — *“something orderly in arrangement”* (Strong); *“Any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise; an element, first principle...the elements, rudiments...primary and fundamental principles of any art, science, or discipline”* (Thayer); *“Elements (of learning), fundamental principles...the very elements of the truths of God”* (Bauer, p. 768). *“Figuratively it refers to the elements of first principles of the Christian doctrine”* (Zodhiates).

“need” — χρεία — *“requirement of **destitution**”* (Strong); *“Necessity, need...to supply what is absolutely necessary for life”* (Thayer); *“Need, necessity, want”* (Zodhiates).

“strong” — στερεός — *“stiff, i.e., solid, stable: stedfast, strong, sure”* (Strong); *“Firm, solid, compact, hard, rigid: strong, firm, immovable”* (Thayer); *“Figuratively meaning firm, strong, immovable”* (Zodhiates).

The phrase **“for when for the time,”** speaks about a sufficient amount of time having passed since the time when they became Christians. These were not babes in Christ due to a short length of time having passed since they had become Christians, but rather, they were babes, because they had not striven to grow as they should have.

By this time, their Christian lives should have grown so that they were able to teach others.

“To be a teacher meant to the ancient mind that one was able to think and act maturely—the very thing that these Christians could not do” (Lightfoot, p. 112).

Instead of advancing in the faith, growing stronger and more capable, they had gone backwards (digressed). They apparently had lost much of the knowledge they had previously attained, which made it difficult for them to advance.

“The church of Christ is a school for the improvement of all of its members; and while it is certainly not possible for everyone to become an efficient Elder or Evangelist, it is nevertheless the duty of all to ‘grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ (2 Pet. 3:18)” (Milligan, p. 206).

Everyone needs teaching as he advances, but these had not advanced. They had grown stagnant, from which decay quickly arises. They digressed instead of progressing.

“taught again the first principles” Note that they had been previously taught, otherwise it could not be said that they needed to be **“taught again.”** They needed to be taught the very basics of the oracles (λογιον — *“utterance of God”* – Strong) of GOD. Noting the context of the entire book of Hebrews, the phrase **“oracles of GOD”** refers to those things taught in the first covenant (Old Testament) which pointed to Christ.

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of GOD” (Romans 3:1-2).

The word “oracles” refers to divine utterances, but it does not give a clue as to which divine utterances are under consideration. But, when one goes back to the phrase “first principles,” he must ask himself to what that phrase refers. When did the first teachings about Jesus the anointed One first come to mankind? They came in the Old Testament. Again, it is important to notice how the author continually went back to the Old Testament to illustrate the New, how he continually went back to the prophecies to point to Christ in this book. To get a complete picture of how great Christ is, one must go all the way back to Genesis and follow Him and the prophecies concerning Him throughout the whole of the Old Testament. The Bible is Christ’s “family album.”

The author again emphasized their lack of growth with the illustration of milk and meat. Those to whom he wrote had been of **milk**. Milk is that substance which babies need in order to grow properly. It is a very basic form of food. One does not give a baby steak and potatoes and expect it to grow. In fact, the baby would die because he could not chew it nor digest it. A baby is simply not ready for solid foods, because his digestive tract has not been developed. The author used a physical example to illustrate a spiritual condition. Instead of growing to the point where they could properly digest solid spiritual food, it became absolutely necessary to feed them milk because they were still babies. They need to be taken back to the Old Law and be re-taught what had been said about Messiah in order to fortify their faith in Him and grow to maturity. They faced spiritual death because they had not matured.

The word “meat” in the original simply means “food.” In present times it means flesh, but at the time this was translated, this English word simply meant food. They should have progressed to the solids or spiritual knowledge, but they had lapsed so badly that they could only accept liquids which had become a necessity to stave off death. Solid doctrine is essential to develop spiritual strength.

One might notice in passing that it takes little effort to swallow baby food, but solid foods are a different matter. These Hebrews had not developed spiritual teeth or intestines for the advanced teaching they needed for strong spiritual growth.

Heb. 5:13 “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”

“For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.” (ASV)

“For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.” (NKJV)

“Everyone who uses only milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.” (ESV)

“milk” — γάλα — “A metaphor for the less difficult Christian

truths” (Strong); *“Metaphor of the less difficult truths”* (Thayer); *“The rudiments of Christianity”* (Zodhiates).

“unskillful” — ἄπειρος — *“inexperienced in, without experience of”* (Strong; Thayer); *“Inexperienced, unskillful”* (Zodhiates); *“Unacquainted with, unaccustomed to”* (Bauer, p. 83).

“babe” — νήπιος — *“1 An infant, little child. 2 a minor, not of age. 3 metaphor childish, untaught, unskilled”* (Strong); *“Childish, untaught, unskilled”* (Thayer); *“One who cannot speak, hence, an infant, child, baby without any definite limitations of age”* (Zodhiates); *“Infant, minor...views spiritual things from the standpoint of a child”* (Bauer, p. 537); *“The word ‘babe’ is not the translation of a Greek word meaning an ‘infant’ such as is used in Luke 2:16, nor from a word translated ‘child’ as in Luke 1:7, which latter word is related to the verb which means ‘to give birth to’ and therefore speaks of a child in its birth relationship to its parents; but from neipios, which means ‘immature’ as contrasted to ‘mature.’ Paul used this word in contrast to a word which means ‘mature’”* (Wuest, p. 106).

Those who were using milk were dealing with the less difficult truths and thus showed their inexperience in the **“word of righteousness.”**

“They are still babes because they had not launched out after further activities or experiences, such as a normal baby will do” (Zerr, p. 217).

They needed a desire to grow because the Lord demands growth from His people.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

“grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever” (2 Peter 3:18).

What is the “word of righteousness?” It is the word of GOD which is able to make one upright in the sight of GOD; that word which provides one with the faith he must have to please GOD.

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:16-18).

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD” (Romans 10:17).

“without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of

them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The problem with the Hebrews to whom this was addressed is that they were not maturing Christians. They seemed happy with becoming a Christian and doing nothing else. They were not putting the effort needed to become a mature Christian.

Heb. 5:14 “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

“But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.” (ASV)

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (NKJV)

“But solid food is for the mature people who, because of use, have their faculties trained to distinguish good and evil.” (ESV)

“strong” — στερεός — Same word found in verse twelve.

“full age” — τέλειος — “complete (in various acts of labor, growth, mental and moral character, completeness)” (Strong); “Brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect...of men, full grown, adult; of full age, mature” (Thayer); “Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting nothing” (Zodhiates); “Having reached its end, finished, mature” (Earle, p. 423); “Having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect” (Bauer, p. 809).

“discern” — διάκρισις — “judicial estimation” (Strong); “A distinguishing, discerning, judging” (Thayer); “To distinguish, decide, judge. A distinguishing, discerning clearly” (Zodhiates); “Distinguishing, differentiation of good and evil” (Bauer, p. 185).

One of the striking points concerning these passages was expressed by Coffman.

“Spiritual maturity is not simply a matter of time. Many who have been Christians many years may be in the condition of these Hebrew Christians. True spiritual growth is the result of prayer, meditation, faithfulness, diligence, exercise, and the successful struggle against temptations” (p. 114).

“Babies do not have the ability to discriminate. They cannot choose for themselves but must take what is before them” (Lightfoot, p. 113).

The weightier matters of Christianity, those things which may be discerned only after much study and contemplation cannot be received by the immature. They must grow into spiritual maturity in order to receive them. The mark of maturity the writer of the epistle gives is being able to distinguish between “good and evil.”

“The latter expression does not refer to good and bad in morals but to good and bad in teaching. It is a mark of maturity to be able to discern truth from error, just as it is a mark of maturity to be able to teach. The two are linked inseparably” (Lightfoot, p. 114).

“Reason of use” Barnes states that this phrase come from a Greek word which has the following meaning.

“Habit, practice. The meaning is this, that by long experience they had arrived to that state in which they could appreciate the more elevated doctrines of Christianity...they see their beauty and value, and they are able carefully and accurately to distinguish them from error” (p. 120).

What does it take to become a mature Christian? To what has already been stated, Stancliff gives these thoughts.

“Time alone does not grow a strong man in the faith. Such a man will have communed with his Heavenly Father in Bible study and prayer. He will have cherished fellowship with devoted Christians, attending every assembly in which he could share. He will have watched for opportunities to do good to his fellow man, particularly those of the household of faith. And he will have met Satan and overcome him time after time” (p. 90).

Here is a final thought about the rebuke of verses eleven through fourteen. It is obvious that the author interrupted the lesson to insert this rebuke. Is it possible he did so because of the attitude of his readers? Is it possible that they considered themselves to have “arrived,” i.e., they considered themselves to be spiritually mature? If such were the case, then they would have needed this rebuke in order to make them receptive to the meat he was about to present. Sometimes one’s heart must be humbled before it can receive the instruction needed to properly mold his thinking. This should also be a warning to every generation to always keep one’s mind open to learning what the Scriptures teach, never thinking that one has “arrived,” i.e., has nothing else to learn, no more growth to be obtained. It should always be remembered that there are different levels of maturity and **always** another level to be obtained.

An interesting translation of this passage is found in The Great Book. *“But solid food is for grown-ups — people who have trained their senses by using them to tell the differences between right and wrong.”*

Hebrews Chapter Six

Heb. 6:1 “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward GOD,”

“Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward GOD,” (ASV)

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward GOD,” (NKJV)

“Therefore Leaving the elementary teachings of Christ let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith in GOD;” (ESV)

“**repentance**” — μετάνοια — “*Compunction (for guilt including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another’s] decision): repentance*” (Strong); “*A change of mind*” (Thayer); “*A change of mind, repentance (Heb. 12:17). Repentance, change of mind from evil to good or from good to better (Matt. 3:8, 11; 9:13 [TR]; Mark 2:17; Luke 3:8; 5:32; 15:7*” (Zodhiates); “*A change of mind*” (Bauer, p. 512); “*Repentance means a change of mind regarding sin with a resolve to change action. Repentance is not godly sorrow (2 Chr. 7:9-11), or a turn in conduct (Acts 3:19), but a changed mind which will reform*” (Moffitt, p. 44:7).

“**perfection**” — τελειότης — “*Completeness (mentally or morally): perfection*” (Strong); “*Perfection, i.e., the state of the more intelligent*” (Thayer); “*Perfection or perfectness, stressing the realization of an end in view, the state achieved when a goal has been accomplished*” (Zodhiates); “*It comes from the noun telos, which means ‘end.’ So the basic idea is completeness*” (Earle, p. 423); “*Perfection, completeness*” (Bauer, p. 809).

“**again**” — πάλιν — “*(adverbially) anew, i.e., (of place) back (of time) once more or (conjugationally) furthermore or on the other hand: again*” (Strong); “*Anew, again, (but the primary meaning seems to be back)*” (Thayer); “*Back, back again, again, as simply implying to return back to a former place, state or act*” (Zodhiates); “*Back...again, once more, anew when someone repeats something he has already done, or an event takes place in the same (or a similar) manner as before, or a state of being recurs in the same (or nearly the same) way as at first*” (Bauer, p. 606).

In the last few verses of chapter five, the author severely rebuked his readers for their spiritual laziness. In one sense, the writer was telling them that it was past time to grow up and be adults in spiritual matters.

In building a building of any kind, a good foundation is needed before the superstructure can be built. After a good foundation is laid,

the builder recognizes that he must go on to the superstructure, or the completed goal and reward (pay day) will not be reached. It is the same in spiritual matters. A foundation must be built in the individual's heart, but then that foundation must be built upon. Two things are needed in order for this spiritual superstructure to rise up: (1) a willingness and desire to grow, and (2) mature teaching or material from which to work.

When the author said, "**Leaving...the first principles,**" he did not mean that one should abandon those first principles, but rather progress beyond them — build upon them. They were to mature to progressively greater understanding of GOD's Word.

It should also be noted that, though human beings will never attain an absolute standard of perfection while walking in this world, they should be striving for it.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Attaining perfection should be the goal of every Christian.

"No man accomplishes much who does not aim high" (Barnes, p. 125).

"repentance from dead works" Coffman advocates that:

"All works are dead, in the same sense intended here, except the ones motivated by faith and love of God. The works of human righteousness, the works of the flesh, the works of mortal achievement, and even the works of the law of Moses must all be included in the 'dead works' mentioned here" (p. 118).

When one considers the context, the emphasis has been on causing the Hebrew Christians to leave the Law of Moses behind. That law was the foundation which provided them with the truths needed to lead them to a recognition of who the Messiah was and to an acceptance of Him once He was revealed.

"When they were converted to Christ they became 'dead to the law' (Rom. 7:4), that they might serve Christ" (Littrell, p. 293).

One of the keys to this passage is the word **"again"** in the phrase **"not laying again."** Notice the definitions given above. He was saying, *"Do not go back and lay the same foundations you have already laid with regard to repentance, dead works, faith, et cetera."* He told them that they had already done these things, and now they simply needed to move forward. He was saying, **"Do not go backwards."** They did not need to go back and change their minds again (repentance). They did not need to go back to the foundation of **"dead works"** — the Law of Moses (Romans 7:4).

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

They had long ago initially established their faith in GOD and did not need to go back to that point in time. They simply needed to get up and build their spiritual house.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Christian, keep on building your spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). Always move forward, increasing in knowledge and understanding of GOD’s truths. Always make the house larger, stronger and more beautiful.

Heb. 6:2 “Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

“of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” (ASV)

“of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” (NKJV)

“Of the teaching about immersions, the laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead; and eternal judgment.”

Once one has accepted the foundation laid by the Old Law, he must pass on to the foundation laid for Christianity. Yet, once he has accepted that, he is to move forward, ever growing, ever maturing. There are those who believe verse two of this chapter, like verse one, speaks of Old Testament information and regulations. This writer believes verse two leaves the fundamentals of Judaism (v. 1) and deals with the fundamentals of Christianity which one must also “grow beyond.”

“An occasional refreshing should have been enough. It was high time they quit laying foundation and moved on to the superstructure of Christianity” (Stancliff, p. 95).

“Of the doctrine of baptisms” Coffman lists seven baptisms found in the New Testament.

“(1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:110), (2) the baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11), (3) the baptism of John (Matt. 3:16), (4) the baptism unto Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), (5) the baptism of suffering (Luke 15:30), (6) the baptism for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29), and (7) the baptism of the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The seventh of these is beyond question the ‘one’ baptism of Ephesians 4:5” (p. 117).

There are many who teach that baptism is not essential to one’s salvation, i.e., it is instead an optional matter. How can that be said or believed in the light of this passage?

“Plainly, baptism is made in this verse a part of the fundamental teaching of Christianity; and therefore, it simply cannot be that baptism is in any sense an optional, non-essential, elective, or superficial duty; but it is a genuine obligation” (Coffman, p. 118).

The use of the plural of “baptism” has caused much disagreement on this text. This writer believes that the correct understanding of it

is in the following sense. The instruction in this passage concerns the difference between the **“one baptism”** of Ephesians 4:5 and any other baptism which one might come up with (Jewish washing, pagan washing, et cetera). One of the fundamental teachings of Christianity is the uniqueness of Christian baptism, which would necessitate an understanding that all other “baptisms” are not the same and do not do the same thing for an individual that the burial in water does. Christian baptism is a burial in water of a penitent believer and his resurrection from such allows him to begin a new life.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4, emphasis mine, RK).

“laying on of hands” When one looks at fundamentals of Christianity, this listing may seem out of place. Since the Holy Spirit put it here it cannot be out of place. The New Testament gives three instances for the **“laying on of hands:”** (1) Imparting spiritual gifts (Acts 8:7); (2) healing the sick (Acts 28:8); and (3) ordaining men in the work of the ministry (Acts 6:6; 3:3; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22). This **“laying on of hands”** is probably dealing with the impartation of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12). During the **infancy** of the church there was the need for a miraculous age which would pass away when that which was perfect was come (GOD’s Word, 1 Corinthians 13). When this age passed, it signaled the fact that the entire revelation of GOD had been delivered to man. There was no further need for miraculous gifts to prove the authority of the messenger. An understanding of this limitation was essential. Again, the message is, **“Move forward; do not stay in the infancy stage; move on to maturity.”**

“resurrection of the dead” The Sadducees denied a future resurrection (Matthew 22:23), and so did most of the heathen world (Acts 17:32). Today, this writer is afraid that many have adopted the idea that when one dies, he is like Rover — just dead all over. Many today do not believe there is a life to come; many others speak of an eternal life with a big “IF.” The apostle Paul spoke about this.

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:19-20).

If there is no resurrection from the dead, why suffer as a Christian? Why suffer the criticism of the world if there is not a resurrection which leads to another life? One should listen to Jesus rather than men on this subject.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

All of the teachings of Christ were founded squarely on the

resurrection of the dead. If there is no future life, then all of the teachings of Christ are worthless. Thanks be to GOD that they are **NOT WORTHLESS!**

The subject of “eternal judgment” is sadly neglected today, and one wonders why this is the case. **Is it the realization that this subject is about something that involves permanent agony for some?** If one is not trying to the best of his ability to live the way GOD wants him to, he probably would not want to hear about an eternal judgment. That seems to be the condition of many. The truth is that whether one wants to hear it or not — the doctrine of eternal judgment is real — it is going to happen. GOD has set forth His laws and they must be obeyed.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In Matthew 21:31-46, a general description of the judgment day is given. Notice how that passage ended.

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Heb. 6:3 “And this will we do, if GOD permit.”

“And this will we do, if GOD permit.” (ASV)

“And this we will do if GOD permits.” (NKJV)

“We shall do this if GOD permit.” (ESV)

“And this we will do” **What was the writer going to do, i.e., what did he intend to do?** He was not going to go back and teach them the fundamentals. They had already been taught those things and had accepted them at one point in time. Instead, he was going to lead them forward with teaching that would help them grow to maturity. Teachers always need to challenge their students to achieve an ever higher and higher level through teaching which will expand the student’s knowledge. Students must be challenged to think and think correctly. For the Christian teacher, the goal is to move the student to an ever higher level of spiritual maturity.

Note the last part of this verse: **“if GOD permit.”** Paul recognized his dependency upon GOD’s will. If GOD would permit, he would teach them what they needed to know. It might have been GOD’s will for him to perform some other task at this time, and that another finish the work he had started. He was going to leave it all in the hands of GOD. Paul did not make up his mind about matters without taking GOD’s will into consideration. On at least one occasion in his life, Paul had wanted to teach the people of Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit him to do so (Acts 16:7). Christians must reverently consider the will of GOD in all things and leave everything up to him. GOD knows what is best. Thus, our prayer should constantly be, **“Thy will be done.”**

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:15).

“For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit” (1 Corinthians 16:7).

“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if GOD will. And he sailed from Ephesus” (Acts 18:21).

“Without GOD’s blessing, the cultivation of the ground does not succeed” (JFB, p. 542).

GOD’s will must be sought for it is He who gives the increase. When His will is not followed there is no increase, and more harm than good will come from those efforts.

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Heb. 6:4-6 “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

“For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” (ASV)

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of GOD and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of GOD, and put Him to an open shame.” (NKJV)

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of GOD and the powers of the age to come; And then have fallen by the wayside, to restore them again to repentance. They have crucified to themselves the Son of GOD, and put Him to an open shame.” (ESV)

It should be remembered that these were not disadvantaged Christians. The context shows that they did not lack in opportunity — **they were simply lazy Christians**. Notice the blessings the text says they received. They had at one time fully committed themselves to obedient faith in Christ.

Why was it impossible to renew some of these Christian’s faith? **Because they carried their apostasy too far to return to GOD.** Is it possible to apostatize and then return to GOD? The answer is **yes**, as illustrated by Simon Peter’s denial of the Lord, repenting, and return in service to the Lord. Another illustration would be that of Simon the sorcerers response when Peter told him to repent. There

would be no reason to tell him to return by repenting and praying if he could not. The current text revolves around one who totally rejects the salvation which he had at one time received. The one in this text has departed so far that he would literally crucify Christ again if he could. His rejection of Christ would cause him to mock the Lord and all which He provided for mankind.

The problem with the person Paul talked about (and his inability to return to the fold) is within his own heart. Such a person sears his conscience so that he has no more feeling when GOD's Word is used to try to prick his heart. One can so harden his heart that a pleading Savior cannot find entrance into it (Consider Pharaoh.). The individual mentioned in this passage is not the one who occasionally sins but rather the one who has totally turned his back on Christ and the blessings which come through Him. The problem does not rest with GOD's ability to forgive but rather man's rebellious heart.

“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

In the physical world, a splinter in the leg potentially involves death through infection. If the splinter is removed and the wound cared for, the leg will heal and death will be avoided. In the spiritual world, sin in one's life potentially involves eternal death. If the sin is removed through cleansing in the blood of Christ, there is life.

“once enlightened” There can be no doubt that those whom the Hebrew writer addressed were Christians. All of the verbs used are in the past tense. These people had been **“enlightened,”** had **“tasted the heavenly gift,”** were **“made partakers of the Holy Spirit,”** et cetera. Many try in various ways to deny that this passage deals with Christians, so that they can try to uphold their various Calvinistic doctrines. These passages are too plain to be denied, and the attempts to negate their message obviously contradict the Scriptures. **If one cannot fall — then why did GOD tell man about the angels sinning and being cast out of Heaven, with the implied warning that man could lose his eternal reward (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4)? If one cannot fall, then why did GOD tell man about an apostle who fell (Acts 1:15ff)? Judas was truly an apostle who was commissioned like the rest to cast out evil spirits, raise the dead, and preach to the people (Matthew 10:17). Peter said “he was numbered with us” (Acts 1:17). In Acts 1:25, the Scriptures say that he “by transgression fell.” One cannot fall from a level which he never attained!**

Regarding Simon the sorcerer, the Calvinists point to him and say that he never really was a Christian (saved). But Jesus said, **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”** (Mark 16:16). **Did Simon believe? Was Simon baptized?**

“Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” (Acts 8:13, emphasis mine, RK).

Was Simon saved? According to Jesus he was! Let GOD be true

and the lies of men be exposed for what they are.

For one's consideration and for the purpose of showing the ways by which Calvinist try to get around the clear teaching of the Bible, Jerry Falwell's remarks are quoted on this passage below. These are the common views of the Calvinist no matter what stripe they may be of, other than the first point Falwell mentions.

*"Some propose that these verses refer to the saved who have fallen from salvation. Others teach that these are professing Christians, though unsaved, who apostatize and so are forever unable to be brought to repentance and true saving faith. A third group proposes that these are indeed saved people who do not fall from salvation, but who fall into sin — they backslide. This view understands the statement of something being **impossible** as the impossibility of starting over again in the Christian life. These have fallen in regard to Christian growth, or concerning the perfection spoken of in 6:1. They have become castaways from God's service. The fourth popular view states that these verses refer to a hypothetical situation whereby the author stresses what would happen to a saved person if he could fall away"* (Falwell, p. 682).

After stating these thoughts, Falwell went on the state:

"The author (The context showed he was not speaking of himself, but rather the apostle Paul, RK) *does not believe one can lose his salvation, or that his readers had (6:9); but he speaks to demonstrate the folly some might have in imagining that they can turn back to Judaism without suffering loss"* (IBID).

Does the reader have any trouble seeing the convoluted contradiction in Falwell's thoughts?

Heb. 6:7-8 "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh off upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from GOD: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

"For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from GOD: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned." (ASV)

"For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from GOD; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned." (NKJV)

"For the earth which drinks the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful for those who cultivate it, receives a blessing from GOD. But that which bears thorns and thistles is rejected and is near a curse, and the end is to be burned." (ESV)

What is said in verses 1-6 regarding the destruction of those who turn away from the blessings of GOD is illustrated by an agricultural illustration.

In Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23, Jesus put forth the parable of the sower, which showed that there are different soils which will produce different results. The seed sown (the word of GOD, Luke 8:11) is the same. It was the soil (the heart of man) which made the difference. The same type of illustration is being used in this text, an agricultural example involving soil (heart) to teach a spiritual lesson. GOD's rich blessings flow from Heaven to man like rain upon the fields. The blessings are for all of mankind, just as the rain falls on the rocky mountains and the fertile fields.

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45).

The field that produces useful “herbs” is deserving of more attention, and it will receive it, but the field which produces only thorns and briars is only fit for destruction (burning).

These Hebrews had received the blessings of GOD. They had been given the prophecies of the Old Law to guide them so as to be able to recognize the Messiah when He came. They had received the fundamental teachings of the Gospel which Christ had delivered. They were in danger of leaving these blessings, leaving the salvation which had been granted unto them in order to return to an inferior law which could not save them.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

The apostle warned them that if they turned back to that law they were no different than the field of thorns which was only fit for destruction. The wise farmer rejects soil which will not produce. GOD will reject the heart which will not accept his blessings and produce His desired crop. These Hebrews had placed themselves close to (“nigh unto”), this point of total rejection.

“in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away” (Mark 11:20-21).

The severity of the warning is seen in the fate of the field which is destroyed by fire. This represents the eternal destruction awaiting those who turn away from the salvation they have in Christ. Those who remain in apostasy have nothing to look forward to except certain destruction on the judgment day (Heb. 10:26-27).

Heb. 6:9 “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that

accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” (ASV)

“But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.” (NKJV)

“But beloved, even though we speak like this, we are sure of better things of you, even things having to do with salvation.” (ESV)

Paul was sure that they understood what he had taught them in this lesson. He then let them know that they had not yet reached the point of rejection and that he believed they would make the adjustments in their lives which were necessary to maintain GOD’s blessings.

“He makes the kindly remark that he is counting on a better showing from them than was indicated by the thorny ground”
(Zerr, p. 219).

He exhorted them to think about what was being said, so that they would not be counted as failures in the end.

The apostle had sternly rebuked them for their sin. After doing so, he then offered words of encouragement. He basically told them that they could be what GOD expected them to be. He also encouraged them by saying he believed they would make the adjustments necessary in their lives to do right. This should be used as a pattern for all Christians when it becomes necessary to rebuke one because of sin. Rebuke and then encourage those who have been rebuked to overcome their sin. Challenge them to overcome sin.

Notice that the apostles did not lower the standard because people were not living up to the one GOD gave. Many in our society (instead of trying to lift people to a higher moral standard) believe the best way to get results is to lower the standard. The Bible has never taught such a doctrine, but it always encourages man to seek the perfect standard and pull himself ever upward through obedience to that higher standard.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Heb. 6:10 “For GOD is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

“for GOD is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister.” (ASV)

“For GOD is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (NKJV)

“For GOD is not unjust to forget your work, and the love you have shown his name by having ministered, and in still ministering to the saints.” (ESV)

From where did the hope expressed in verse nine (that they would do better) spring? It was founded upon their acts of unselfishness which had been expressed toward the saints and were continuing to be expressed. The original word for “ministered” indicates personal

involvement. They waited upon the saints, and they did not wait for someone else to do what was needed. The apostle was therefore confident that they would change their course, because he believed that those who would render such service toward GOD in one area would cease from a course which would lead them to destruction when they became aware of their shortcomings.

The ministering that they had done was continuing to be done. Their love had not totally diminished; they simply had not grown the way they should have, and this lack of growth threatened their well-being. They had neglected their study while continuing to be involved in other good works which GOD recognized on their behalf (He credited their good works to them.).

“The warning from this is pointed indeed. Wonderful as works of benevolence assuredly are, pure benevolence, however lavish, is no substitute for faithful adherence to the word and doctrine of Christ” (Coffman, p. 129).

What does this passage say today to those who desire a “social gospel” and neglect their study of GOD’s word? Some people generally do not feel a need for strict adherence to GOD’s laws.

A principle should be observed from this passage which is clearly taught in so many places in the Scriptures. When anyone does something to or for a Christian, it is as if they have directly committed that action to the Lord — whether it be good or bad.

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” (Matthew 25:34-40).

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:1-5).

Let the warning clearly be sounded as it is seen in this text — GOD does not forget. But what is it that He does not forget? The works of

love that His people continue to show in their faithfulness to Him. It is not one's works of righteousness alone which will save him. These brethren were in danger of losing their souls through disobedience because they had neglected to study and understand GOD's law. Such a one will be lost because what he does not know cannot be applied to his life. GOD dictates that one must know and apply His law so that his work will indeed be righteous in every area.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Without GOD's word directing one's steps there is no merit to his works.

Heb. 6:11-12 "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

"And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (ASV)

"And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (NKJV)

"But we earnestly desire that each one of you show the same diligence to have the full assurance of hope until the end. So that you will not be lazy, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (ESV)

"desire" — ἐπιθυμέω — *"to set the heart upon, i.e., long for (rightfully or otherwise): covet, desire, would fain lust (after)"* (Strong); *"to keep the tumos turned upon a thing, hence to have a desire for, long for"* (Thayer); *"to have the affections directed toward something, to lust, desire, long after"* (Zodhiates); *"A verb found in eighteen places meaning 'desire,' denoting both a legitimate longing as well as a perverse 'lusting' or 'coveting'"* (Renn, p. 270); *"Desire, long for with gen. of the thing desired"* (Bauer, p. 293); *"An intense longing"* (Lightfoot, p. 128).

"diligence" — σπουδή — *"'speed,' i.e., (by implication) despatch eagerness, earnestness: diligence, forwardness, haste"* (Strong); *"Haste, with haste, earnestness, diligence: univ. earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything"* (Thayer); *"Speed, haste, earnestness, diligence, zeal"* (Zodhiates); *"Haste, speed, in haste, in a hurry"* (Bauer, p. 763).

"followers" — μιμητής — *"an imitator: follower"* (Strong); *"An imitator"* (Thayer); *"An imitator, follower"* (Zodhiates); *"Imitator"*

(Bauer, p. 522); *"This is 'mimic' in a good sense"* (Robertson, p. 568); *"Follower or imitator"* (Renn, p. 398).

"Every one of you" shows the individual concern which the apostle had for his readers. Each one was important and each one had the power to choose a course of life which led to eternity with or without GOD. His **"desire"** was that each one show diligence in his efforts to attain the final reward. This diligence was to be manifested in every area of a Christian's life, not only in ministering to the saints.

"Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:6-8).

To become (and especially remain) a true disciple, one must diligently seek and "hold fast" to that which GOD has given through His Son and the Spirit. Hope is only attained through diligent study **and** obedience.

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4).

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).

In order to accomplish the goal set before one by GOD, he cannot be slothful (lazy). Previously, the apostle told them that they were **"dull of hearing"** (5:11). They had demonstrated lethargy and laziness in their neglect of GOD's word, and so Paul exhorted each individual to mature and be diligent unto the end. They had a hope built upon abundant evidence; what a pity it would be if they ignored it. Notice the appeal to the individual. As a whole, one might point to the works of a congregation with commendation. But what the whole group accomplishes will not get the individual to Heaven. Each individual is responsible for whether or not he is diligently pursuing the Lord's will. Each individual is thus charged with following (imitating, mimicking) those who have manifested faithful obedience in every area and who, therefore, have gained an eternal reward (Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Elijah, et cetera; see chapter eleven).

"Followers" or **"imitators"** of whom? In this writer's opinion, this can only mean the great men and women of faith of all the ages and probably in particular those mentioned in chapter eleven.

"Be ye followers (imitators, RK) of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1, emphasis mine, RK).

Ultimately, this must refer to the example left by Christ Himself (Hebrews 13:2-3). Observe the diligence which Christ demonstrated in His life as He steadily and patiently marched toward the cross in order to fulfill His mission to gain salvation for fallen man. That is the same diligence His servants are to develop, as they march toward their heavenly goal.

"Be ye therefore followers (imitators, RK) of GOD, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

A Christian's faith (belief) and patience will cause him to inherit the

promises which GOD has offered. **What promises?** The heavenly possessions which GOD has laid up for His faithful people.

“In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:12-14).

The writer had shown them how GOD's people in time past had forfeited the reward, warned them that they were in danger of doing the same thing, and exhorted them to go on unto perfection.

“the end” **What is the end in view here?** It must refer to one's being diligently faithful to the end of his life. Active faith must continue until one draws his last breath in order to receive the **“crown of life”** (victory crown based on whether one has diligently striven for it).

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

“And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).

The apostle discussed the men of old (**“followers of them”**) and their great faith and patience in greater detail in Hebrews chapter eleven.

“The promises' include all the wonderful things that God will do for his redeemed; and what will he do? He will forgive men's sins when they accept and obey him, bless them providentially in the present life, make all things work together for good on their behalf, provide the earnest of the Holy Spirit within them as a pledge of eternal life, comfort them in sorrows, strengthen them in weakness, illuminate them in darkness, make the way of escape in their temptations, attend them through the Dark Valley, raise them from the rottenness of the grave itself, cover their sins in judgment, and administer to them an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom” (Coffman, p. 131).

The **“promises”** are obtained by those who continue in **“faith”** (belief) and **“endurance”** (patience). The reward goes to those who

patiently maintain their belief and obedient lifestyle in GOD's service.

Heb. 6:13-15 "For when GOD made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

"For when GOD made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise." (ASV)

"For when GOD made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." (NKJV)

"For when GOD made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself; Saying, I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you. And so by patiently enduring he attained the promises" (ESV)

Abraham is held up as one who patiently endured and then received the promises which GOD made to him.

"In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

In this section, Paul shows that the promises of GOD are sure and unbreakable. Therefore these promises provide a solid foundation of hope for every Christian.

GOD's **"swearing"** is speaking of what would be called a "judicial oath." On man's part, it is the promise that what is said is the truth or that which is promised will be attempted with all of one's effort. In the case of GOD, all that He says is truth, and all that He promises will be done.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

If GOD tells man that He will do something, it will be done. Nothing will/can stop the completion of that which GOD promises. One would do well to remember that this was done by GOD in an accommodative sense for man's benefit.

"Such a concept is introduced here for the sake of emphasizing the absolute eternal and irrevocable nature of GOD's judgments" (Coffman, p. 78).

This was not something that GOD had to do to establish His word, but He did it to increase the assurance that man felt toward Him.

The event spoken of in this text took place in Genesis 22:16ff, where it is recorded:

"By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son"

What an example this was of patient endurance in order to receive the promises GOD made to man. GOD had promised Abraham long before Genesis twenty-two. For many years Abraham looked for the fulfillment of that promise, never giving up his faith that GOD would fulfill it. There was a time when his faith in this birth would be fulfilled through Sarah wavered, but nevertheless he maintained his faith in

GOD's promises. The son born to Abraham and Hagar was not the son of promise. Abraham knew this, yet as the years swiftly passed, it looked increasingly impossible from a human standpoint for GOD's promise to be fulfilled because of their barrenness. Yet, Abraham waited patiently for GOD. Then the son of promise was born, began to grow, became an adult, and then GOD told Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering. Abraham's faith did not waver; he set out to obey GOD's command. Because of his great faith, Abraham patiently endured and obtained the promise of GOD! There was no distrust in Abraham, and he by faith saw the beginning of the fulfillment of GOD's promises to build a people in the birth of Isaac.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and He saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

Note what Paul said about Abraham's faith.

"He staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to Him for righteousness" (Romans 4:20-22).

It should be noted in passing, that it was Abraham's **faith** which caused him to act in obedience and thus receive this confirmation by GOD. His **faith** caused him to patiently endure.

The apostle reminded these Hebrews (and those of every generation) that it was the same GOD Abraham served which would keep His promises to them.

"In hope of eternal life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

Heb. 6:16 **"for men indeed do swear by the greater, and an end of all controversy to them for confirmation is the oath,"**

"For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation." (ASV)

"For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute." (NKJV)

"For people swear by the greater, and with them the oath as a confirmation is the end of every dispute." (ESV)

"confirmation" — βεβαίωσις — **"stabiliment: confirmation"** (Strong); **"Confirmation: to produce confidence"** (Thayer); **"Ratification, confirmation, corroboration"** (Zodhiates); **"The process of supporting a statement by evidence"** (Webster 1828); **"A legal term meaning 'confirmation...guaranteeing, furnishing security'"** (Bauer, p. 138); **"The words for confirmation (eis bebaiosin) have a legal connotation, in the secular papyri it was the expression used for more than 700 years to 'legally guarantee' a sale"** (Lightfoot, p. 130).

"swear" — ὀμνύω — **"to swear, i.e., take (or declare on) oath: swear"** (Strong); **"to swear; to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath...in swearing to call a person or thing as witnesses, to**

invoke, swear by (Thayer); *“to take or make an oath”* (Zodhiates).

“strife” — ἀντιλογία — *“dispute, disobedience: contradiction, gainsaying, strife”* (Strong); *“gainsaying, contradiction...opposition”* (Thayer); *“Contradiction. Controversy, question, strife. Spoken of a controversy before a judge”* (Zodhiates); *“Contradiction, dispute”* (Bauer, p. 75).

The common practice of mankind has been to guarantee promises or legal actions with some kind of oath. An oath is an appeal, usually to someone (or something) greater than the one taking the oath, by which the witness confirms the truthfulness of whatever is said. Such oath taking implies that if a false statement is made, the one in whose name the oath was taken will contradict or punish the one who took the oath.

For Christians this should be something totally unnecessary, for the Christian must realize that he is a subject of a court which is above any possible earthly court which might exist. There are those who believe it is all right to take an oath on GOD's name because He did so. They reason that it is the abuse of an oath which the Bible condemns and not all oaths. If this writer was to err, he would rather err on the side of caution in this matter.

“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is GOD's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:34-47, emphasis mine, RK).

The meaning of the word **“swear”** in the text can be seen above. It is the same word used in the above quotation from Matthew.

“above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12, emphasis mine, RK).

“In the ordinary course of human affairs, an oath has two results — one positive and one negative. Negatively, it stops all contradiction of disputing. Positively, it establishes or confirms that which it attests” (Reese, p. 98).

Having said that one should err on the side of caution; this writer must say that it is not necessarily wrong to take an oath. It should be remembered that the Lord dealt with people who trivialized oaths and often did not intend on keeping the oaths they made. If one cannot make any kind of oath (promise) then he could not sign a contract of purchase of any kind (house, car, etc.). Yet, caution should be exercised with the view of making as few oaths as possible in one's life, realizing that an oath (promise) is a binding contract which demands fulfillment on the part of the one making the oath. It should be that our word is our guarantee.

Heb. 6:17-18 “Wherein GOD, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”

“Wherein GOD, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.” (ASV)

“Thus GOD, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.” (NKJV)

“Since GOD desired to show clearly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His purpose, interposed with an oath; So that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie, we may have a strong encouragement to seize upon the hope that is before us.” (ESV)

“*immutability*” — ἀμετάθετος — “*unchangeable or (neuter as abstract) unchangeability*” (Strong); “*Not transposed, not to be transferred; fixed, unalterable*” (Thayer); “*Immovable, immutable, sure, unchangeable*” (Zodhiates); “*Unchangeable*” (Bauer, p. 45).

Who are these “heirs of promise?” They are those who, like Abraham, remain faithful to the promises of GOD throughout their lives. In this text though, it particularly points to the Jews who were listening to Peter. They were not confined to those who lived under the patriarchal age, but include those of the Mosaic as well as the Christian ages.

“Even as Abraham believed GOD, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that GOD would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Galatians 3:6-9).

What are the two “immutable” (unalterable) things which give Christians “strong consolation?” The answer to this question is implied by the phrase “in which it was impossible for GOD to lie.” One cannot lie to someone without using words to express that lie. GOD made “promises” (with words) and gave an “oath” (with words); therefore, the two immutable things are GOD’s promise and His oath.

“GOD is not a man, that He should lie” (Numbers 23:19).

“In hope of eternal life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2).

“If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny

Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

"If either His promise or His oath proved false, the very laws of His being would be violated and He would cease to be God"

(Lightfoot, p. 131).

The image used by the apostle is one of an anchor holding a ship fast in a stormy sea (v. 19). It is like one who struggles through adversity, gaining the safety which is desired. One is to struggle through the waves of troubles to lay hold of, and hang on to, the only thing which provides safety to man.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble"

(Job 14:1).

The **"troubles"** (Trials, temptations, heartaches, etc.) are going to come upon man like the never ending waves of the sea — one after another.

The image being portrayed here has also been likened to the man who fled from the avenger of blood and laid hold of the horns of the altar or to one who fled to a city of refuge (Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 4:42; 19:5; Joshua 20:9). Consider this picture, where one has inadvertently killed someone. He fled to the city of refuge where he found safety. But to maintain that safety, he had to stay within the confines of the city. Comparing that illustration to mankind's situation, is the man who has recognized his sin fleeing for safety to Christ and His church. There he finds safety from the "avenger of blood" (Satan) who would take his soul if possible (1 Peter 5:8). Just like the one who fled to the city of refuge, he must remain in the safety of that city (remain faithful in the church). If he leaves that safe environment, he will be subject once again to losing his soul to Satan.

What is the hope to which one should lay hold, realizing that to let go of it is to perish?

"For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel"

(Colossians 1:5).

The hope of the final reward in Heaven is portrayed in GOD's word — the Gospel (v. 23).

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

The hope portrayed in this passage is the final realization of a Christians anticipations — eternity with GOD. The refuge sought can only be **in Christ**.

Heb. 6:19 "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;"

"which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil;" (ASV)

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil," (NKJV)

"This hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and enters that which is within the veil," (ESV)

“sure” — ἀσφαλής — *“secure: certain, safe, sure”* (Strong); *“Firm (that can be relied on confided in)”* (Thayer); *“Firm, that which cannot be thrown down as used in the Classical Greek. Firm, sure, steady, immoveable”* (Zodhiates); *“Firm. Safe, secure”* (Bauer, p. 119); *“Certain, secure, safe”* (Earle, p. 423).

“steadfast” — βέβαιος — *“stable: firm of force, steadfast, sure”* (Strong); *“Stable, fast, firm”* (Thayer); *“Figuratively that upon which one may build, rely, or trust. In the NT not used of persons but objects, that which does not fail or waver, immoveable, and on which one may rely”* (Zodhiates); *“Firm, permanent”* (Bauer, p. 138); *“Firm, secure”* (Earle, p. 423).

“within” — ἐσώτερος — *“interior: inner, within”* (Strong); *“inner. The inner space which is behind the veil, the shine, the Holy of Holies, said of heaven by a figure drawn from earthly temple”* (Thayer); *“inner, interior”* (Zodhiates).

The Christian’s hope is portrayed as an anchor for his soul. If there is no eternal abode, or if there is an eternal abode, yet, Christ does not abide there, then there is no hope and Christians are indeed the most miserable creatures who have ever existed.

“Hope is represented on coins by an anchor” (JFB, p. 545).

The picture drawn for one is of a mighty ship which represents the soul of man. This ship is on a sea where the wind and waves can rise up in such a fashion as to move the ship to disaster. These winds and waves represent the trials and adversities which Christians face in life. **How is the ship protected from these elements?** When the winds and waves rise, the anchor is thrown out into the sea. There are important things to consider about this anchor.

“The arm on the anchor must be strong enough not to bend or twist out of shape or break...The other important thing about anchors is their placement” (Reese, p. 101).

If a strong anchor is cast into the sand, the ship will continue to be pushed toward disaster, like the house built on the sand (Matthew 7:26-27). The anchor must hook into something (rock, etc.) which will not move — then the ship is safe. The Christian’s anchor (Christ) is firmly anchored in Heaven; He is immoveable. The chain of the anchor holds the ship (soul) firmly in place so that the ship is not destroyed. **Can the chain between the anchor be broken?** Yes, but only through the Christian’s indifference and disobedience. The anchor will always be in place, and if one maintains his obedient faith, then the time will come (eternity) when the soul will be drawn (pulled) to its permanent abode. **How does one know that the chain between his soul and Heaven will not be broken from Heaven’s standpoint?** Because it is a double chain. The chains of GOD’s promise and His oath (v. 18). The faithful, obedient child of GOD is being shown the security he has in Christ.

“The aptness of the figure of an anchor appears in the fact that an anchor is not doing any good at all as long as it is visible. It is only when it disappears in the deep beneath that it

stabilizes and protects the ship; how beautiful is the imagery of Christ's also being out of sight from Christians, having disappeared into the unseen world, but who is nevertheless connected with Christians by the strong and effective cable of his love, just as the anchor, though unseen, is connected to the ship by a mighty chain" (Coffman, p. 134).

The Christian's hope is a little different from a physical anchor in one respect. A Christian's anchor is permanent; nothing can remove it! A Christian may break the chain through his own indifference or rebellion, but the anchor will always be there. In the physical realm, the anchor may slip, it may rust away — but not in the spiritual anchor.

"within the veil" — This can be nothing more than a reference to the Tabernacle/Temple and the partition between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In the Tabernacle, any priest could enter the Holy Place (type of the church). Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place (type of Heaven), and then only once a year when the atonement sacrifice was offered. At the present time, only Christ can enter the Most Holy Place (Heaven). Christ has entered that **"veil,"** offering the atonement for man's sins (His blood) once for all time. Thus Christians are assured that they may also enter after the judgment. The Christian's hope is behind the veil — in Heaven.

One other note which needs to be made concerns the rendering of the NKJV here. It *translates* the word **"within"** with the word **"Presence."** As seen in the Lexicons, the original word here is used of a place and not a person. The place to which one's anchor is attached is Heaven.

Heb. 6:20 **"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."**

"whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (ASV)

"where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (NKJV)

"Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, being a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (ESV)

"forerunner" — πρόδρομος — *"a runner ahead, i.e., scout: forerunner"* (Strong); *"One who comes in advance to a place with the rest are to follow"* (Thayer); *"The one running before. In the NT used as a masculine subst., a forerunner, precursor, spoken of Jesus as entering before His followers into the celestial sanctuary"* (Zodhiates); *"Old word used for a spy, scout"* (Robertson, p. 379); *"In the Greek classics it is often used to denote scouts of calvary or infantry sent before an army"* (Milligan, p. 236).

Christ, the forerunner of the Christian army, is in Heaven waiting for the time when His faithful soldiers join Him. He has shown them the way. As long as one's hope rests upon Him, there is no danger. He has done His part; it remains for Christians to follow His lead.

They must patiently fight the battles and trust Him until the end.

In chapter five (verse eleven), the apostle broke away from the theme he was discussing to reprove and admonish his readers. He will now return to the theme of the original discourse — the priesthood of Christ and Melchizedec.

“It marks a difference between Christ passing within the veil, and everything that had preceded it in the ritual of the Hebrew people. Aaron had entered within the veil once a year, but never as a forerunner. He entered as the representative of the those who left outside; but they were always left outside. No one followed Aaron when he entered within the veil to stand in the presence of the ark and the mercy seat. When Jesus passed within the veil, he entered as a forerunner, which at once suggested that the way was open for others to follow him” (Morgan, p. 76).

Hebrews Chapter Seven

Heb. 7:1-2 “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high GOD, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that

also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;”

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of GOD Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace;” (ASV)

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High GOD, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, meaning king of peace,” (NKJV)

“For this Melchizedec was king of Salem and priest of the most high GOD. He met Abraham when he returned from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. Abraham also gave him a tenth part of all. Melchizedec (first being interpreted king of righteousness, and after that also, King of Salem, which means, King of Peace),” (ESV)

“The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).

The historical record of this meeting between Melchizedec and Abraham is recorded in Genesis chapter fourteen.

The titles used of Melchizedec are illustrious ones which portray him as an ethical ruler. He was one who was concerned with what was right and wrong. Having this concern, he chose to do that which was right and was thus highly respected for his conduct.

It is interesting that he is first described as a man of “righteousness” and then as a man of “peace.” Peace cannot be obtained until one first attains righteousness. No one may have peace with GOD who does not do what is right in the sight of GOD. Any peace which is attempted (in any relationship) apart from GOD and from obedience to His law is simply pseudo-peace.

Consider: A husband and wife, where one is a conscientious Christian and the other is a non-Christian. No matter how morally good the non-Christian may be, there will still be a conflict between them. There will always be a partial wall between them that robs them of the total peace they could have. They are denied the full measure of peace which is so desirable in a marriage.

The problem exists in that many (both religious and non-religious), want peace without obedience to the terms GOD has set in order for them to have peace. Unfortunately, many choose to have a semblance of peace with their fellow man rather than the real thing. Many marriage partners, for the sake of peace at home, compromise and sacrifice their peace with GOD to have a pseudo-peace with their mate. How many businessmen have sacrificed peace with GOD for a pseudo-peace with their unethical business partners? How many have sacrificed peace with GOD to have pseudo-peace with their everyday companions and fellow workers?

Melchizedec is called a “priest of the most high GOD.”

“The Hebrew word kohen, rendered priest, occurs about seven hundred times in the Old Testament, and like the Greek hiereus, is always used to denote one who offers sacrifice and ministers in other sacred things” (Milligan, p. 247).

Melchizedec was a faithful priest of GOD before the Aaronic priesthood was put in place by GOD. One of the important things to be understood is that GOD was working among those who were not of the family of Abraham. This shows the love GOD has always had for all men, providing them with the knowledge they needed to be pleasing to Him. In every dispensation of time, GOD has always provided a way for ALL men to come to Him. The racial barriers which were erected to separate mankind from GOD were built by men — not by GOD!

Abraham gave Melchizedec a tenth of the spoils which he had taken from the four kings of the north after slaughtering them in battle.

“This act of devotion on the part of Abraham, as well as the vow of Jacob (Gen. 28:22), clearly indicates that the custom of paying tithes to GOD for the maintenance of his worship and the support of true religion, was of very remote antiquity” (Milligan, p. 248).

The giving of tithes to GOD’s priests did not originate with Moses and the Aaronic priesthood. More will be said about giving of tithes in verses four and six.

The definition of the words **“Melchizedec”** and **“Salem”** are given. The significance of this will be noted later. One should remind himself that there is significance in **“righteousness”** coming before **“peace.”**

Melchizedec is also seen as both a priest and a king, thus the type for the anti-type (Christ), who united the two functions or offices. Consider also that under the Mosaic covenant, one could not hold both the office of king and priest. The priests were to come only from the tribe of Levi, and after David no man could be king without coming from the tribe of Judah.

As one studies this chapter, three major points should be noted. (1) Verses one through three state that Melchisedec was a type of Christ. (2) Verses four through ten show the superiority of Melchizedec over Abraham and the priests of the Mosaic order (Levites). (3) Verses eleven through twenty-eight show the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over that of the Levites.

Heb. 7:3 “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of GOD; abideth a priest continually.”

“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of GOD), abideth a priest continually.” (ASV)

“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of GOD, remains a priest continually.” (NKJV)

“Was without father and mother; without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, being made like the Son of GOD, he abides a priest continually.” (ESV)

“without descent” — ἀγενεαλόγητος — *“unregistered as to birth: without descent”* (Strong); *“Of whose descent there is no account, without genealogy”* (Thayer); *“Without a genealogy or*

pedigree” (Zodhiates); *“Without genealogy”* (Bauer, p. 8); *“A rare adjective only in Hebrews 7:3, denoting Melchizedec as a man ‘without descent,’ or without a record of mother or father”* (Renn, p. 267).

“made like” — ἀφομοιῶ — *“to assimilate closely: made like”* (Strong); *“to cause a model to pass off into an image or shape like it, to express itself in it; to copy; to produce a fac-simile: to be made like, render similar”* (Thayer); *“to make very much like”* (Zodhiates); *“make like or similar...in past tenses be like, resemble”* (Bauer, p. 127); *“to produce a facsimile or copy”* (Robertson, p. 381).

As one studies this passage, it is important to understand that this passage looks back in time **only** to what is written in the Scriptures. Thus, there is no record of Melchizedec having a father or mother; there is no record of his descending from a lineage of priests nor of anyone from his family following him in that office; there is no record of his birth or death. The Holy Spirit purposely caused these things about Melchisedec to be omitted so that he would be the type of the anti-type — Christ.

“without father, without mother” This term was not used to signify that Melchisedec never had any parents, that he was a miraculous being. Instead, it was used by the Jews and Greeks to denote someone whose genealogy could not be traced (See definitions above.).

“The Greeks and Romans were wont to apply the epithets ‘without father’ and ‘without mother’ (1) to their gods; (2) to orphans, and (3) to persons of unknown or obscure parentage...so also the Jews were accustomed to use these terms of persons, the names of whose parents were not given in the Holy Scriptures or in their genealogies” (Milligan, p. 249).

“without descent” The footnote in many Bibles which says this phrase means *“without pedigree”* is an accurate definition of the KJV’s usage. The Scriptures do not tell one when he was born nor when he died. This does not mean that he was not born or that he did not die. It simply means that those events were not recorded. Further, the Scriptures thus portray him as having no predecessor or successor to his priestly office or kingship. This is another contrast which the author was determined the readers should grasp. The Levitical priesthood was often change because of death, and under the law only those from the tribe of Levi could serve as a priest. Thus, genealogical records were meticulously kept, and if one could not prove that he came from the priestly lineage, then he could not hold the office (Nehemiah 7:63-64). Melchisedec was not of the family of Abraham, much less the family of Levi which did not exist at that time; yet, he was a priest. Jesus Christ was not of the family of Levi, yet He is the Christian’s great High Priest. It seems obvious that they were alike in that GOD Made them priests outside of the ordinary priestly lineage which He gave through Moses.

“abideth a priest continually” This portrays Melchisedec’s priesthood as being never ending according to the record. Christ’s

priesthood is also never ending; it will never be interrupted by changes of succession as was the Levitical priesthood.

Heb. 7:4 “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.”

“Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils.” (ASV)

“Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.” (NKJV)

“Behold how great this person was to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.” (ESV)

“consider” — θεωρέω — “to be a spectator of, i.e., discern or intensively (acknowledge): behold, consider, look on, perceive, see” (Strong); “*To be a spectator, look at, behold*” (Thayer); “*to gaze, to look with interest and for a purpose, usually indicating the careful observation of details*” (Zodhiates); “*Be a spectator, look at, observe, perceive, see*” (Bauer, p. 360).

“tenth” — δεκάτη — “a tenth, i.e., as a percentage or **tithe**” (Strong); “*the tenth part of anything, a tithe*” (Thayer); “*a tenth part*” (Zodhiates).

“spoils” — ἀκροθίνιον — “to top of the heap, i.e., (by implication) best of the booty: spoils” (Strong); “*a heap; extremity, (topmost part of a heap), generally the first fruits, whether of crops or of spoils*” (Thayer); “*the top of the heap, the best of choice parts, the first fruits of the field, of booty*” (Zodhiates); “*First fruits, usually the best part of the booty, which is reserved for divinity*” (Bauer, p. 34); “*literally ‘top + a heap,’ the top of the pile*” (Robertson, p. 56).

Why is so much effort exerted by the Spirit to prove the greatness of Melchisedec? Because through showing the greatness of Melchisedec, He showed the exceeding superiority of Christ. Once the superiority of Melchisedec’s priesthood was established over the Levitical priesthood, then it automatically followed that Christ’s priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood.

How did the apostle prove the superiority of Melchisedec? By comparing Melchisedec to Abraham. Abraham has long been considered a great person of the Old Testament, for it was to Abraham that GOD made the promise of a blessing to all the world through his seed. The Jews of Paul’s day considered Abraham as **THE** patriarch. At the time Abraham and Melchisedec met, Abraham had returned from the victory over the kings of the north.

When Abraham met Melchisedec, he gave him a “tenth” (tithe) of the “spoils.” As seen in the definitions above, this tenth consisted of the very best of all the goods captured from their enemies. This would be the normal portion given as an offering to GOD through His priests (GOD has always demanded one’s best.). One of the interesting things noticed by this writer is the idea of giving the tenth

part. It seems obvious that the need of supporting GOD's priests had already been declared by GOD to man, even though the exact words of this instruction is not shown. Later one sees Jacob promising the gift of a tenth to GOD (Genesis 28:22). What this did was establish the fact that a tenth was to be given in the patriarchal age. Then, in the Mosaic age, a tenth was also given. **What about the Christian dispensation?** No percentage is specified in the Christian era for one's giving. Yet, it is hard to imagine that one would give less who has been blessed more abundantly than were those of previous ages.

Who pays tithes to another? Those who are lesser in rank pay tithes to those higher in rank. This shows that Abraham recognized his position as being lower than GOD's Priest — Melchisedec.

"Melchisedec possessed great dignity that even the illustrious Abraham, the head of the Hebrew nation and the greatest of great men, gave him a tenth part of the spoils" (Lightfoot, p. 139).

Heb. 7:5-6 "And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises."

"And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises." (ASV)

"And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises." (NKJV)

"And those of the descendants of Levi who accept the priesthood are authorized by the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is of their own brethren; although they are descended from Abraham. But the one whose genealogy was not traced from them received a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one having the promises." (ESV)

The practice of tithing for the up-keep of GOD's servants, Temple, et cetera, can be seen more clearly in Numbers 18:21-24, 26-28. There one notices that the people gave the tithe to the Levites as a whole, and in turn the priests took a tithe from that portion.

The whole point is that again the greatness of Melchisedec is seen. His priestly superiority is seen in that the father of those who became the priests under the Mosaic system offered tithes to Melchisedec. If the father's position was lower than another's, surely the position of his children was lower as well.

"Melchisedec bore no such relationship to Abraham; he was not of the same kindred, nor had he, so far as we know, any legal right to tax Abraham for his services. And yet, so great was his personal and official dignity, that even Abraham, the

honored father of the whole stock of Israel, including the priesthood as well as the people, paid tithes to him and received his blessing” (Milligan, p. 251).

The superiority of Melchisedec is further demonstrated by His blessing Abraham. It was through Abraham that GOD promised so many blessings, including the blessing (Christ) to the whole world (Genesis 12:3; 13:14-18; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8). Yet, Abraham received a blessing from a priest who was “**made like unto the Son of GOD**” (v. 3).

Heb. 7:7 “And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.”

“But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better.” (ASV)

“Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.” (NKJV)

“Without any controversy the lesser is blessed by the greater” (ESV)

“contradiction” — ἀντιλογία — *“dispute, disobedience: contradiction, gainsaying strife”* (Strong); *“Gainsaying, contradiction...opposition”* (Thayer); *“Controversy, question, strife...reproach”* (Zodhiates); *“contradiction, dispute”* (Bauer, p. 75); *“Dispute”* (Robertson, p. 569); *“A noun found four times with the various senses of ‘opposition,’ ‘rebellion,’ and ‘strife,’ or ‘dispute’”* (Renn, p. 289).

A powerful conclusion is now stated for what has previously been said, The Jews understood the greatness of Abraham. Yet, Abraham was inferior to Melchisedec as indicated by (1) Abraham’s giving the tenth to him that belonged to GOD, (2) by Melchisedec giving the blessing to Abraham, (3) by Abraham’s acceptance of the blessing. A good example of this principle is seen in Genesis chapter twenty-seven, where Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. It is easy to see that Jacob did not have the ability to bless Isaac because he was inferior to Isaac.

“One who has the capacity to give what another needs is greater than the one who is in need” (Stancliff, p. 113).

Heb. 7:8 “And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.”

“And here men that die receive tithes; but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.” (ASV)

“Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.” (NKJV)

“And here people who die receive the tenths, but there one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives.” (ESV)

The priesthood of Melchisedec takes precedence over the Levitical one, because death had no hold over it. Melchisedec was an historical person and as such did suffer death. But as far as the Scriptures are concerned, there is no record of it. Thus, as the type, he portrays the anti-type. Christ indeed lives as High Priest, a High

Priest who shall never die. One should remind himself that Christ could not have served as a High Priest (or any true priest) on earth (v. 14). He became High Priest **after** He arose from the grave and returned to Heaven. Melchizedec's priesthood began with himself and ended with himself. Christ's priesthood began with Himself and ends with Himself at the judgment day.

Unlike Levitical priests who died, Christ never dies; He never relinquishes His priesthood. Under the Levitical priesthood, the death of the High Priest occasioned another priest being appointed to take his place. This point makes Christ's priesthood superior to any and all who served under the Levitical system. Once there was no longer an heir (because of change and destruction of the records of the Temple — 70 A.D.) To end the Levitical system, then the entire system must of necessity no longer exist. Today no one can be a priest, much less the High Priest, under the Mosaic system because there is no way for him to trace his ancestry back to Aaron. Further, the abolition of the Levitical system necessitated the end of the law which governed that priesthood.

Heb. 7:9-10 "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."

"And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him."
(ASV)

"Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him." (NKJV)

"And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who receives the tenth, paid a tenth; For he was still in the loins of the father when Melchizedec met him"
(ESV)

In verse nine the expression was used, "And as I may now say."
"It is used precisely as it is with us when we say 'so to speak,' of 'if I may be allowed the expression.' It is employed when what is said is not strictly and literally true, but when it amounts to the same thing, or when about the same idea is conveyed"
(Barnes, p. 158).

"so to speak' says it is not strictly and literally true, but at the same time is not an unfounded exaggeration either" (Reese, p. 109).

The subtle argument is that since Levi (the great grandson of Abraham) paid tithes through his father Abraham to Melchizedec, then Melchizedec's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood. This is true because the tithes paid by Abraham showed his inferiority to this priest of the Most High GOD. The generations who followed Abraham would never rise to a superior relationship to the one who blessed Abraham. Thus, the authority and superiority of Melchizedec's position is affirmed.

Inherent in the argument is the position and authority of the

Levites over the rest of the children of Israel. It would then follow that since the Levitical priests were inferior to Melchizedec, and Melchizedec was but a type of Christ (inferior to the real thing), then the Levitical priesthood was inferior to the priesthood of Christ. This was true because it would not have mattered if Levi had been alive when Abraham met Melchizedec. Levi would have had to pay tithes to his superior — Melchizedec.

“The Jews valued themselves on the dignity and honor of the Levitical priesthood, and it was important to show them, on their own principles, and according to their own sacred writings, that the great ancestor of all the Levitical community had himself acknowledged his inferiority to one who was declared also in their writings (Psalm 110) to be like the Messiah, or who was of the same ‘order’” (Barnes, p. 159).

“When Edward VIII of England renounced his throne, the abdication not only bound him but any posterity that he may have had afterward. The fact, therefore, of Abraham’s taking a tithe of the chief spoils and paying them to Melchizedec, priest of God Most High, clearly made any priesthood developed through the descendants of Abraham to be subordinate to that of Melchizedec” (Coffman, p. 148).

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

“Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron?” (ASV)

“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?” (NKJV)

“Now if perfection were being reached through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the law), what further need was there for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedec, and not be appointed after the order of Aaron?” (ESV)

“perfection” — τελείωσις — *“completion...perfection, performance”* (Strong); *“A completing, perfecting; a fulfilment, accomplishment...consummation, perfection”* (Thayer); *“The act of completion, successful effort or fulfilment. Also the state or attainment of perfection”* (Zodhiates); *“perfection”* (Bauer, p. 810); *“A completing; finality of function; completeness of operation and effect”* (Littrell, p. 304).

“another” — ἕτερος — *“other or different”* (Strong); *“The other, another, other...to quality; another, i.e., one not of the same nature, form, class, kind; different”* (Thayer); *“Other but*

different, another...other, another, some other, equivalent to allos, another, but with a stronger expression of difference” (Zodhiates); *“Another, different”* (Bauer, p. 315); *“of another kind...since the Levitical priesthood brought nothing to completion, not merely another priest was needed, but another priest of a different kind”* (Wuest, p. 132).

The Jews were accustomed to thinking of the system under which they lived as being perfect, absolutely complete and needing no other. They had failed to consider passages such as Psalm 110:4, which showed that there was another dispensation to come which **was** the complete and perfect law. (David made this prophecy well after “the law” had been established.) If completion could be accomplished under the law of Moses and the priesthood it represented, then David would not have told the people that a new priesthood would be established. It should be remembered that David prophesied (Psalm 110) that Messiah would be both priest and king. Messiah was to come from a tribe which had no right to usurp the office of priest, therefore a change of priesthood and a change of the law was necessary for Messiah to come. If the Levitical priesthood could offer sacrifices which took away the sins of man, then the offering of Christ’s blood would not have been needed and would therefore be worthless.

“if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Galatians 3:21).

“another priest should rise” This new priest was to be a priest of another kind, i.e., not from the Levitical family. He was also to be another kind of a different nature, being eternal. The Levitical priesthood was to be removed and another installed in its place which was after the order of Melchizedec — superior and never-ending.

Melchizedec was a priest long before Aaron was born, yet, the Levitical priesthood was inferior to his. One of the interesting points made in this verse is the order of the priesthood and the law. This passage shows that Aaron was appointed to the priesthood, and then later the law was given. Notice that the law was received under the Levitical priesthood.

“It was on the basis of the priestly function that God wanted performed that he issued the Law of Sinai, giving the regulations and directions for how the priesthood should function” (Reese, p. 110).

Since the law depended on the priesthood for its existence, if the priesthood changed to a superior one, then the law by necessity needed to be changed to a superior one as well. Notice the interesting comments by Coffman on this passage

“Whatever the intent of this particular verse there can be no doubt that the entire system of Moses fell with the change of the priesthood, even the Decalogue...Revolting as the thought seems to many, the Decalogue itself has been taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, and superceded by the teachings of Christ. In fact, a major part of the Sermon on the Mount is given over to an analysis of specific commands in the

Decalogue, setting them aside as originally given, and reaffirming them in a much more comprehensive frame of reference” (p. 151).

Heb. 7:12 “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.”

“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” (ASV)

“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.” (NKJV)

“For the change of the priesthood makes necessary a change of law also” (ESV)

“being changed” — μετατίθημι — “to transfer, i.e., transport (by implication) exchange (reflexively) change sides” (Strong); “To transfer...to change...to transfer one’s self or suffer one’s self to be transferred” (Thayer); “to transpose, put in another place and hence to transport, transfer, translate” (Zodhiates); “Change (the position of)” (Bauer, p. 513); “to transpose, to put one thing in the place of another” (Wuest, p. 132).

The whole point of Paul’s argument is that “the law” must be changed when the priesthood changed. **Why?** Because the entire law rested upon the priestly system. Anyone knows that if the foundation of a building is destroyed, the entire building will collapse around it. Not only is this true in the physical realm, it is also true of any philosophy. Destroy the foundation, and everything which is built upon it crumbles.

Many have tried to change the impact of “the law,” as it refers to the entire Mosaic system. Instead, they want these words (“the law”) to represent what they call the “ceremonial law” or “the priestly law.” This is illogical, for how can you separate the moral laws from the “priestly laws” which regulate them? Further, if the moral law was removed, what need would there be for a priestly law?

The Bible predicted and constantly affirmed that there would be a change of the law. Consider the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, as he predicted the future to the Israelites of his day.

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” (Emphasis mine, RK)

Moses not only served Israel as a guide through the wilderness; he served as their **lawgiver** (John 1:17). In stating that another prophet would replace him and that they were to listen to Him, Moses showed that this Prophet would give them a new and superior law. GOD affirmed the same thing in Matthew 17:1-5).

“after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for

us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.”

Peter wanted to put Moses and Elijah on equal footing with Jesus. When GOD spoke, He showed mankind that His Son was a superior lawgiver and prophet. In essence GOD said, “*Do not listen to Moses and Elijah, LISTEN TO MY SON for your instruction (law).*” Thus, the law which Christ gave replaced the law given by Moses!

One should also consider the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, and the quotation of that passage in the text of Hebrews 8:6ff; which states that the law had changed. Consider also Hebrews 10:1-18.

Heb. 7:13-14 “For He of Whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.”

“For He of Whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests.” (ASV)

“For He of Whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.” (NKJV)

“For the One of Whom these things are said is of another tribe, of which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is very clear that our Lord descended from Judah; a tribe of which Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood.” (ESV)

“evident” — πρόδηλος — “plain before all men, i.e., obvious” (Strong); “Openly evident, known to all, manifest” (Thayer); “In the NT used emphatically meaning manifest before all, well-known, conspicuous” (Zodhiates); “Clear, evident, known to all” (Bauer, p. 704); “Obvious, evident” (Renn, p. 345); “Openly, manifest to all” (Robertson, p. 384).

The “He” of this verse is Christ. This new “High Priest” came from a different tribe. GOD had dictated that all priests were to come from one tribe — Levi (Numbers 16:1 - 18:7). Christ did not come from this tribe, as is evidenced by the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. His becoming a High Priest thus signified a tremendous change of both the priesthood and the laws which governed it.

Judah had absolutely had nothing to do with participation in the altar services; it was the wrong tribe under the Mosaic order. If someone from any other tribe tried to officiate as a priest under that system, he would be severely punished. This is evident by noticing two cases in the Old Testament. First, there is the example of King Saul, who did not wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice before going into battle. As punishment, GOD refused to allow a dynasty to

develop from Saul's lineage (1 Samuel 13). Second, there is the example of King Uzziah, who tried to usurp the priestly office by offering incense on the altar. For his transgression, GOD caused him to have leprosy from which he eventually died (2 Chronicles 26).

"If Jesus serves as high priest, two things stand out clearly: (1) He cannot as high priest wait at Jewish altars, for this service was limited to those who were in the tribe of Levi, and therefore, (2) the whole principle of priesthood, and the law itself, necessarily must be changed" (Lightfoot, p. 143).

One of the interesting points which should be noticed about this passage is the lesson regarding the silence of the Scriptures. It should be noted that GOD said the priests were to be descendants of Aaron who was of the tribe of Levi. GOD did not say anything else regarding this matter. He did not have to list each tribe with a "thou shalt not" before it or add that a Gentile could not serve as a priest. Human beings understand this principle and use it every day in their dealings with one another. One tells his child to go to the store and buy a loaf of wheat bread. He does not then have to list all the other kinds of bread he does not want the child to purchase. Further, he does not have to tell the child that a substitute is unacceptable. GOD did not say, "Thou shalt not appoint a priest from any other tribe than Levi;" He did not have to. When GOD specifies anything, it automatically excludes anything else, no matter what subject is under consideration. The "law of exclusion" is universally understood by man to be true.

Heb. 7:15 "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,"

"And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest," (ASV)

"And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest" (NKJV)

"And it is clear still that if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedec," (ESV)

"far more" — περισσότερον — *"in a more superabundant way: more abundantly, a great deal, far more"* (Strong); *"Over and above, more than is necessary, super added"* (Thayer); *"More abundant, greater, Used adv., more abundantly, far more"* (Zodhiates); *"Exceeding the usual number or size...going beyond what is necessary"* (Bauer, p. 651).

"evident" — κατάδηλος — *"far more evident"* (Strong); *"Thoroughly clear, plain, evident"* (Thayer); *"Quite manifest, exceedingly evident"* (Zodhiates); *"very clear, quite plain"* (Bauer, p. 410).

The evidence for the change of the entire system is the fact that Jesus' priesthood is of an entirely different order, like Melchizedec's priesthood. To emphasize the difference in the two systems, it is shown that Jesus is of the *"same rank with one who did not even*

belong to that tribe” (Barnes, p. 161). That is, His office was “*after the similitude of Melchizedec.*” Remember, the tribe of Levi paid tithes to the priesthood of Melchizedec (vv. 9-10).

Heb. 7:16 “*Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.*”

“Who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life:” (ASV)

“Who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.” (NKJV)

“That He is not a priest according to the Law’s fleshly requirements; but according to the power of a life that cannot be destroyed” (ESV)

“*law*” — νόμος — “*law, generally (regulation), specifically (of Moses, or figuratively (a principle))*” (Strong); “*Anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, usage, law...of the Mosaic law*” (Thayer); “*Etymologically something parceled out, allotted, what one has in use and possession; hence, usage, custom. In the NT, law*” (Zodhiates); “*A norm, a standard*” (Bauer, p. 134).

“*carnal*” — σαρκικός — “*pertaining to flesh, i.e., bodily temporal of animal, unregenerate: carnal, fleshly*” (Strong); “*Fleshly, carnal...pertaining to the flesh, i.e., to the body*” (Thayer); “*Fleshly, carnal, pertaining to the flesh or body. Found only in the epistles*” (Zodhiates).

“*endless*” — ἀκατάλυτος — “*permanent: endless*” (Strong); “*In dissoluble; not subject to destruction*” (Thayer); “*Indissoluble, an adj. used of the life of Christ and translated as ‘endless life.’ The word, however, has nothing to do with time but with the indissoluble character of life*” (Zodhiates); “*Not to loose nor to dissolve or disunite*” (Wuest, p. 134).

Under the Law, one became a priest because of physical requirements. He was born of a certain family, and physical characteristics could qualify or disqualify him from serving in that office. This system was based primarily on inheritance. The contrast with the Lord is that His appointment was based not on physical requirements, but solely upon spiritual perfection.

“No matter what the man’s position or the degree of his willingness to serve, he became a priest solely because of who his father and mother were. On the other hand, the new priesthood owes its existence to one in whom resides intrinsically ‘the power of a life that cannot be destroyed’” (Lightfoot, p.142).

Since the priests of the Mosaic system could not live forever, it is obvious that the High Priest who has always lived is superior to them. It is interesting to note that the priest’s “reign” of that era ended in death and ultimately in the death of the One who replaced them and the system under which they lived. As already been shown, the office

of Levitical priests was designed to end; the priesthood of Christ is to last throughout the remainder of the Christian dispensation. It was not designed to be replaced at some future date as was the Mosaic.

These passages show a contrast between the physical and the spiritual, a law which could not give life and one through Christ which can.

Heb. 7:17 “For He testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

“for it is witnessed of Him, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek.” (ASV)

“For He testifies: You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” (NKJV)

“For He bears witness, You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedec.” (ESV)

“For He” This is the testimony of GOD in this matter. Paul again draws the reader’s mind back to Psalm 110:4. **When was Christ made a priest after the order of Melchizedec?** It may be at the splitting of the veil of the Temple, which signified not only the opening of access to GOD by all of GOD’s servants, but also the end of the Mosaic dispensation. It may have been at His resurrection, but most probably when He returned to His Father shortly before meeting with His disciples after His resurrection. The exact time is simply not known.

Melchizedec’s reign as priest is recorded for man without any reference as to the day it began, neither is there any record of when it ended. This allowed the type of an eternal reign to be portrayed. The Scriptures simply tell one that Christ is our Great High Priest. It does not tell when His reign began, nor can one see the end of it, which will come when Christ turns all things over to His Father in the last day.

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Corinthians 15:24-25).

Heb. 7:18 “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

“For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness” (ASV)

“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,” (NKJV)

“Now the commandment going before is annulled because it was weak and ineffective” (ESV)

“disannulling” — ἀθέτησις — “*cancellation*” (Strong); “*abolition*” (Thayer); “*cancellation, disannulling*” (Zodhiates); “*the word ‘disannulling’ is the translation of athetesis, the fundamental*

idea of which is the doing away of something established” (Wuest, p. 135); *“The term set aside (athetesis), as Deissman has shown, was a technical term used in legal documents; the verb means ‘to declare as void,’ ‘to invalidate,’ ‘to abrogate,’ or ‘disannul’”* (Lightfoot, p. 143).

“weakness” — ἀσθενής — *“strengthless, more feeble, impotent, sick, without strength, weak”* (Strong); *“weak, infirm, feeble”* (Thayer); *“Without strength, powerless”* (Zodhiates); *“weak, powerless”* (Bauer, p. 115); *“weak, sick, often overlapping in meaning...to the law, which is described in Heb. 7:18 as ‘weak,’ or lacking in effective power to deal absolutely with sin”* (Renn, p. 1033).

“unprofitableness” — ἀνωφέλεις — *“useless or inutility: unprofitable”* (Strong); *“unprofitable, useless”* (Thayer); *“unprofitable, serving no purpose, and hence injurious, noxious”* (Zodhiates); *“useless, harmful”* (Bauer, p. 77); *“not useful”* (Robertson, p. 570); *“worthless, unprofitable, useless”* (Renn, p. 1067).

The law given before the one which Christ gave was canceled, and a greater, better law was established in its place. **Why was that former law placed to the side for another?** Because the old law was weak and unprofitable. The Mosaic law was designed to be replaced by a better and complete law which had a perfect sacrifice and thus never needed to be replaced. The new law could not be improved upon.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:23-24).

How was the Mosaic law weak? The writer has already pointed out its weakness because of its physical aspect. Further, it could not bring one to that perfect communion with GOD which can only be attained in Christ. The author pointed this out in the next verse by the use of the phrase **“a better hope.”** Perfect communion with GOD begins with GOD’s part in the sacrifice of the perfect **“Lamb of GOD.”** That communion is then completed when man obeys and remains faithful to the commands of GOD.

It should be emphasized that **“the law”** was designed by GOD for the purpose of introducing Christ and His law to mankind. Refer back to the above passage in Galatians 3:23-24. The law of Moses was designed to be a schoolmaster. The schoolmaster was not a teacher. This is a Greek word which refers to the servant (The Law of Moses) who brought the master’s child to the teacher for instruction. In today’s time, a schoolmaster is thought of primarily as the teacher, but not so in the time in which Galatians was written. The Law of Moses pointed to (brought one to) the teacher — Jesus the Christ. The old law was purposely designed to be **“weak and unprofitable”** from the standpoint that it could not save, and thus it pointed to the One who could.

One might also notice that the Mosaic law is referred to here as **“the commandment going before.”** This is the same idea as the schoolmaster in Galatians 3:23-24. The old law prepared the way and pointed to the new lawgiver and His perfect law.

Heb. 7:19 “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto GOD.”

“(for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto GOD.” (ASV)

“for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to GOD.” (NKJV)

“For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, through which we draw near to GOD.” (ESV)

“perfect” — τελειόω — *“to complete, i.e., (literally) accomplish or (figuratively) consummate”* (Strong); *“to make perfect or complete...to bring to the end (goal) proposed”* (Thayer); *“to complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal”* (Zodhiates); *“complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish...bring to an end, bring to its goal or to accomplish”* (Bauer, p. 809); *“a verb with the primary meaning ‘to make perfect,’ with the senses of ‘complete,’ ‘accomplish,’ ‘fulfill’”* (Renn, p. 723); *“to carry through completely, to make complete, to finish, bring to an end”* (Wuest, p. 136); *“to execute fully, to reach the end of, place in a position of finality; to advance a person to completeness and/or perfection”* (Littrell, p. 308).

“The law” (Mosaic) was not given to complete GOD’s plan, but Christ and the law He brought was given to complete the goal that GOD was to give man in order that he might gain salvation.

“It (the law, RK) was an introductory arrangement, and had not the power to bring anything to perfection. Had it been sufficient to meet and accomplish God’s benevolent designs in reference to the justification, sanctification and redemption of mankind, then indeed, as our author very clearly intimates in the eleventh verse of this chapter, and also in Galatians 3:21, perfection would have been by the law” (Milligan, p. 263).

“for the bringing in of a better hope did” This phrase is *“used by Josephus for the introduction of a new wife in place of the repudiated one”* (Robertson, p. 385). While the Old Law could not bring man to completeness, it did point to a better law which would. Paul showed that the better law, (with its better sacrifice) had come into existence through Christ; thus, man now has the better hope. It is through this better hope that man can **“draw nigh unto GOD.”**

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having an High Priest over the house of GOD; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies

washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)" (Hebrews 10:19-23).

Something is hinted at here which is plainly stated elsewhere, i.e., the priesthood of all believers under the Christian dispensation. Under the Old Law, there was a certain class of people who were priests, and no one else could hold this office. This whole discussion has been about the priesthood (High Priesthood) of Christ in comparison with the Levitical priesthood and about how much better the priesthood of Christ is. But notice the "we" — "we draw nigh unto GOD."

"That which was before (in a figure) the privilege of a class has become (in reality) the privilege of all" (Westcott, p. 189).

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5 — also consider 1 Peter 2:9; The Revelation 1:6; 5:10, emphasis mine, RK).

"We," each individual, has access to GOD through Christ, the Great High Priest. This hope is a reality through contact with the cleansing blood which He shed for all men who will take advantage of it.

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

He offered the atoning sacrifice to His Father which provides man the ability to draw nigh unto GOD.

Heb. 7:20 "And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:"

"And inasmuch as it is not without the taking of an oath" (ASV)

"And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath" (NKJV)

"In as much as it was not without an oath" (ESV)

Milligan quotes Macknight here and this author believes that the force of Macknight's comments are exactly right.

"The reasoning of the Apostle, says Dr. Macknight, 'is founded on the conceded fact that God never interposed his oath except to show the certainty and immutability of the thing sworn. Thus he swore to Abraham, Gen. 22:16-18, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and to the rebellious Israelites, that they should never enter into his rest, Deut. 1:34-35; and to Moses, that he should not go into Canaan, Deut. 4:21; and to David, that his seed should endure forever, and his throne unto all generations, Psalm 89:4. Therefore, since Christ was made a priest, not without an oath that he should be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec, that circumstances showed God's purpose never to change or abolish his priesthood; and never to change or abolish the covenant which was established on his priesthood. Whereas the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses being

established without an oath, were thereby declared to be changeable at God's pleasure” (Milligan, p. 264).

The apostle emphasized that there was nothing better than the priesthood of Christ. Therefore, nothing can ever replace that priesthood.

Heb. 7:21 *“(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)”*

“(for they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but He with an oath by Him that saith of Him, The Lord sware and will not repent Himself, Thou art a priest for ever);” (ASV)

“(for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: The LORD has sworn And will not relent, You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek),” (NKJV)

“(For indeed men were made priests without an oath, but He was appointed with an oath by the One Who said to Him, The Lord swore and will not change His mind, You are a priest forever).” (ESV)

For the details of the Mosaic priest's ordination, one should turn to Exodus chapter twenty-four and Leviticus chapters eight and nine. Neither in these passages, nor anywhere else in the Bible, is it ever stated that GOD made an oath in connection with their ordination. Further, there is no oath with regard to the Law of Moses. But when Christ was made High Priest, it was done with an oath. This is another evidence of the superiority of Christ's priesthood over theirs.

The later portion of this verse is quoted from Psalm 110:4. Of the oath GOD made, it is said that He *“will not repent.”* To repent is to have a change of mind. The oath itself declares that an appointment will be made, whatever it is, just as GOD said it will be done. When GOD seals anything with an oath, it will not be changed! There will be no change of mind regarding the change of priesthood or of the law. The priesthood and law of the Christian age (New Covenant) will never cease until the judgment day.

“When God is said to repent, the meaning is that he simply wills a change; and when it is said that he will not repent, it means that he will never will a change” (Milligan, p. 265).

Heb. 7:22 *“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”*

“by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant.” (ASV)

“by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.” (NKJV)

“So much the more Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.” (ESV)

“surety” — ἔγγυος — “pledged, i.e., a bondsman” (Strong); *“surety”* (Thayer); *“Yielding a pledge”* (Zodhiates); *“under good security, guarantee”* (Bauer, p. 214); *“occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint. It*

properly means, bondsman; one who pledges his name, his property, or his influence that a certain thing shall be done” (Barnes, p. 163); “the state of being sure: as a sure knowledge: CERTAINTY b: confidence in manner or behavior: ASSURANCE 2a: a formal engagement (as a pledge) given for the fulfillment of an undertaking: GUARANTEE b: a basis of confidence or security 3: one who has become legally liable for the debt, default, or failure in duty of another” (Webster).

Jesus Himself is the surety of the New Covenant (testament). He stands as the pledge that all of its promises, blessings and curses will be fulfilled.

He “guarantees the new covenant by his sinless life, his death upon the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven and his work as high priest after the order of Melchisedec” (Sheerer, p. 1000).

Christ guarantees that GOD fulfills His promises.

The word testament (or covenant), stands for an “agreement” or “contract.” As used in the Bible, it stands for an agreement between GOD and man, the terms of said agreement being dictated by GOD. The covenant that Jesus brought is better, which signifies that there must have been another which was not as good, i.e., inferior. This covenant Jesus established embraces all of the New Testament, there can be only one other covenant which it has replaced — the Mosaic. The Mosaic covenant was the one in existence before Christ came with the New Covenant; therefore it was the Mosaic covenant which was done away with, being inferior.

“Why is Jesus’ priesthood better? There was prophecy of His Priesthood (v. 11). He had no carnal descent, but the power of an endless life (v. 16). His Priesthood was made with an oath (vv. 20-21)” (Sheerer, p. 453).

Heb. 7:23-24 “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”

“And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but He, because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood unchangeable.” (ASV)

“Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.” (NKJV)

“Indeed man men became priests because death prevented them from continuing; But this One has an unchangeable priesthood, because He continues forever.” (ESV)

“unchangeable” — ἀπαράβατος — *“not passing away, i.e., untransferable (perpetual): unchangeable” (Strong); “signifying either unviolated, or not to be violated, inviolable: unchangeable and therefore not liable to pass to a successor” (Thayer); “unchangeable” (Zodhiates); “without a successor. Permanent, unchangeable” (Bauer, p. 80); “not + valid or inviolate” (Robertson, p. 570); “not stepping across...thus the*

word describes that which cannot be violated, or that which does not pass over to another” (Wuest, p. 137).

It should be kept in mind that the word “priests” in this context speaks of the High Priests. The Levitical system recognized the necessity of having a High Priest at all times, but its High Priests were mortal. According to Josephus, from Aaron to the fall of the Temple in A.D. 70, there were eighty-three High Priests. Other commentators set the number at eight-one. This necessitated a constant change to a new High Priest in the course of time. In contrast, the priesthood of Christ never changes because He lives forever.

“hath an unchangeable priesthood” The marginal reading in some Bibles has, “...which passeth not from one to another.”

The reasoning of this passage *“is not designed to prove that the priesthood of Christ will be literally eternal — for its necessity may cease when all the redeemed are in heaven — but that it is permanent, and does not pass from hand to hand”* (Barnes, p. 166).

Heb. 7:25 “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

“Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto GOD through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (ASV)

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to GOD through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” (NKJV)

“Therefore He is able to save throughout all time those who come to GOD through Him, because He always lives to make intercession for them.” (ESV)

“intercession” — ἐντυγχάνω — *“to entreat (in favor or against: deal with, make intercession” (Strong); “to go to meet a person, esp, for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication” (Thayer); “to fall in with, light upon, to meet and talk with. In the NT, to come to, to address, apply to...In the sense of to intercede, make intercession for or against someone” (Zodhiates); “meet, turn to, approach, appeal, petition” (Bauer, p. 270); “intercede, make intercession for, petition” (Renn, p. 526); “speaks on intervention rather than merely intercession” (Wuest, p. 138).*

Strong consolation is given to Christians in this verse. Christ (their High Priest) lives forever, always able to interceded for them.

“He never dies but lives forever at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; he is perfect, sinless, and undefiled; and, through his human experience, he is one who can feel, understand, and sympathize with mortals who have fallen through temptation and sin” (Coffman, p. 161).

It is Christ and Christ alone who has the complete power to save, which could not be said about the High Priest of the former dispensation. The power of Jesus’ blood is seen in that it reaches

back to the beginning of time and forward to eternity. His life is never ending; thus, He can save to the “**uttermost.**” But notice who it is that He can save — it is those who “**come unto GOD by Him**” (Emphasis mine, RK). There is no other way to reach GOD, except through Jesus. It cannot be done through Buddha, Mohammed, or any denominational doctrine. This means that one must meet the conditions which the Lord has laid down to reach the Father and the eternal abode of Heaven.

The priest’s job was to intercede on behalf of man for the purpose of attaining acceptance for him from GOD. Now it is Christ, not a man, who intercedes for man. Each Christian is himself a priest (1 Peter 2:5, 9) who can approach the Father through Christ, his High Priest. It is the one sitting at the right hand of GOD, who never dies, who intercedes for His people (Romans 8:34).

“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus can intercede for man because He can sympathize with his trials. He lived on this earth and “**Was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15). The temptations which Jesus withstood had to have been harder than those which any Christian has endured, yet He did not sin. For Him to have sympathy for those enduring temptations does not necessitate that He also experienced sin.

“On the contrary, his sympathy will be fullest who has known the extremist power of temptation because he has conquered. He who yields to temptation has not known its uttermost force” (Westcott, p. 193).

Those who withstand the temptations of the Devil will be those he attacks the hardest. It should be quite obvious to any Bible student that the one the Devil wanted to sin more than any other who has walked upon this earth was the Lord Himself.

In considering the idea of intercession, one realizes that this work is done in Heaven. It ought to be very encouraging to GOD’s people when they understand that the One Who died to give salvation is the very One Who intercedes on their behalf before GOD. Further, the Christian does not have to worry that the only One with the power to intercede before GOD for him will ever cease doing such because of His death. He continues to live forever, interceding for His faithful servants as long as time exists.

Heb. 7:26 “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”

“For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” (ASV)

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;” (NKJV)

It was suitable that we have such a High Priest; holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens;” (ESV)

“became” — πρέπω — *“to tower up (be conspicuous), i.e., to*

be suitable or proper” (Strong); *“which becometh, befitteth”* (Thayer); *“to be eminent, distinguished, to excel”* (Zodhiates); *“Be fitting, be seemly or suitable”* (Bauer, p. 699); *“to be becoming, to be seemly, to be fitting”* (Wuest, p. 138).

“holy” — ὅσιος — *“properly right (by intrinsic or divine character) (Strong); “undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious”* (Thayer); *“holy, righteous, unpolluted with wickedness, right as conformed to God and His laws, thus distinguished from dikaios, righteous, which refers to human laws and duties”* (Zodhiates); *“devout, pious, pleasing to God, holy”* (Bauer, p. 585); *“‘holy’ or morally and religiously pure”* (Renn, p. 495); *“The word is hosios here, not hagios. The former speaks of personal holiness, the latter of holiness as a state of separation to God”* (Wuest, p. 138).

“harmless” — ἄκακος — *“not bad, i.e., innocent or unsuspecting: harmless, simple”* (Strong); *“without guile or fraud, harmless; free from guilt”* (Thayer); *“harmless, void of evil, blameless”* (Zodhiates); *“innocent, guileless”* (Bauer, p. 29); *“without evil, or harm, or guile”* (Renn, p. 467).

“undefiled” — ἀμίαντος — *“unsoiled, i.e., pure: undefiled”* (Strong); *“not defiled, unsoiled; free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed and debased, or its force and vigor impaired”* (Thayer); *“that which has nothing in it that defiles, unpolluted, unstained, unsoiled, undefiled by sin”* (Zodhiates); *“‘undefiled’ in the sense of being ‘free from any impurity or flaw’”* (Renn, p. 999).

Mankind needed a perfectly holy High Priest, which did not exist prior to Christ’s becoming such. All priests before Christ were mortal and thus died; but they also, unlike Christ, had to make sacrifices for their own sins. Christ, by coming to this earth in the clothes of mortality, became perfectly fitted for man’s needs through His perfect life. Thus, GOD made Him the perfect High Priest.

Jesus is perfectly **“holy.”** In order for one to be holy, he must be loyal to the law under which he lives. This loyalty requires more than outward purity; it necessitates inward purity as well. Too many do not believe inward purity is necessary for one to be holy. Like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, some today believe as long as they do not physically violate GOD’s law, then they are all right. What they forget is that GOD judges the actions of the mind to be as important as the outward actions of the body.

“the word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

One simply cannot be holy who does not control both his mind and his body!

Jesus was **“harmless.”** He did no wrong, nor evil, toward anyone.

How different this is from the philosophy some preach today, i.e., in order to be “harmless” like Jesus one can never say or do anything which causes pain to another’s feelings. Jesus hurt a lot of feelings when He called the Pharisees hypocrites (Matthew 23; 15:12-13), chased the money-changers from the Temple (Matthew 21:12ff); et cetera. His apostles no doubt hurt a lot of feelings on the day of Pentecost when they called those Jews murderers, not once, but twice in one sermon (Acts 2).

Jesus was “undefiled.”

“Sin always defiles the soul; but from every such pollution the Lord Jesus was free” (Barnes, p. 167).

Jesus was “unspotted from the world” in which He sojourned.

“Pure religion and undefiled before GOD and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

Jesus refused to allow the sin found in this world to corrupt Him. Christian’s must fight against sin’s corrupting influence so that they will not become spotted by the filth of sin.

Jesus is “separate from sinners.” This writer believes that the idea here is His refusal to partake of the sins of those around Him. (Some believe this refers to His dwelling in Heaven.) He was thus separated from sinful man, though He mingled with men (lived among them). He mingled with man not to become like man, not to allow them to influence Him, but mingled among them in order to influence them to obey GOD, to change them.

Jesus was “made higher than the heavens.”

“Higher refers to rank or importance rather than bodily position; Jesus is more lofty as a High Priest than all the heavens” (Zerr, p. 223).

This phrase simply indicates the absolute supremacy of Christ over all created things, above every limitation of human senses. Above the powers of any angelic being. Thus, He sits at the right hand of GOD.

“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Ephesians 1:21).

“Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9).

Heb. 7:27 *“Who needeth not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.”*

“who needeth not daily, like those High Priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself.” (ASV)

“who does not need daily, as those High Priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.” (NKJV)

“Who does not need to offer sacrifices daily as those High Priests; to offer sacrifices first for his own sins and then for those of the people; because He did this once for all when He offered Himself.” (ESV)

“once” — ἐφάπαξ — *“upon one occasion (only)”* (Strong); *“once, at once...once for all”* (Thayer); *“once and for all”* (Zodhiates); *“at once, at one time...once for all”* (Bauer, p. 330); *“‘once for all’ is the translation of the Greek word hapax, which means ‘once, without need or possibility of repetition.’ It means ‘once, finally’”* (Coffman, p. 164).

Critics attack this verse based on the mention of daily sacrifice for sin. They also attribute ignorance to the writer of Hebrews by saying that he did not know the High Priests’ function of offering sacrifices once a year.

“These critics do not have much ground to stand on, for it can readily be observed that the writer says, ‘once a year’ (9:7), ‘year by year’ (10:1); and that he knows Lev. 16:2 (‘not at all times’), and Lev. 16:29, and also has ‘once a year’ v. 34)” (Lenski, p. 207).

The biggest thing missed by the critics is that the High Priest did not offer for his sins only once a year. He was indeed part of the daily sacrifices, as were the regular priests. He may not have actually killed the sacrifice on a daily basis, but he representatively did so through the priests. Further, any time a priest sinned, he could not offer a sacrifice of any kind until he had made a sacrifice for his own sin(s). The thing being taught is that Jesus was unlike any of the priests, in that they had to make multiple sacrifices for their own sins. Jesus never had to make the first sacrifice for His sins — because He never sinned!

The High Priest was ultimately responsible for all of the sacrifices which were performed by the regular priests. If they did not perform their duties as prescribed by the law, then it was his responsibility to make any necessary corrections. Thus, in essence, the High Priest offered the daily sacrifices or any other sacrifice which was made.

“for this He did once” The term **“once”** is defined by a number of scholars above. In the book of Hebrews, this term is found in the English eleven times in one of two forms.

“once” (6:4; 7:27; 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27).

“once for all” (9:12; 10:10).

It should also be noticed that this term is found in 1 Peter 3:18 and in Jude 3. The significance of this word is that it is once — and only once — offered. Jesus’ blood was once for all time offered for mankind, never to be repeated. The word of GOD was once and for all time delivered to mankind. The blood of Christ will never be shed for man’s sins again, and neither will there be any additions to His word for mankind. Everything needed by man has been delivered to/for him.

A perfect blood sacrifice had to be offered for man’s sins, and it could not be the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 10:4). The perfect sinless Son of GOD offered Himself once and for all time for man’s sins.

Heb. 7:28 **“For the law maketh men High Priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son,**

Who is consecrated for evermore.”

“For the law appointeth men High Priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore.” (ASV)

“For the law appoints as High Priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son Who has been perfected forever.” (NKJV)

“For the Law appoints imperfect men as High Priests, but the word of the oath which came after the Law appoints the Son Who is perfected forever.” (ESV)

“**infirmity**” — ἀσθένεια — *“febleness (of body or mind)...disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness”* (Strong); *“want of strength, weakness, infirmity”* (Thayer); *“weakness, sickness”* (Zodhiates).

“**consecrated**” — τελειόω — *“to complete, i.e., accomplish or consummate”* (Strong); *“to make perfect or complete...to bring to the end (goal) proposed”* (Thayer); *“to complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal”* (Zodhiates); *“complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish”* (Bauer, p. 809); *“a verb with the primary meaning ‘to make perfect,’ with the senses of ‘complete,’ ‘accomplish,’ ‘fulfill’”* (Renn, p. 723).

There are a couple of thoughts which seem to play into the idea of the infirmity of the priests under the Mosaic system. First, they were mortal. They were mere men who suffered and eventually died on this earth like all other mortals. Second, the character of the High Priests was involved. Like other purely human beings, they sometimes showed themselves vulnerable to pride, vanity and all sorts of wickedness.

On the other hand, Christians have a High Priest Who was consecrated with an oath after the law was done away. Christians have a High Priest who is not subject to the infirmities of mere mortals. He rose above the weaknesses of man, refusing to sin, and now sits at the right hand of GOD. Thus, One who is perfectly suited to make intercession for His people — He is the perfect High Priest. His priesthood is based upon personal greatness and not on legal requirements (v. 16). Death cannot touch His office (v. 17). His priesthood provides open access to GOD (v. 19). His priesthood never changes (v. 25). His priesthood is totally pure (v. 26).

“The verse is a recapitulation of what had already been said — that the Levitical priests were weak, mortal, sinful men; but that the Son of God, the glorious high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec is perfected for evermore” (Coffman, p. 165).

Hebrews — Chapter Eight

Heb. 8:1 “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens;”

“Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens,” (ASV)

“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens,” (NKJV)

“Now the main point of what has been said is that we have a High Priest who is at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens;” (ESV)

“sum” — κεφάλαιον — “a principle thing, i.e., main point” (Strong); “the chief or main point, the principle thing” (Thayer);

“A principle thing, a sum” (Zodhiates); “main thing, main point” (Bauer, p. 429); “the word rendered sum (kephalaion) means (1) that which is chief or principle; (2) the sum or result of numbers added together and set down at the head of the column; (3) the crown or that which gives completeness to anything, and (4) the division of a book, as a chapter or section” (Milligan, p. 275).

The writer was not giving a summation of what he had previously stated, but rather he was adding the crowning point of all the argumentation regarding the superiority of Christ’s priesthood to that of the Levitical system.

Here Jesus is pictured as a High Priest Who sits on the right hand of GOD. This is in contrast to the Levitical High Priests, who did not have a chair to sit upon in the Most Holy Place. The High Priest, as well as the priests had no chair in the Tabernacle/Temple complex because his work of offering sacrifices never ended. The symbolism of Christ’s sitting in Heaven after having made His sacrifice shows that His work is completed and is perfect. This also shows the permanent position of Jesus, who has entered the “Most Holy Place” and has sat down at the right hand of GOD. In comparison, the Levitical High Priest could only enter the Most Holy Place once a year — and then only for a brief stay.

“every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of GOD; From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Heb. 8:2 *“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”*

“a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.” (ASV)

“a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” (NKJV)

“A minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not a person.” (ESV)

A **“minister”** is someone who serves in some capacity.

“Lying behind New Testament usage is a long history of the term’s being applied to anyone who served in public office at his own expense or who in any capacity did work for the state. The term later came to denote any type of ministry or service, including those with religious connotations. Here the author uses minister as the equivalent of ‘priest,’ as in Isaiah 61:6” (Lightfoot, p. 154).

The term **“sanctuary”** stands for a holy place. The Tabernacle (and later the Temple) was viewed as a holy place. Today there is no building which man can call holy, for today the High Priest ministers

in a holy place not made by the hands of men. It is possible that the terms “sanctuary” and “Tabernacle” may refer to two different things. The term “sanctuary” may refer to the Most Holy Place, which represented Heaven and speaks of Heaven in this text. The term “Tabernacle” may refer to the Holy Place, which would indicate the church. Another possibility seems to exist in that the “sanctuary” might represent the Most Holy Place, while the term “Tabernacle” could represent the entire “complex” of both Heaven and the church.

The term “true” most obviously would refer to that which is genuine as opposed to that which is fake. Yet, that is not how the term is used in this passage when it refers to the “true Tabernacle.”

“True is alethinós, literally ‘genuine,’ not in this case opposed to that which is false or counterfeit, but in contrast to that which is a mere copy or representation of the heavenly” (Wuest, p. 141).

The Tabernacle of the Old Testament, the Levitical system, was but a type, a shadow of the real thing — that which is heavenly. The Tabernacle erected in the wilderness was a physical building, unlike the Tabernacle in which the Word now serves. His ministry is shown to be superior in that it is accomplished in a better place — Heaven itself. Again, the physical Tabernacle was a type of that better thing which was to come.

Over the years, some have tried to twist this passage to make it declare that there is a Temple in Heaven. This passage will not support their claim, nor does any other passage in the Scriptures.

“These revelations symbolize and typify facts and realities beyond any intellectual grasp” (Coffman, p. 168).

When John saw the New Jerusalem, he specifically stated there was no Temple there.

“I saw no Temple therein: for the Lord GOD Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it” (The Revelation 21:22).

The place where the Word now ministers is shown to be different by the fact that the sanctuary and Tabernacle have not been “pitched” (built, constructed) by man. GOD gave the plans for the Tabernacle of the Jewish system, but human hands constructed it. The place where the Savior ministers was not built with human hands.

Heb. 8:3 “For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.”

“For every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also have somewhat to offer.” (ASV)

“For every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.” (NKJV)

“For every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is necessary that this One have something to offer.” (ESV)

The primary role of the Old Testament High Priest was to offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people to GOD. It should also be

kept in mind that he had to make sacrifices for himself as well. The people brought these sacrifices to the High Priest through the priests. Christians offer up prayers through Christ (their High Priest), and all that one does is to be done in His name (by His authority).

If the work of the High Priest included the offering of sacrifices, then it was essential that Christ also offer a sacrifice. He offered the **perfect** sacrifice, one that could be offered once and could accomplish the purpose of atonement, and which no other could offer.

“Who needeth not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself” (Hebrews 7:27).

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

“For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

“this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of GOD” (Hebrews 10:12).

One of the great differences between the sacrifices of the Old Testament High Priest and our High Priest is that their sacrifices for atonement had to be offered every year for the sacrificers to gain benefit. Whereas the Great High Priest (Christ) offered one atonement sacrifice and it continues to operate.

Heb. 8:4 “For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:”

“Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law;” (ASV)

“For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;” (NKJV)

“Now if He were on earth He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer gifts according the Law;” (ESV)

The old priesthood had been established and regulated by the Mosaic Law. According to that law, only those born into the family of Aaron could serve as priests. The argument was that Christ was not born into a family which had Aaronic lineage. As long as Christ was on the earth, He could not render any priestly service without breaking the law GOD gave them. There may be an exception to this if one considers the sacrifice He made on the cross. The Mosaic Law was still in effect when Jesus walked in this world and He observed it

perfectly.

“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

The present tense of this verse seems to indicate that the Temple was still in existence at the time Hebrews was written. If such be the case, Jews who rejected Christ were still offering sacrifices at the Temple. When the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, all of the genealogical records of the priests were destroyed. Thus, even if a new Temple were ever built, it could not have any priests officiating because they could not prove their right to serve in that capacity.

“And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the Tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the Tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the Tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation. Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” (Numbers 18:1-7).

Heb. 8:5 “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of GOD when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

“who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of GOD when he is about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.” (ASV)

“who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the Tabernacle. For He said, See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” (NKJV)

“Who serve in a type and a shadow of heavenly things, just as GOD warned Moses when he was about to make the Tabernacle; See, He said, that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you in the

mountain.” (ESV)

“**example and shadow**” – patterns and types. They served under a system that was a type or shadow of that which was to come. Thus, Moses was instructed to make all of the Tabernacle according to the pattern which GOD gave him (Exodus 25:40). The earthly Tabernacle was not the original; it was only a shadow of what GOD had designed in Heaven. It was a physical representation of the real thing, which is not physical in nature.

The later portion of this passage is an extremely important statement.

“**See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.**”

GOD instructed Moses to set up the Tabernacle, make the utensils, set in order the priesthood — all according to a specified plan (as it were, the blueprint). If the Old Testament is given for one’s learning (Romans 15:4), and if GOD ordered Moses to set things up only the way He demanded them to be done, then **why do people today think that there is no pattern to follow?** Divine law has always set forth a pattern whereby man may follow the said pattern and have assurance that GOD is pleased with him when he follows that pattern. (Example: Cain and Abel. Cain’s sacrifice was rejected because a pattern had been given, and he did not follow it. Abel’s sacrifice was acceptable because he followed the pattern.) GOD has set up a pattern for worship, the church, marriage, daily life, et cetera. He rightfully expects His people to exactly follow that pattern.

Regarding patterns, one should study Coffman’s excellent notes on this in his commentary of Hebrews.

Heb. 8:6 “**But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.**”

“But now hath He obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.” (ASV)

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” (NKJV)

“But now He has obtained a much superior ministry, and He is the mediator of a much better covenant, which is established upon better promises.” (ESV)

“**excellent**” — διάφορος — “**varying; also surpassing**” (Strong); “**excellent, surpassing**” (Thayer); “**distinct meanings: diverse, various; to be superior, better**” (Zodhiates); “**outstanding, excellent**” (Bauer, p. 190).

“**mediator**” — μεσίτης — “**a go between, i.e., an internunciator or a reconciler: mediator**” (Strong); “**one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant; a**

medium of communication, arbitrator” (Thayer); *“a mediator, one who mediates between two parties”* (Zodhiates); *“mediator, arbitrator, one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal”* (Bauer, p. 506); *“middle man (arbitrator)”* (Robertson, p. 571); *“mediator, intermediary...it is used for someone who stands or walks in the middle, between two persons or two groups; the context indicates the reasons for this intervention”* (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 465).

“established” — νομοθετέω — *“to legislate, i.e., to have enactments enjoined, be sanctioned: establish, receive the law”* (Strong); *“to enact laws; pass. Laws are enacted or prescribed for one, to be legislated for, furnished with laws...to sanction by law, enact”* (Thayer); *“To legislate, to make or give laws, establish as law”* (Zodhiates).

“A more excellent ministry” The ministry of the priests of the Old Law was important in its role of service to the people, but the ministry of Christ is far superior to theirs. This is true because of his superiority over the entire system. **Why is He so superior?** The argument in the immediate text revolves around the superior covenant which He brought to man.

“He is the mediator” A mediator must be impartial, equally distant from both parties, in order to act on behalf of both parties. He must be neutral, seeking to the best of his ability what is right and best for both parties. When one looks back into the Old Testament, he sees that the fathers stood as mediators between GOD and man (Patriarchal dispensation — Job, Abraham, etc.). Later, Moses stood between his brethren and GOD (Galatians 3:19). Still later, it appears that the High Priest was the mediator, especially as this was seen in the day of atonement. Now Christians have a mediator who has partaken of both deity and humanity. He is now the only mediator that mankind has or will ever need with GOD.

“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Under the Law of Moses and the Patriarchy many mediators were needed because of the death of each.

“for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24).

“Through Him God can now be just in pardoning and justifying every obedient penitent believer; and through Him, unworthy as we are, we can now come to God, as children to a father, and obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help (4:16)” (Milligan, p. 289).

“a better covenant” Man now has a better (more useful) covenant between himself and GOD. This covenant was enacted by GOD for man to serve man’s best interest. Christ did not mediate a covenant between two equal parties, which entails gaining compromises from both. He enacted a covenant from a benevolent superior to an oft-rebellious inferior. The mediation of the Lord allows the inferior to approach GOD in order to receive His blessings.

The text will begin to reveal the **“better promises”** through another quotation from the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31ff), showing the fulfillment of all that Jeremiah spoke. The covenant that Christ enacted is better, because it has superior promises when compared to the one it replaced. The Old Covenant promised salvation in prospect of a perfect atoning sacrifice. Under the New Covenant, the perfect sacrifice has been accomplished with the death of the Lamb of GOD. The blood of bulls and goats could not cleanse one of his sins, but the blood of Christ always cleanses the obedient. Under the old, there was the promise of physical Canaan; under the new, spiritual Canaan (Heaven) is the promise.

Heb. 8:7 “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.” (ASV)

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.” (NKJV)

“If that first covenant had been faultless no place would have been sought for a second.” (ESV)

“faultless” — ἄμεμπτος — *“irreproachable: blameless, faultless, unblameable”* (Strong); *“blameless, deserving no censure, free from fault or defect”* (Thayer); *“blameless”* (Zodhiates); *“blameless, faultless”* (Bauer, p. 45); *“adjective found five times meaning ‘blameless,’ or ‘without fault, guilt’”* (Renn, p. 370).

The first thing that one must notice is that two different covenants are under consideration, i.e., **only** two covenants and no others. The argument which Paul lays down is that the New Covenant has superseded the first covenant.

Before going further, the identity of the two covenants is shown. In the next verse, Paul will identify the first covenant by quoting from Jeremiah 31:31-34. The first covenant is the Old Testament. The first covenant includes the entire religious system of the Jews (See comments at Hebrews 7:11-12,). Understanding this, the second covenant is easily recognized as the New Testament.

The Old Covenant (Law of Moses) was not faultless. Note that **“if that first covenant”** had been without fault, there would not have been any need for another. **But one cannot help but ask what was wrong with the first testament?**

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to Whom the promise

was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Romans 7:5).

“The old law in itself was, as Paul states, ‘holy and just and good (Rom. 7:12). But it was weak and useless (7:18), not able to accomplish the purpose of true religion. It could not bring men into permanent fellowship with God” (Lightfoot, p. 158).

When Lightfoot spoke of the Old Testament’s being “useless,” he was probably referring to its relationship with the New Testament. Once the New Covenant superceded the Old, that Old Covenant was no longer binding upon man for his religious practices. The Old Law was given as a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). This shows that justification came through Christ (v. 25) and could not come through the Old Testament.

Morally, the law given by GOD in the First Covenant was indeed without fault. But with regard to salvation, it could not save anyone. Consider the following comments with regard to this thought.

“If the law could give life, righteousness would be by the law (Gal. 3:21). But the law failed (Rom. 3:10; Gal. 2:16). Yet the law served a purpose: it showed sin, and failure. It gave a religious nomenclature and all the religious concepts (Gal. 3:19, 24). So we can apply all this nomenclature and concepts in the New Covenant and realize what God has done” (Moffitt, p. 456).

“The law and the corresponding levitical priesthood could not bring men to the necessary perfection. Its fault was that it could not save (Rom. 3:20), nor could it sanctify (Rom. 7:12-24; 8:2-3). Yet, we must not assume that the Law has failed to do its work; for its work was not to save, but to reveal sin (Rom. 3:19-20), making men aware of their sin and condemnation (Rom. 4:15; Deut. 27:26). The Law manifests sin’s terrible nature (Rom. 7:7-13) and extent (Rom. 5:20), Furthermore, the Law was given to actively restrain sin (Gal. 3:23; 1 Tim. 1:9-10)” (Fallwell, p. 690).

If that first covenant had been designed as the final, perfect plan of GOD for men, it would not have been replaced by Him with another. Nothing can replace a covenant which has no fault, and any attempt to do so would have been to present an inferior covenant. No, GOD replaced the Old Covenant with a vastly superior one. It is that superiority which is being presented in this text.

Wuest translated this verse as follows (note his comments as well).

“For if that first testament had been faultless, in that case there would not have been a constant searching out of a place for a second” (p. 143).

“The words ‘have been sought’ are the translation of zeteo, a verb in the imperfect tense, which tense speaks of progressive action going on in past time. The literal translation is, ‘then no place would have been being sought.’ That is, a search would not have been going on for a new testament if the first testament had been faultless” (IBID).

It should be considered that the “fault” did not lay with GOD’s law — it lay with the Jews who refused to obey it as seen in the next verse.

Heb. 8:8 “For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

“For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;” (ASV)

“Because finding fault with them, He says: Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (NKJV)

“He, finding fault with them, said, Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” (ESV)

The author introduces a quotation from Jeremiah (31:31-34) to show that the law had passed away. Notice the tactic involved here. They loved the Old Law and held it in high esteem. Since the Old Law predicted the New Law, if they rejected the New Law then they also rejected the Old Law. Thus, they would be forced to accept the New Law because of their acceptance of the Old Law.

Jesus and His apostles had said much about the passing of the Law, but this letter was written to Hebrews to fortify their faith in the New Law. With the respect which the Hebrews had for the Old Law it was appropriate to go back to the Old Testament to prove this point — the Old Covenant has passed away at the death of Jesus, and a New Covenant had taken its place. The Jews had *“maintained that the Mosaic system was intended by the Lord to be permanent”* (Zerr, p. 224), so Paul went back to the prophets to show that they had predicted the end of the Law.

Paul attributed the quotation (Jeremiah 31:31-34) to GOD. It was GOD Who declared that there was fault in the Old Law. It was GOD Who found fault with the people because of their stubborn rebellion. There are then two basic reasons given in this context as to why GOD abolished the Old Covenant. (1) He had promised to make a new one which would replace the first. (2) Israel had continuously broken the old one. One might remind himself that it was primarily the moral law which they violated and not the ceremonial (Indeed, they broke the ceremonial law from time to time, but primarily it was the moral aspect of the Law to which they would not hold.).

The New Covenant would be given to **“the house of Israel”** and **“the house of Judah,”** and thus all people would receive its blessings. It should be remembered that the fulfillment of the promise of a New

Covenant was a result of the promise made to Abraham of a blessing which included all men [every nation (Genesis 18:18; 22:18, etc.)]. This promise was renewed many times until it was fulfilled in Christ. At the time Jeremiah wrote, the nation was divided into the ten northern tribes (Israel) and the two southern tribes (Judah). There was another covenant coming which would allow the two nations (and all people) to participate in it — not as nations, but as individuals which made up the new **spiritual nation of Israel**.

One of the major fallacies of modern religion is the failure to understand that with a change of the priesthood, it was demanded that there be a change of the law, which in turn demanded a change in the nation. The nation of Israel would no longer be a physical entity but rather a spiritual nation which transcends all physical borders. One of the most striking statements affirming this was made by the Lord as He stood before Pilate.

“Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice” (John 18:33-37).

Israel of old was a physical kingdom which in essence did not exist when Jesus spoke to Pilate. Jesus clearly told Pilate that the nature of His kingdom was not physical. If it were not a physical kingdom, then there is only one other possibility for it — a spiritual kingdom.

Heb. 8:9 “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; For they continued not in My covenant, And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.” (ASV)

“not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.” (NKJV)

“It will not be like the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by their hand to lead them out of Egypt land; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.” (ESV)

“The word ‘covenant’ is the translation of diatithemi which is made up of tithemi ‘to place’ and dia the root meaning of which

is 'two!' thus, 'to place between two.' Thus, a covenant is something placed between two, an arrangement between two parties" (Wuest, p. 145).

This shows the idea that there is something between GOD and man, something which man must "go through" in order to reach GOD's approval. Without the covenant there can be no access to GOD, for a covenant sets forth the conditions and boundaries for man's forgiveness, reconciliation to Him, and continued fellowship with Him.

This covenant was a new one, not a re-worked Law of Moses. *"The New Covenant was not to be the same thing warmed over" (Lightfoot, p. 158).*

"The New Covenant is not Moses patched up and refurbished; it is a different covenant" (Reese, p. 133).

This is one of the problems with those who still want the "Ten Commandments" to be in effect today. They simply refuse to accept what GOD says about establishing a new law which replaced the old law.

The covenant which was to be replaced is clearly identified as the one given by GOD when He **"took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt."** The only covenant to which this could possibly refer to is that given on Mount Sinai. In passing, notice how GOD took them there — **"by the hand."** This is drawn from the image of a father guiding his child by his hand as they journeyed. That way the child cannot get lost and is gently guided to a safe destination.

GOD set forth His covenant (law), but the Israelites refused to obey it. Jesus stated the same thing in Mark 7:7-9.

"Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of GOD, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of GOD, that ye may keep your own tradition."

When Israel abandoned GOD, then GOD abandoned them. **Why did He abandon them?** Because they refused to follow His law, because they did not believe Him. Time after time He abandoned them — first to the people of Canaan, then to captivity by Assyria and Babylon, and finally destruction by the Roman army — **never to rise again.**

Once Israel had broken the covenant, if another covenant would be enacted, then it would need to be a New Covenant, with a new priesthood, with a new government (kingdom). It is the same idea as that of a person who breaks a contract with the bank on a loan that he has taken out. A new loan must be enacted with a new payment plan. The two payment plans are not the same though there may be some similarities.

"In the AV, the last clause of verse 9 reads, 'Although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord' (Jer. 31:32 AV). We shall leave it to the translators to choose between the renditions, but the thought from the AV is quite significant. It stresses the tender and intimate relationship between God and Israel, as

represented under the metaphor of a husband and his wife; and Paul shows that God honored that spiritual marriage to the extent of dying upon the cross (in the person of His Son) in order to bring about the legal cancellation of the marriage contract with Israel (Rom. 7:1-4). After discussing God's law on marriage Paul said, 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ' (Rom. 7:4). Thus, sinful as Israel was, God did not dissolve his marriage with them except on the basis of his own death in the person of Christ" (Coffman, p. 177).

Heb. 8:10-12 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, And on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a GOD, And they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know Me, From the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more." (ASV)

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (NKJV)

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws into their mind, and write them upon their heart; and I will be their GOD and they will be My people. They will not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and I will remember their sins no more." (ESV)

These three verses show special blessings and improvements of the New Covenant over the old one. As Paul repeatedly showed, these changes had been foretold by the prophets.

Note that the New Covenant was made with the "house of Israel." Previously the text spoke of the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah" (v. 8). After the unification, GOD's people would be known as the "house of Israel." Today, all who are the family of GOD (Christians) are the "house of Israel," not by physical birth as Israel of old, but rather through a spiritual birth. Membership in GOD's family is no longer determined by physical lineage. With that in mind, one should turn his attention to the contrasts (changes) which the Hebrew's writer shows between the Old and New Covenants (laws).

Previously, the Law had been written on tables of stone (the core of the law standing for the whole of the law). Now the law would be written in the heart of each individual, signifying the internal and not the external.

“Written on tables of stone, it would not affect the inner man where the covenant feelings of loyalty and love must arise. To guarantee that allegiance, God would have to set His laws in the minds of His people and inscribe them on their hearts”
(Lightfoot, p. 159).

How would this writing in the heart be accomplished? Would GOD in some miraculous way put the new law (word for word) permanently into one’s heart (mind)? No, this would be accomplished before one became a part of the new “house of Israel,” the church, through study of His new law — the law of Christ.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”
(Galatians 6:2).

In verse eleven, one sees that there is a difference in when and how one comes to know GOD. Under the Old Covenant, one was born into the family of GOD through a physical birth, a particular lineage (Abraham’s). As a baby, he knew nothing of GOD and of necessity had to be taught in order to come to know Him. Under the New Covenant, one must be “born again” to be a part of the covenant people, i.e., be a part of GOD’s family. But one cannot be born again until he comes to know GOD through teaching. Thus, the order is reversed. Old Covenant — born into the family, then come to know GOD. New Covenant — come to know GOD, and then born into the family. Notice the process under the New Covenant as described by Christ Himself.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20).

His first command to His disciples is to teach. Those hearers who are willing to submit themselves to His authority will be baptized in order to have their sins washed away. Then the disciples should continue teaching those who have been baptized. This “second round” of teaching is to perfect one’s knowledge of GOD and to draw him closer to GOD as he learns more of Him. It is to give him comfort as he faces the trials and disappointments in life and the strength to go on. After coming to GOD and rendering initial obedience to Him, there is a constant need to study His laws and be reminded of them so that one may remain faithful to Him.

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Peter 3:1-2, emphasis mine, RK).

The “mercy” spoken of in verse twelve relates to the forgiveness of sins. Under the Old Law, the atonement sacrifice was offered once

each year by the High Priest (Leviticus 16; Hebrews 10:3-4). These sacrifices reminded the children of Israel of their sins, but they did not take them away — they were remembered each year. Their sins were not permanently removed (forgotten) until the perfect sacrifice for sins was made — Jesus, the Lamb of GOD, on the cross. Under the New Covenant, the perfect sacrifice, the perfect atonement, has already been made. When one learns of GOD and renders obedience to Him through faith, his previous sins will be remembered no more, i.e., forgotten and never held against him again. Under the New Covenant, sins are forgiven immediately at the point of obedience, not in prospect of a future sacrifice. The blood of Christ flows backward from the cross to the beginning of time and forward until time shall exist no longer (Hebrews 9:15).

Heb. 8:13 “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

“In that He saith, A new covenant He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.” (ASV)

“In that He says, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” (NKJV)

“But when He said, a new covenant, the first has become old and is ready to vanish” (ESV)

“old” — παλαιόω — “to make worn out or declare obsolete” (Strong); “to make ancient or old, to become old, to be worn out...to declare a thing to be old and so about to be abrogated” (Thayer); “To make old, render obsolete, abrogate” (Zodhiates); “make old, declare or treat as obsolete” (Bauer, p. 606).

“decayeth” — Same word as “old” above.

“vanish” — ἀφανισμός — “disappearance, i.e., abrogation” (Strong); “disappearance, destruction” (Thayer; Bauer, p. 124); “to vanish away, destroy. A disappearing or vanishing away” (Zodhiates).

It is fascinating to note that the prophets of the Old Law predicted the end of the law which they advocated (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Old Law was compared to a garment which has grown old and threadbare. Such a garment, as it grew older, approached a time when it would be discarded for a new one (Hebrews 1:11-12). When Jeremiah spoke, the Spirit led him to anticipate the time when a new law would replace the one under which he served.

The phrase “ready to pass away” is puzzling. The book of Hebrews was written after the death of Jesus. His death on that cross marked the time in which the Law of Moses was no longer valid (Ephesians 2:15-16; Colossians 2:14). **How then does Paul speak of the future here?** The thought which seems to make the most sense to this writer is as follows. The law passed away at the death of Jesus

on the cross. Thus, it was no longer a system which governed one in religious matters. But the civil institution of the Temple and the false worship being offered there at the time Paul wrote would not pass away until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. The total destruction of the Mosaic system should be seen in that it required a priesthood from the lineage of Aaron, yet after the records of priestly descent were destroyed with the Temple, no man could ever again serve as a priest under that system.

“A sanctuary is a real sanctuary only if God is there” (Lightfoot, p. 161).

Hebrews — Chapter Nine

Heb. 9:1 “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.”

“Now even a first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world.” (ASV)

“Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.” (NKJV)

“The first had its regulations for worship and worldly sanctuary.” (ESV)

“ordinances” — dikaioma — “*an equitable deed; by implication a statute or decision*” (Strong); “*that which has been deemed right so as to have the force of law...what has been established and ordained by law, an ordinance*” (Thayer); “*regulation, requirement, commandment*” (Bauer, p. 198).

“divine service” — latreia — “*ministration of God that is worship*” (divine) service” (Strong); “*service rendered for hire; then any ministration; the service of God; the service or worship of God according to the requirements of the levitical law*” (Thayer); “*service for hire or as a slave, divine service*” (Zodhiates); “*service or worship*” (Bauer, p. 467); “*it occurs five times, only in ceremonial contexts, and means ‘service,’ or ‘worship’*” (Renn, p. 880).

“worldly” — kosmikos — “*literally (mundane) or figuratively corrupt: worldly*” (Strong); “*of or belonging to the world...relating to the universe: earthly: worldly, i.e., having the character of this (present) corrupt age*” (Thayer); “*worldly, what belongs to the world*” (Zodhiates); “*earthly, worldly*” (Bauer, p. 445).

The word “covenant” does not appear in the original manuscripts of this verse. But, it is implied by the context, which has been describing the contrasts between the old and new laws. The system spoken about here is the Mosaic system, which operated with Levitical priests and physical structures.

It is also noted that the word “had” is used to designate that what is being spoken of is no longer in force. The ordinances of the old law had been nailed to the cross, and though the Temple might have been still standing at the time this letter was written, it was no longer the focal point of worship, i.e., the place where worship was to be conducted. Listen to what Jesus had told the woman of Samaria.

“Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21).

The term “ordinances” refers to the ceremonies and laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The word “service” refers particularly to the worship in which they had engaged under that law. Note that these ordinances were divine, i.e., they had been given by GOD. This implies that GOD had expected the Israelites to worship in the way

that He dictated, not by their own instructions or whims 8:5).

The next phrase is “**worldly sanctuary.**” This refers particularly to the Tabernacle and later by extension to the Temple. This sanctuary was built according to the pattern given by GOD to Moses on Mount Sinai. The point is, that it was built by human hands with physical materials. The word “**worldly**” in this text does not imply that which is evil, as it sometimes does in the Scriptures. It is simply that the sanctuary was constructed of earthly, physical materials.

This whole chapter is basically used to show the difference between the Tabernacle of the first covenant and that of the second. The chapter will also show the “furniture” which was found in the earthly Tabernacle, which served as types of the heavenly. It is interesting that none of the items which were found in the Tabernacle or Temple still exist. They were either long ago destroyed, or they have never been found (It is this writer’s view that if they still exist, GOD will see to it that they are never found. Imagine the “icon” quality these items would assume if they were ever found. It would be like the brazen serpent which came to be used by Israel as an idol (2 Kings 18:4).). These items were perishable in comparison to the eternal anti-types.

Heb. 9:2 “**For there was a Tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.**”

“For there was a Tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place.” (ASV)

“For a Tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;” (NKJV)

“For there was a Tabernacle prepared. The first part, which was called the Holy Place, contained a lamp, and the table of show-bread.” (ESV)

“**For there was a Tabernacle made**” The word “**Tabernacle**” simply means “**tent.**” It can refer to both the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place as a combined unity, or it may refer to either unit individually. In this context, the two rooms are divided, each being called a Tabernacle. Interestingly, verse three refers to “**a Tabernacle,**” and verse four refers to “**the Tabernacle,**” both of which show the singleness of the structure mentioned. There were not two Tabernacles, or ten, or a thousand — **only one.** Since the first Tabernacle is the type of the anti-type (the church), it shows the singular nature of the church. There are not multiple churches which lead to the Most Holy Place (Heaven); there is only one. Likewise, there are not multiple Heavens where the redeemed of all time will go for their reward of faithfulness (rest) — only one.

For details of this building, one can turn to Exodus 26:1-30. The Tabernacle was a physical building which was to be built by Moses and his helpers in exactly the way GOD determined it to be built. Being the type of the church, this tells one that the church is to be built exactly as GOD designed it to be built. Human beings never

have had the right to change what GOD designs and expect to be blessed by Him.

“the first” signifies the first room on the East side of the total structure. This room opened to the East and is called the “sanctuary.” In this first room there are three pieces of “furniture” (Although only two of them are mentioned in this verse). These pieces of furniture are listed as follows.

(1) “the candlestick” The term “candlestick” found in the KJV is incorrect, because candles had not been invented until years after this time. The Greek word is *luchnia*, which refers to a “lamp-stand” (correctly rendered in the NKJV, YLT and ESV). This is the same word found in Matthew 5:15, which should be interpreted, “Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lamp-stand.” The door of the Tabernacle always faced East, and the lamp-stand was thus found on the south side of this room. This lamp-stand was made of pure gold.

“It consisted of an upright shaft (which the rabbis say was four cubits high) and six branches, all ornamented with ‘bowls, knobs and flowers.’ On the top of the main stem and each branch there was a lamp in which pure olive oil was kept constantly burning” (Milligan, p. 309).

For more details of the lamp-stand, one may turn to Exodus 27:20-21 and Leviticus 24:1-4. This lamp was made of a talent of pure gold. The talent is a measurement which has been assigned different weights by various experts. For purposes of showing the value that men would place on this object, this work will take the weight of about seventy-five pounds for a talent. There are fourteen troy ounces per pound of gold. Today, (1 June 2018) gold is selling for \$1,293.00 per ounce, making this lamp-stand worth \$1,357,650.00 in today’s market. *With the value men have always placed on gold, is it any wonder that this item probably no longer exists, having long ago probably melted down for other purposes?*

(2) “the table” Commonly called the “table of shewbread,” was found on the North wall of the Holy Place, opposite the lamp-stand. On top of the table, twelve loaves of unleavened bread were placed every sabbath day, two stacks of six each. On top of each stack was a cup of frankincense (Leviticus 24:5-9). When the loaves were replaced each sabbath day, the old loaves were eaten by the priests. These loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel. This table was made of acacia wood and was covered with a veneer of gold. It was approximately three feet long, twenty-seven inches wide and twenty-seven inches high. It had an intricate edge around the top which was made of gold, and four rings in its sides where staves could be run through in order to carry it from place to place when the Tabernacle was moved. These staves were made of wood which were also covered with gold. There were also cups and dishes for this table which were made of gold (Exodus 25:23-30).

(3) The third item of furniture in this room was the “altar of incense” (though not mentioned in this text). There has been much dispute over where this altar was placed down through time, because in this context it seems to be placed in the Most Holy Place. But

consider the following reasoning which causes this author to place it in the Holy Place. The Scriptures teach that Aaron was to offer incense on this altar each morning and evening (Exodus 30:7-8). Aaron was the High Priest, so it was therefore his obligation as the High Priest to function in this capacity each day. But if the “**altar of incense**” was in the Most Holy Place he was violating the law under which he served. The law said the High Priest could only go into the Most Holy Place once a year in order to offer the atonement sacrifice. Further, the “**altar of incense**” would have been too heavy to be carried by one man. Therefore, the “**altar of incense**” could only have been found in the Holy Place, next to the curtain on the North wall of the Tabernacle. This altar was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. It stood three feet high and was eighteen inches in both width and length. It also had a “**horn**” on each corner upon which the High Priest also made an atonement once a year. See Exodus 30:1ff for more details on this item.

Heb. 9:3 “**And after the second veil, the Tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;**”

“And after the second veil, the Tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies;” (ASV)

“and behind the second veil, the part of the Tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All,” (NKJV)

“But behind the second curtain was a place called the Holy of Holies;” (ESV)

Most people are amazed to realize there were two veils associated with the Tabernacle.

“The one which is described in Ex. 26:36-37, was called ‘the hanging of the door of the tent,’ and was made of ‘blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen,’ (served as a door into the Holy Place, RK)...The second or inner veil, here referred to, divided the holy from the most holy place. This is described in Ex. 26:31-33. It was made of the same materials as the other, though, it would seem, in a more costly manner, and with more embroidered work. On this veil the figures of the cherubim were curiously wrought. The design of this veil was to separate the holy from the most holy place” (Barnes, p. 187).

The Most Holy Place was a cube shaped room of fifteen feet in all directions. Verse four will tell what was in this room. This room is the type of the anti-type — Heaven, the dwelling place of GOD. Notice that for one to get to the Most Holy Place (Heaven), he had to travel through the Holy Place (the church). Only priests were allowed in the Holy Place, and now priests make up the church.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:5, 9, emphasis mine, RK).

Heb. 9:4 “Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;”

“having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;” (ASV)

“which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;” (NKJV)

“Having a golden censer and the ark of the covenant completely covered with gold; in which was the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.” (ESV)

The first object mentioned in this verse is the “golden censer.” There is not a great deal of information available regarding this particular instrument. In fact, the Old Testament does not mention the censer by name. There are some who believe that the censer and the altar of incense were one and the same. Exodus 30:1-10 seems to refute this thought. First, the size and weight of the altar would preclude one man's moving it (as would have been done on the day of atonement by the High Priest in order to get it into the Most Holy Place to offer incense). It makes far more sense to have a special censer, light enough to carry, which was used to accomplish this task; especially when one sees that Nadab and Abihu had their individual censers (Leviticus 10). The altar also had rings by which to carry it from place to place. This would require two people to move it, but only the High Priest was allowed in the Most Holy Place. Second, the place of the altar was set in the Holy Place near the veil, not in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:6; 40:24, 26). The only conclusion which may be reached is that the golden censer and the altar of incense are not the same item.

“According to Leviticus 16:12 the high priest burned incense in the most holy place on the day of atonement. A censer is a vessel to be carried in the hand and used in the manner of fumigating. The instrument was necessary because the golden altar of incense was in the first room of the holy place of the tabernacle. As proof of this we read in Exodus 40:24 that the candlestick was placed in the ‘tent’ of the congregation. In verse 26 it says the golden altar was in the ‘tent’ or the same place where the candlestick was. Hence, the golden altar of incense was in the holy place or first room of the tabernacle, making it necessary to have this censer in the most holy place” (Zerr, p. 225).

“Quotes from the Mishna to the effect that there was a censer used on the day of expiation that was different from that used on any other day, different in that it was made of gold. This golden censer, full of burning coals of fire was carried into the Holy of Holies by the high priest on the day of atonement... The meaning of the writer thereof would be that the golden censer had to do with the Holy of Holies, but was not a permanent

article of furniture which it contained” (Wuest, p. 150).

Some have said that Paul made a mistake here and misplaced the censer, that he should have placed it in verse two, in the Holy Place. Such reasoning accuses the Holy Spirit (who guided the writers of the New Testament) of being in error — such **CANNOT** be the case. One also ought to recognize that Paul’s purpose was not to include every detail of the Tabernacle. He gave an over-all picture.

“the ark of the covenant” This was a chest which measured approximately three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide, and two feet three inches tall. It was made of Acacia wood, covered with gold, and had a crown around the top made of gold. Rings were built into its sides so that it could be carried from place to place by the Levites (Exodus 25:10-16). Of the ark. Milligan wrote;

“It was never restored after the Babylonian captivity; but in its stead, there was placed in the second Temple a stone slab of three fingers in thickness, called by the Rabbi’s Eben Sh’theyah which means a stone of drinking” (p. 315).

This being the case, the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write of the Tabernacle and of the things within it as it originally was in the time of Moses, not in the present time in which he lived.

Within the ark, three objects were found. (1) **“the golden pot that had manna”** (Exodus 16:32-33). This reminded the people of the care that GOD had extended toward them. (2) **“Aaron’s rod that budded”** (Numbers 17), which was a confirmation of the priestly lineage as determined by GOD through the tribe of Levi, specifically the family of Aaron. (3) **“the tables of the covenant”** These were of course the Ten Commandments which GOD gave Moses on Sinai (Exodus 26:16, 21; 40:20; Deuteronomy 10:2-5). When Solomon dedicated the Temple the only thing in the ark was the tables of stone (1 Kings 8:9).

Regarding the **“tables of stone,”** some have pointed to the description of their being in the ark and said, *“See, the ten commandments were the law, and the ceremonial laws were separate.”* They do this to claim that the ceremonial laws were what was done away with in the New Testament and thus they think they can keep the Ten Commandments. Yet, these same people would recognize that the Constitution of the United States is the core of American law, which is kept in a special place apart from the rest of the laws of the United States. The Ten Commands were the core of the Law of Moses, yet like the Constitution of the United States, they were not the totality of the laws given by GOD on Sinai. Both items simply represent the basis upon which their laws existed — its foundation, so to speak.

Heb. 9:5 **“And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”**

“and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally.” (ASV)

“and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.” (NKJV)

“And over it the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak in detail,” (ESV)

“**cherubims**” Today no one knows what these cherubims looked like. At best, the objects placed on the mercy seat were simply representations of these attendants of GOD. It is believed by some that they were composite creatures, sphinx-like, with faces of human beings, bodies of animals, and wings of birds. Others believe they had the bodies of human beings and wings like birds. Whatever they looked like is unimportant. In Exodus 25:18-20, one learns that they were made of gold and faced each other in a bowing position toward the mercy seat, with wings spread in such a way as to cover the mercy seat. They are spoken of in the Hebrews text as “**cherubims of glory,**” which seems to indicate the cherubims of GOD’s glory.

What was the role of the cherubims? They were placed at the Garden of Eden in such a way that Adam and Eve could not return to the tree of life. They acted as guards of the tree. In the present text they seem to be guarding the glory of GOD (the shekhinah). This writer’s opinion is that they serve GOD in the capacity of guardians of holy things.

“**the mercy seat**”

“On the ark was placed a cover (hilastarion) of pure gold; two cubits and a half long, a cubit and a half wide, and of unknown thickness. The original word kapporeth meant simply a cover. But as from it, GOD was want to give forth his gracious responses (Num. 7:89), and hence obtained the name Propitiatory or Mercy Seat” (Milligan, p. 315).

Regarding the mercy seat, Coffman made some interesting observations.

“There in the location of that mercy-seat, was revealed the key fact of all God’s dealings with the race of Adam, namely, that God’s eternal will, his mercy stands enthroned even above his law; and no more significant truth was ever made apparent under the types and symbols of the old covenant. Generations of men beheld the wonder of God’s mercy-seat above God’s law; but neither men nor angels understood it, nor could they understand it, till the Christ ascended Golgotha” (p. 190).

The mercy seat was the place from which GOD dealt with man, communicated with him. When one views the incident with Nadab and Abihu, he also sees that it was the place from which GOD dispensed justice, and yes, even His wrath. It would thus seem to represent the throne of GOD. Especially does this conclusion seem appropriate when one considers that the Most Holy Place was the type of Heaven.

Paul then said, “**of which we cannot now speak particularly.**” The basic idea is that the writer did not have time to deal with all the minute details of the items found in the Tabernacle. He needed to proceed to discuss the true Tabernacle, of which these things were but types and shadows. If it had been important to have all the details of these items, GOD could easily have caused him to write them, as He had the other details which are listed. The reader could go back

and read all the details in the Old Testament.

Heb. 9:6 “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first Tabernacle, accomplishing the service of GOD.”

“Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services;” (ASV)

“Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.” (NKJV)

“Now after these things had been prepared in this manner, the priests were continually going into the first part of the Tabernacle ministering.” (ESV)

“ordained” — kataskewazo — “to prepare thoroughly...by implication to construct: build, make, ordain, prepare” (Strong); “To furnish, equip, prepare, make ready” (Thayer); “to prepare fully, put in readiness” (Zodhiates); “make ready, prepare” (Bauer, p. 419).

“Now when these things were thus ordained,” i.e., when the Tabernacle was built and furnished according to the pattern which GOD gave Moses on Sinai. In verses 1-5, the Hebrews writer pictured the Tabernacle in a general fashion. This Tabernacle was not established by man, nor even by Moses, but rather by GOD. Only He had the right to arrange the Tabernacle and to order the services to Himself which would be rendered there. It is remembered that Moses was told to “make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Hebrews 8:5).

Since the Spirit was showing the type and the anti-type, it means that under this new system (Christianity), the pattern that GOD has set must be followed without deviation. Just as then, GOD has set up one place of worship, with one priesthood — the church. He has set up one way of salvation, one plan, and **the conditions do not change!** He has set up a system of worship which man dare not toy with if he wishes to experience Heaven.

“the priest went always into the first Tabernacle” The “first Tabernacle” signifies the first room of the Tabernacle — the Holy Place. In the Holy Place, one finds the golden candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of showbread. Regarding the showbread, Stancliff made the following observation.

“There were twelve of these loaves. Each of them was made of two tenths of an ephah of meal. An ephah was about equal to a bushel. This means each of these loaves was about twelve pounds...it was loaves such as these which David and his men ate because they were hungry” (p. 143).

This writer had never thought of the loaves as being anywhere near this size, instead having envisioned them as probably small, flat and thin. But then, **how could David and his men have been sustained on their journey if the loaves had been as this writer previously thought of them?**

It was into this portion of the Tabernacle (Holy Place) that the priests daily entered. In contrast with the next verse, they could enter this compartment often, and in fact **must** often enter therein to

perform the services which GOD demanded. But they were strictly forbidden to pass through the veil or even look into the Most Holy Place. As Lightfoot states it, *“They could never go into the immediate presence of God”* (p. 166).

“Accomplishing the service of GOD” Twice daily the priests entered the Tabernacle to burn incense which was a type of Christian’s prayers. The lamps on the lampstand were to be attended to, which were the type of the light of the church — Christ and His word which were given by the Father. Each sabbath day the loaves of showbread were replaced by new loaves on the table, which was a type of the Lord’s Supper. All of the items found in the church were foreshadowed by what was in the first compartment of the Tabernacle.

Some have seen a hint in this verse that the Temple was still in existence at the time this epistle was written. There is no conclusive information on this subject one way or the other.

“The present tense may be used here as the historical present, indicating merely what was customary; or it may denote that these services were still performed in the Temple when this epistle was written” (Milligan, p. 316).

What generally happens when people argue over the date of this epistle is that they forget that what is being said here does not depend on whether the Temple was still standing or not. The Holy Spirit did not direct Paul to speak about the Temple, but rather the original Tabernacle as the basis for the thoughts in this chapter. The comparisons being made are with the Tabernacle — not the Temple.

The Tabernacle does not stand today, yet when one speaks of these things, he often uses the present tense to speak of it and of the things which were done there. The important thing being shown in Hebrews is the contrast between the old and new laws and how the old continually pointed toward the new with its many types and shadows. It would be folly to go back to an incomplete system when they had the completed system — Christianity. The book of Hebrews encourages Christians to continue serving GOD as He has now ordained their service.

“GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds... Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-3).

Heb. 9:7 **“But into the second went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:”**

“but into the second the High Priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people.” (ASV)

“But into the second part the High Priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance” (NKJV)

“However, only the High Priest went into the second part once a year; not without blood which he offered for himself and for the people's sins of ignorance.” (ESV)

“But unto the second” This phrase speaks of the second chamber of the Tabernacle — the Holy of Holies or Most High Place. In this chamber was found the ark of the covenant, in which was found the rod of Aaron, the table of testimony (ten commandments), and the golden pot of manna. It also contained the mercy seat with golden cherubim to guard it. Into this chamber, only the High Priest could enter, and then only one day each year. He entered this chamber on the day of atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:37). This of course excludes those times when the camp of Israel was moved, which necessitated the Levites moving the items found within the Tabernacle.

On the day of atonement, the High Priest offered a blood sacrifice for his own sins and another one for the sins of the people. The complete details of this may be found by studying Leviticus 16 and Numbers 29. On the day of atonement, the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place at least three times (Jewish tradition says he entered it four times). According to Leviticus 16:12-16, he entered the Most Holy Place three times: (1) took coals from the altar and offered incense, (2) offered the blood of the bullock for his own sins and for the sins of his family, and (3) offered the blood of the goat for the sins of the people.

“for the errors of the people” The word **“errors”** (agnoema) in this passage is interesting.

“A sin, (strictly that committed through ignorance or thoughtlessness)” (Thayer).

“The word ‘error’ is in the translation of agnoema, a sin committed through ignorance or thoughtlessness. The word ‘for’ is the translation of hyper, preposition which speaks of substitution. It means ‘for the sake of, in behalf of.’ It speaks of the substitutionary character of the atonement...Here the blood is offered as a type to the atonement of the Lord” (Wuest, p. 153).

“The agnoemata, for which the high priest offered sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, were not specifically willful transgressions or presumptuous sins, but the sins of the nation as a whole” (Zodhiates).

“if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall

make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him” (Numbers 15:27-31).

“He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Hebrews 10:28).

Heb. 9:8 “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing:”

“the Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the Holy Place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first Tabernacle is yet standing;” (ASV)

“the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first Tabernacle was still standing.” (NKJV)

“By this the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Holy Place was not yet revealed while the first Tabernacle was standing.” (ESV)

“The Holy Ghost this signifying” The Holy Spirit (third person of the GODHEAD) is the One Who revealed GOD’s will to mankind.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

What purpose did the Holy Spirit have in revealing the things found in this text? He was showing the dramatic difference between the Old and New Testaments, the difference between that which was seen darkly as in a mirror and that which the light of Christ revealed to mankind. In this text, it should be clearly kept before one’s mind that the “**First Tabernacle**” is used to represent the entire Levitical system — from Sinai to the cross.

The Most Holy Place represented Heaven. What is thus shown by the apostle (through revelation) is that the way into Heaven could not be revealed to mankind while that old system existed. As long as the Tabernacle stood, i.e., that system which it represented, the way to GOD (full access) was hidden to man. This fact was represented by the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place (Heaven) was hidden to man as long as the Tabernacle represented the place to worship GOD (approach Him). Note: man knew it was there, but had no clear access to it. At the death of Jesus, the veil was ripped from the top to the bottom (not done with human hands) to show that the way had been opened for

all to enter into the glory of the Father. Barnes points out that while the Tabernacle was in existence, it showed four things.

“(1) That it was a mere symbol, and not the reality — showing that the way was not yet fully understood. (2) It was entered but once a year — showing that there was not access at all times. (3) It was entered only by the High Priest — showing that there was not free and full access to all the people. (4) It was accessible only by Jesus — showing that the way in which all men might be saved was not then fully revealed” (p. 192).

As long as the blood of animals was offered there was not a full cleansing of sin. Animal sacrifice was at the heart of Tabernacle worship, but that blood did not open the way to Heaven — it did not cleanse a single sin (See verse 13.).

All this points out that while the Tabernacle and the system of religion it represented were still in existence, a mystery existed. That is the way GOD planned it.

“the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24-25).

Like a good teacher today, the Old Testament was preparing the people bit by bit for an understanding of the final product. Through Christ, all would be able to clearly see GOD’s plan of redemption and have full access to His throne.

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12)

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46).

Wuest offers an excellent translation of this verse which might further help the understanding of this passage.

“The Holy Spirit all the while making this plain, that not yet was made actual the road into the Holiest while the first tabernacle had standing (i.e., remained a recognized institution)” (p. 155).

There is another interesting thought which crossed the desk of this scribe from the pen of Moffitt. It is offered for the readers consideration.

“The meaning seems to be that as long as the church is on earth we can’t enter heaven. We go, I believe, to paradise in hades (Luke 16:19-31; 23:43)” (p. 458).

It has long been this writer’s belief that as long as the earth exists, no one has gone directly to Heaven at death, except the Lord after His death and resurrection, based on the passage in Luke 16. Instead, those who depart this life for to the Hadean world where they will be separated into either Paradise or Tartarus. This writer had never thought of it in the terms of the churches existence before, but it would seem to apply.

Another thing to consider to consider is the veil at the entrance of the Tabernacle itself. The veil between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place kept the priests from going into the Most Holy Place. But there was also a veil at the entrance to the Holy Place which kept the

people from entering that compartment. Under the Christian dispensation, both of those veils have been done away with. All may enter the church, and all those in the church can have access to the throne of GOD.

Heb. 9:9 “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”

“which is a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshiper perfect,” (ASV)

“It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—” (NKJV)

“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which both gifts and sacrifices were being offered which could not make the one ministering perfect in conscience.” (ESV)

The Tabernacle and the system it represented were figures for the reality GOD had in mind. [FIGURE — *“that which is thrown alongside of something else’ to explain it”* (Wuest, p. 155)]. GOD revealed this figure to those of that era as a **“schoolmaster”** (Galatians 3:24), leading them to the reality. This was to prepare His people for the completed form, i.e., the Christ with the completed, final system He was to bring. Today, man is no longer under that schoolmaster system, but rather the perfect law of liberty.

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (James 2:12).

“whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25).

The **“gifts and sacrifices.”**

“The Levitical rituals, as such, did not touch the conscience. No ritual in itself ever does. There was nothing in it that could deal with conscience. Only the working of the Holy Spirit through the word of God and the efficacy of the blood of the Messiah could do that”
(Wuest, p. 155).

The sacrifices of the Levitical system could not make those who practiced them complete with regard to the conscience – they were still convicted.

“No heap of legal ordinances can heal the conscience or bring the worshiper near to God” (Lightfoot, p. 168).

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices

there is a remembrance again made of sins every year”
(Hebrews 10:1-3).

The conscience cannot be cleansed until that person has come in contact with the forgiveness given by Christ through His blood. In the Old Testament man’s sins were forgiven in prospect of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. Today, one’s sins are forgiven through Christ’s sacrifice, not in prospect of, as were theirs. Under the old law, the people knew that the “gifts and sacrifices” they offered did not take away their sins, thus, the atonement sacrifice was offered year by year. But even their yearly atonement sacrifice required the blood of animals which could not take away sin.

Heb. 9:10 “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

“being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.” (ASV)

“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.” (NKJV)

“They related only to food and drink and various washings; fleshly regulations imposed until the time of reformation.” (ESV)

Meats, drinks, divers washing, and carnal ordinances are introduced as those things which would cause them to see the physical aspect of the old system, the Mosaic law. The Old Testament was designed primarily for the purification of physical man (carnal ordinances), the external man. These ordinances, et cetera, did not deal with the conscience. These ordinances were meant to be the shadow which pointed to the real or complete thing, “the time of reformation,” which meant the time of Christ.

“Christ remodeled (reformed) the scheme of human redemption, by bringing into the world the last or final religious plan, of which those in force under the Mosaic system were types or figures, which were to be used until the Lord was ready to set up the completed form” (Zerr, p. 226).

These external items were never intended to last until the end of time. GOD had planned from the very day on which He instituted the Mosaic law, with all of its ordinances, to replace it with the complete, final system of law. The value of these things is seen in their use as an introduction to that better system.

“They were not adapted to purify the conscience and remove the stains of guilt from the soul” (Barnes, p. 193).

The word “reformation” is an important word. Note what Wuest said about this word below.

“The word means in its physical sense the making straight, the restoring to its natural and normal condition, something which in some way protrudes or has gotten out of line, as for instance broken or misshapen limbs. It means ‘to set things to rights’” (p. 156).

Sheerer states that the word in this text (“reformation”) means,

“putting things straight that have gotten out of line” (p. 1006).

The **“time of redemption”** is the last time — the Christian dispensation. There Christ has set everything in order. Once everything was set in order, there was no need to return to the former way, nor can there be anything yet future.

Heb. 9:11 **“But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;”**

“But Christ having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,” (ASV)

“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.” (NKJV)

“But when Christ came as a High Priest of good things to come, He entered by the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hand, that is, not of this creation;” (ESV)

“being come” — paraginomai — *“To become near, i.e., approach (have arrived); by implication to appear publicly: come to be present”* (Strong); *“to become near, to place one’s self by the side of, to be present, to come near, approach...to come forth, make one’s public appearance, of teachers”* (Thayer); *“to come to be or present, i.e., to come, approach, arrive”* (Zodhiates); *“come, arrive, be present...appear, make a public appearance”* (Bauer, p. 613); *“the word is paraginomai, which means ‘to become alongside,’ thus, ‘to arrive upon the scene,’ here the human scene. It speaks here of an advent”* (Wuest, p. 157).

“to come” — mello — *“to intend, i.e., be about to be, do or suffer something”* (Strong); *“to be about to do something”* (Thayer); *“to be about to do or suffer something, to be at the point of, to be impending, followed by the inf. (Mostly the fut. inf., although frequently in the NT the pres. inf.), When followed by the pre. and aor. inf., it implies duration or transientness”* (Zodhiates); *“will certainly take place or be”* (Bauer, p. 500); *“the words ‘of good things to come,’ are the translation of a rejected reading. The best text reads, ‘of the good things realized,’ referring not as the rejected reading, to merely prophetic blessings of objects of hope, but also to blessings already attained, free approach to God, the better covenant, personal communion with God, and the purging of the conscience”* (Wuest, p. 157).

“building” — ktisis — *“formation (properly the act; by implication the thing literally or figuratively): building, creation, creature ordinance”* (Strong); *“the act of creating, creation...creation, i.e., thing created...acc. to the demands of*

*the context, of some particular kind or class of created things or beings: thus of the human race” (Thayer); “something founded, i.e., of a city, colonization of a habitable place. Creation, in a pass. sense, what has been created, the sum total of what has been created” (Zodhiates); “creation...the sum total of everything created” (Bauer, p. 455); “the word ‘building’ in the Greek text is *ktisis*, ‘creation.’ That is, the tabernacle in which Messiah serves, does not belong to the natural creation, the material universe” (Wuest, p. 158).*

What signified the **“time of reformation?”** It was the coming, the public appearance of Christ in this world. Not merely His appearance, but all that He accomplished while on this earth, including His birth, death and resurrection. **When did Christ become the Christian’s High Priest?** Certainly not while He sojourned on this earth. He, because of birth (tribe of Judah), could not enter the Holy Place, (much less the Most Holy Place), which was the shadow of the church. The NKJV has Christ coming as an High Priest to introduce the better things to come. That is not correct, He could not be a High Priest on earth!

The High Priest entered the Tabernacle made with human hands to offer the sacrifice (day of atonement) which consisted of the blood of animals. Again, this was a shadow of the real Tabernacle, that one not made with human hands. Christ actually entered Heaven, of which the Most Holy Place was but a type.

“The Old Covenant had a worldly sanctuary (9:1); but the Sanctuary of the New Covenant is not of this world (John 18:36); it is heavenly” (Milligan, p. 322).

The Tabernacle mentioned here is hard to understand. Some think it may be the church which is spoken of, since it is not made with human hands. It may indeed be referring to the church, since it does not belong to the physical order of creation. Others believe it refers to Heaven itself. This writer’s conclusion is that the reference is to Heaven, where Christ presently resides and officiates as High Priest. This conclusion is based on the fact that Heaven is the ultimate goal, the place man is to seek above all else.

Heb. 9:12 “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

“nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.” (ASV)

“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” (NKJV)

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He once for all entered the Holy Place; having obtained our eternal redemption” (ESV)

“once” — *ep̄hapax* — *“upon one occasion (only)”* (Strong); *“once, at once...our once for all”* (Thayer); *“once and for all”* (Zodhiates); *“at once, at one time...once for all”* (Bauer, p.

“having obtained” — heurisko — *“find, get, obtain, perceive, see”* (Strong); *“to come upon, hit upon, to meet with; after searching, to find a thing sought”* (Thayer); *“to find, either by a previous search (Matt. 7:7-8) or without (Matt. 27:32)”* (Zodhiates); *“find after seeking, find, discover, come upon...find, come upon accidentally, without seeking”* (Bauer, p. 324); *“the word speaks of the act, not merely of obtaining something, but of seeking for something, of finding it, and then of appropriating it”* (Wuest, p. 159).

“redemption” — lutrosis — *“a ransoming: redemption”* (Strong); *“A ransoming...universally deliverance, redemption”* (Thayer); *“The act of freeing or releasing, deliverance”* (Zodhiates); *“ransoming, releasing, redemption”* (Bauer, p. 483); *“the verbal form of this word means ‘to release on receipt of ransom, to redeem or liberate by payment of a ransom.’ The word ‘ransom,’ lutron, was used of the ransom-money that was paid in freeing a slave. Sinners are slaves of sin and Satan”* (Wuest, p. 159).

On the **“day of atonement,”** the High Priest took the sacrificial blood of animals into the Most Holy Place. He had killed the bullock and offered its blood for his own sins and for the sins of his family (Leviticus 16:3, 11). Then the blood of the goat was offered in the Most Holy Place for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:9, 15). On the other hand, Christ offered His own blood for the sins of others. Barnes noted three basic differences between the offerings of the High Priest and Christ’s offering.

“(1) The offering which Christ made was wholly for others; that of the Jewish priest for himself as well as for the people. (2) The blood offered by the Jewish priest was that of animals; that offered by the Savior was his own, (3) That offered by the Jewish priest was only an emblem or type – for it could not take away sin; that offered by Christ had a real efficacy, and removes transgression from the soul” (p. 194).

The Levitical High Priest carried the blood into the Most Holy Place.

“He says that Christ entered ‘through’ (dia) His own blood. That is, by virtue of His own shed blood – because He Himself was the victim – He was able to enter the heavenly sanctuary” (Lipscomb, p. 12).

The blood of the animal sacrifices had to be offered over and over. In contrast, the word **“once”** in this passage signifies that the blood of Christ was so powerful that it only needed to be offered one time — for all time. **What made His blood so powerful?**

“The efficacy of our Lord’s blood rested, not in the fact that it was human blood, but that it was human blood of a unique kind. It flowed in the veins of One who was as to His humanity, sinless, and as to His Person, Deity” (Wuest, p. 158).

Heb. 9:13 “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:”

“For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh.” (ASV)

“For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,” NKJV)

“Now if the blood of bulls and goats and a heifer’s ashes sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies them to the cleansing of the flesh;”

“**unclean**” — koinoo — “to make (or consider) profane (ceremonially): call common, defile, pollute, unclean” (Strong); “To make common, to make (levitically) unclean, render unhallowed, defile, profane” (Thayer); “to make common, unclean, pollute or defile” (Zodhiates); “make common or impure, defile in the ceremonial sense” (Bauer, p. 438); “to make common, to render unhallowed, profane” (Wuest, p. 160).

“**sanctifieth**” — hagiazō — “to make holy, i.e., (ceremonially) purify or consecrate” (Strong); “to make, render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate...to purify, to cleanse externally, to purify levitically” (Thayer); “to make clean, render pure...to consecrate, devote, set apart from a common to a sacred use since in the Jewish ritual, this was one great object of the purifications...to regard and venerate as holy, to hallow” (Zodhiates); “make holy, consecrate, sanctify...of things: set aside or make them suitable for ritual purposes...of persons consecrate, dedicate, sanctify...treat as holy, reverence of person...purify” (Bauer, p. 9); “to set apart for God” (Wuest, p. 160).

“**purifying**” — katharotes — “cleanness (ceremonially)” (Strong); “cleanness, purity” (Thayer); “purity, referring to the result of cleansing or purification” (Zodhiates).

The general idea is that the unclean Israelite walked outside (out of bounds) with regard to participation in the Tabernacle services. When he was sanctified (purified, externally cleansed) he could again participate in the worship of the Israelites.

“**bulls and goats**” is a general reference to sacrifices made in order to ceremonially cleanse the people and would include those made on the day of atonement. The “**ashes of a heifer**” has reference to Numbers 19, where ceremonial cleansing needed when one touched a dead body, or entered a house where a corpse lay, or touched a human bone or a grave.

This heifer was to be red and without spot of blemish; further; no yoke could have ever been placed upon it. Its blood was to be sprinkled in front of the Tabernacle seven times. Then the heifer was to be burned with cedarwood, hyssop and scarlet. The ashes were to be gathered and kept as a water purification for the people. These ashes were kept outside the camp. When one became ceremonially

unclean, water would be mixed with these ashes and sprinkled on the person or object which had become unclean. This was, in essence, a provision of convenience which GOD made for His people, yet it was a provision still connected to a blood sacrifice. See Numbers nineteen for more detail.

Emphasis should be placed on the fact that all of these sacrifices and the acts surrounding them only dealt with the purification of the flesh, the outer man. They did nothing to cleanse and purify the inner man — the soul. Only the blood of Christ can purify the soul.

Heb. 9:14 “How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to GOD, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?”

“how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto GOD, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?” (ASV)

“how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to GOD, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?” (NKJV)

“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to GOD, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?” (ESV)

“without spot” — amomos — “unblemished, without blame, faultless, unblameable” (Strong); “without blemish, free from faultiness, as a victim without spot or blemish” (Thayer); “spotless, without blemish” (Zodhiates); “blameless, without blame” (Bauer, p. 48).

“purge” — katharizo — “to cleanse, make clean, purge, purify” (Strong); “fit, sound, complete, to mend...to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust...ethically, to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be” (Thayer); “to cleanse, free from filth” (Zodhiates); “make clean, cleanse, purify” (Bauer, p. 387).

“serve” — latreuo — “to minister (to God), i.e., render religious homage: serve, do the service, worship” (Strong); “to serve for hire; to serve, minister to...to render religious service or homage, to worship” (Thayer); “to serve, in a religious sense to worship God” (Zodhiates); “‘serve’ in the primary sense of worship, or officiate in a ritual ceremony” (Renn, p. 879).

“living” — zao — “to live” (Strong); “to live, be among the living, be alive (not lifeless, not dead)” (Thayer); “to live...to live, have life, spoken of physical life and existence as opposed to death or nonexistence, and implying always some duration...in the sense of to exist, in an absolute sense and without end, now and hereafter, to live forever” (Zodhiates).

If the blood of mere animals had the power to ceremonially cleanse people, **how much more power resides in the blood of GOD**

to cleanse man's soul? Further, a difference existed in the way in which each became the sacrifice.

"The animals which were offered, had no will, no pneuma (spirit) of their own, which could concur with the act of sacrifice. Their was a transitory life, of no potency or virtue. They were offered through law rather than any consent, or agency, or counter agency, of their own. But Christ offered , with His own consent assisting and empowering the sacrifice" (Wuest, p. 161).

"eternal spirit" What **"spirit"** is being spoken of here? Some have thought that this refers to the Holy Spirit. If GOD had intended for one to see this as the Holy Spirit helping the Lord to offer Himself, this writer believes that the language would have been precise enough to understand it in that light. Instead of "Holy Spirit" being used, inspiration records **"the eternal spirit."** Thus, this writer believes it deals with the eternal nature of Christ Himself.

"I conclude with Delitzsch as to the relevancy of such a clause here: the eternal spirit is absolute spirit, divine spirit, and thus self-conscious, laying down its own course purely of itself unbound by conditions, simply and entirely free: so that Christ's offering of Himself through eternal Spirit is, as such, a moral act of absolute worth" (Wuest, p. 161).

"without spot" Christ offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice, one in which there is no fault. He suffered all temptations as a human being, yet no fault was found in Him — not a single blemish.

"we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Why was He without sin? It was not because He was GOD. It was because of His total reliance upon GOD to direct Him. His total purpose centered around doing the will of His Father, to please His Father, to be obedient to Him in all things.

"Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9).

"seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

This perfect atoning sacrifice is able to purge the conscience of man. A man's conscience, due to its training, can be either good or bad. A man's conscience may have many things wrong with it: (1) It can be evil (Hebrews 10:22), (2) It can be seared (1 Timothy 4:2), (3) It can be defiled (Titus 1:15), (4) It can be ignorant (1 Timothy 1:13), (5) It can be choked with dead works (Hebrews 9:14). As seen above, there are things which can go wrong with the conscience, yet if the conscience has been trained (or retrained) through GOD's word, it can be a valuable guide.

"if our heart condemn us, GOD is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20).

The only way for man to obtain a clear conscience is through the blood of Jesus Christ.

“from dead works” It was the works under the Law of Moses which had become dead. They could not provide life.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Colossians 2:14).

Thus, one can only serve the living GOD by accepting the perfect sacrifice that His Son made, thus, rejecting the law of the previous dispensation.

“A good conscience becomes a reality upon one’s obeying the gospel of Christ through faith, repentance, baptism, and rising to walk in newness of life” (Coffman, p. 201).

Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

“And for this cause He is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” (ASV)

“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” (NKJV)

“And because of this He is the mediator of a new covenant, having experience death to gain redemption for those who also transgressed under the first covenant; that those who have been called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” (ESV)

“mediator” — mesites — “a go between, i.e., an internunciator or a reconciler” (Strong); “one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant; a medium of communication, arbitrator” (Thayer); “a mediator, one who mediates between two parties” (Zodhiates); “mediator, arbitrator, one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal” (Bauer, p. 506); “it is used of someone who stands or walks in the middle, between two persons or two groups; the context indicates the reasons for this intervention” (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 465).

Because Christ shed His blood, because He made the sacrifice above and beyond all sacrifices, He was qualified to be the Mediator that mankind needs. Jeremiah had spoken of the day when an atonement would be made which would ensure that sins would be remembered no more.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But

this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The sacrifice which made atonement possible had now been made. Not just for those who presently live under the reign of Christ, but for the sins of all mankind, of all time.

Sin has always demanded punishment by a just GOD; and according to the passages studied in this book, the only acceptable atonement which could meet the demands of GOD’s justice was the death of His Son, through the blood He shed on the cross at Calvary.

That *“No sin was ever forgiven absolutely, without the blood of Christ, is of course conceded”* (Milligan, p. 329).

GOD, *“So to speak, issued in the meantime a sort of promissory notes, based on the infinite value of the blood of Christ, which he knew was to be shed in due time. By means of these notes he was enabled (if I may say it with reverence) to meet, for the time being, all the claims of justice, and still to treat as just and righteous all who like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, became loyal subjects of His government”* (Milligan, p. 329).

“Whenever a man was forgiven under the Mosaic exercises, the sins were charged up against the blood of Christ (not ‘rolled forward’). Hence when Jesus came into the world in the form of flesh, it was necessary for Him to make all of those instances good by His own blood” (Zerr, p. 226).

“they which are called” Those who have been called are those who heeded the call or words of GOD. No man has ever been called unconditionally to salvation. Under the Old Testament, those who met the requirements of GOD, will finally receive the eternal inheritance because of the blood Jesus shed — not from the blood of the animals they offered.

Heb. 9:16-17 *“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”*

“For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth.” (ASV)

“For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.” (NKJV)

“For where there is a will, death of the one who made it must be shown; For

a will is in force at death, since it has no force at all while the one who made it lives" (ESV)

"testament" — diatheke — *"a disposition, i.e., (specifically) a contract (especially a devisory will): covenant, testament" (Strong); "a disposition, arrangement, of any sort, which one wishes to be valid" (Thayer); "testament, covenant, In classical Greek it always meant the disposition which a person makes of his property in prospect of death, i.e., his testament, and used either in the singular or plural. See discussion which follows. The plural also means the testamentary arrangements of a person" (Zodhiates); "last will and testament (so exclusively in Hellenistic times)" (Bauer, p. 183); "translated either by the word 'covenant' or 'testament,' the former appearing twenty times, the latter, thirteen" (Wuest, p. 163).*

"necessity" — anagke — *"constraint (literally or figuratively); by implication distress: distress, must needs (of), necessity (-sary), needeth, needful" (Strong); "necessity, imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty" (Thayer); "Necessity, compelling force, as opposed to willingness" (Zodhiates); "necessity, compulsion of any kind, outer or inner, brought about by the nature of things, a divine dispensation, some hoped for advantage, custom, duty, etc." (Bauer, p. 52).*

"testator" — diatithemai — *"to put apart (figuratively) dispose (by assignment, compact or bequest): appoint, make, testator" (Strong); "to place separately, dispose, arrange, appoint...to arrange. Dispose of, one's own affairs...to dispose of by will, make a testament" (Thayer); "to dispose or arrange for oneself" (Zodhiates); "decree, ordain...assign, confer something... extremely often dispose of property by a will, make a will" (Bauer, p. 189); "a verb found in seven places with a primary sense of 'make a covenant.' The term refers to a person making a last will and testament" (Renn, p. 219).*

The ASV translation of these verses should be noticed since it portrays the meaning of the original better than does the KJV.

A testament, or will, is a document drawn up which generally shows what a person wants done with his property after he decease. It is not uncommon for conditions to be placed in that will which have a direct bearing on that property. For example, this writer's great-grandfather had a will which divided all of his land among his sons. They could do anything they wanted with the land — but they could not sell it during their lifetimes. While great-grandfather lived, he could have sold all of the land, thus making the will null and void. Once he died, that will became law, and his sons were never able to sell that land.

Christ came to deliver a new system of government which was to encompass all people, regardless of their race or nationality, and it was going into effect upon His death. The point of this illustration of a will is to simply impress on one's mind the necessity of the death of

Christ before the implementation of His law. The author spoke of an “eternal inheritance” in verse fifteen. That inheritance could only be obtained through the atoning blood of Jesus — through His death.

“It is His death that conveys the inheritance of salvation”
(Lightfoot, p. 173).

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto” (Galatians 3:15).

Consider this thought about a will: a will is not a negotiated document. That is, the one who makes the will does not sit down with the heirs and mutually produce the will. The terms of the will are set by the testator. If the one designated as heir wishes to receive the benefits specified in the will, he must follow (obey) the specified conditions in that will to receive them. If he refuses to obey the conditions specified, he forfeits all blessings which he otherwise would have received.

Heb. 9:18 “Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.”

“Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.”
(ASV)

“Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.” (NKJV)

“So, not even the first was dedicated without blood;” (ESV)

“The first testament was dedicated (consecrated) with blood. Since the shedding of blood required the death of the creature furnishing it, the circumstance makes the type and antitype complete. The animals died in order to dedicate (or put into force) the Old Testament or covenant, and Christ died and gave his blood to dedicate and render forceful His New Testament. (See Matt. 26:28). Therefore the animals slain in sacrifice under the law constituted the testator of that system”
(Zerr, p. 226).

“It is a great principle that in order to ratify a covenant between God and His people a victim should be slain, therefore it was that Moses ratified the old covenant in this manner, and therefore it was also that the death of a victim was necessary under the new dispensation” (Barnes, p. 210).

Heb. 9:19 “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,”

“For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,” (ASV)

“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to

the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,” (NKJV)

“For when Moses spoke every commanded according to the Law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled the book itself and all the people,” (ESV)

This text is based upon the account recorded in Exodus 24:1-8.

The apostle now showed the relationship of blood to the covenants. It must be remembered that one of the obstacles which the Jews had to overcome was their bad feeling about the death of Messiah on the cross.

“we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23).

The Hebrew’s writer had already pointed out the necessity of death for a **“testament”** (covenant) to be considered valid. Now he pointed back to the Mosaic law and illustrated how it was confirmed or ratified by the shedding of blood. Notice that Moses spoke to the people, telling them all the precepts of the law (Exodus 24), after they had been given to him. H delivered them orally and then wrote them in a book. This covenant which he delivered was then ratified by the sprinkling of the blood of calves and goats on the book and the people.

“This mention of all that blood and sprinkling is for the purpose of showing that all of the ancient typical institutions called for blood-shedding, not occasionally, but continually, such things being suggestive of the death of Christ” (Coffman, p. 205).

The water mentioned was probably for the purpose of diluting the blood so that it could be sprinkled more easily. When looking at John 19:34, one wonders if there might be more significance concerning the water than first meets the eye.

“One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”

“Hyssop” is a plant of which there are several varieties, stems of which were probably woven with wool to make the device for the sprinkling. The sprinkling of the blood was used as an emblem of consecration or purification. Notice some examples of this in Exodus 29:19-21; Leviticus 1:5, 11; 3:2, 13; 4:16-17.

There are a number of differences between this text and that of Exodus 24. Inspiration allows one to see details which were omitted in each of these texts by combining them. The major point to notice is not the blood of the animal whose blood was used, but simple that blood was being used to ratify the covenant. The Old Covenant required the shedding of blood to ratify it (bulls and goats blood); likewise, the New Covenant required blood to ratify it (Christ’s blood).

Heb. 9:20 “Saying, This is the blood of the testament which GOD hath enjoined unto you.”

“saying, This is the blood of the covenant which GOD commanded to you-ward.” (ASV)

“saying, This is the blood of the covenant which GOD has commanded you.”

(NKJV)

“Saying, This is the blood of the covenant which GOD enjoined upon you.”
(ESV)

The above passage is quoted from Exodus 24:8.

“And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”

The time for the perfect sacrifice to be offered had not yet arrived, so GOD sealed His covenant with Israel with the blood of animals as a substitute. Just as the covenant which He made with them was temporary, so also was the blood which had to be often offered.

“Without the shedding and sprinkling of blood, the people could not be received into covenant relation with GOD; nay more, that without this blood, the covenant itself would have no validity” (Milligan, p. 332).

That covenant was not confirmed until the blood sealed it. In studying this, one sees that every covenant given by GOD to man was sealed with blood. The Hebrews would understand this was a necessity, and thus it would help them to understand why the Messiah’s blood would be required to implement the New Covenant.

This “**testament**” (covenant) was “**enjoined**” by GOD, through Moses, upon the people. The word “**enjoined**” signifies a command given to another with full authority given by the one giving it. It would be well for one to consider the nature of a covenant just here. In human relationships with one another, a covenant is usually considered in the light of an agreement between equals, where neither has the right to command the other. Such is not the case with covenants that man has with GOD, as can be seen here. GOD had the right and authority to command Moses to give this covenant to His people, and He did so by the right of an absolute sovereign. GOD did not give this covenant to Moses so that he could in turn propose its conditions to the people for their consideration and ratification. GOD gave the covenant, the terms of the covenant — the people had but one choice to make with the attending consequences of their decision.

In considering this covenant (testament), several things should be considered. The original promise to Abraham was that all nations would be blessed through his seed. This indicated that the Messiah and His laws would be for all men. This being the case, GOD’s law regulates the conduct of **ALL** men, whether they accept it or not. All men are subject to the laws which GOD has given through Christ and will be held accountable by them on the judgment day. One of the areas where people try the hardest to say that GOD’s laws do not apply to non-Christians is in the realm of marriage.

“Baptism won’t wash away an unscriptural marriage. It won’t change a wrong state into a right state. If one repents, he will reform an unholy marriage before he is baptized” (Moffitt, p. 459). One might add that an ethical person will not baptize a person who refuses to repent. To do so would give the

unrepentant one false hope of having his sins forgiven and being able to go to Heaven!

On the judgment day, all will be judged by the law that Christ has given — whether they chose to obey it while they lived on this earth or not.

Regarding covenants between GOD and man, Barnes has this well-worded thought. In the Bible a covenant,

“Is not a transaction between equals, or a mutual agreement; it is a solemn arrangement on the part of GOD which he proposes to men, and which he enjoins them to embrace; which they are not, indeed,, at liberty to disregard, but which, when embraced, is appropriately ratified by some solemn act on their part” (p. 212).

Heb. 9:21-22 *“Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the Tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”*

“Moreover the Tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.” (ASV)

“Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the Tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.” (NKJV)

“In like manner he sprinkled the Tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood. And almost all things are purified with blood according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (ESV)

The actual occasion of Tabernacle (and its vessels), being sprinkled with blood is not recorded in the Old Testament. It is thought by most that this probably took place at the consecration of the Tabernacle, which is recorded in Exodus 40:9-11 and Leviticus 8.

“The mere silence of Moses is therefore no evidence that the Tabernacle and all of the vessels of the ministry were not purified with blood, as well as anointed with oil. We all believe on the testimony of Paul (Acts 20:35), that Christ said on one occasion, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive;’ though this saying is not recorded in any of the Gospel narratives. And just so we reason in the case under consideration” (Milligan, p. 333).

“Almost all things are by the law purged with blood” The first thing which must be recognized is that the apostle did not make any reference here to the blood of Christ and its cleansing properties. For the present time, he was speaking only of the Mosaic system (9:18-22).

Under the Law, almost everything which was defiled was purified by blood, but as the author points out, not all things were purified by blood. For example, some things were purified by water (Numbers 31:21-24; Leviticus 16:26-28); other things were purified by fire and

water (Numbers 31:22-23). But these cases were rare in that all else was purified by blood.

“and without shedding of blood is no remission” Whereas the first part of this passage was not universal in scope, the latter portion of it is. There was no exception to this law. **Remission of what?** Remission of sins. There is not, never has been, nor never will be remission (forgiveness) of sins without the shedding of blood. Remember that the Jews did not want to accept the fact that the Messiah was to die on the cross, with blood flowing from His wounds for the whole world to see. The Hebrew author was preparing them to accept the necessity of Christ’s sacrificial offering. He was trying to get them to see the universal truth that it has always taken a blood sacrifice for man to gain forgiveness.

“Every sin required an atonement; and no atonement could be made without blood. The only apparent exception given in the Law is in the case of one who was too poor to bring ‘two turtle-doves or two young pigeons for a sin offering’ (Lev. 5:11-13). In that event, he was required to bring the Priest the tenth part of an ephah (about seven pints) of fine flour, without oil or frankincense, a handful of which, the Priest was to burn as a memorial upon the altar. But that even in this case, the sin of the poor man was not forgiven without the shedding of blood, seems evident from what follows in the next verse of the same chapter, where it is said, ‘And the priest shall make an atonement for him for the sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.’ This atonement, it seems, could not be made without blood, for God says (Lev. 17:11), ‘I have given it [the blood] to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.’ This law was regarded by the Jews as universal in its application: for in the Talmud it is said, ‘There is no atonement except in blood’ (Yoma 5). It is most likely therefore that in this case, the Priest was required to make an atonement for the sin of the poor man, at the public expense. The memorial was made with flour; but the atonement with blood” (Milligan, p. 334).

“It is universally true that sin never has been, and never will be forgiven, except in connection with and in virtue of the shedding of blood...It follows, therefore, (1) that no sinner can hope for forgiveness except through the blood of Christ; (2) that if men are ever saved they must be willing to rely on the merits of that blood; (3) that all men are on a level in regard to salvation, since all are to be saved in the same way” (Barnes, p. 213).

“Since there is so much use of blood in connection with the Mosaic testament and all that pertained to that testament, how can any of the readers find fault with Christ’s death and blood in connection with the new testament? They should do the very opposite: appreciate the fact that Christ’s death and blood

are infinitely more precious than all the Mosaic sacrifices”
(Lenski, p. 307).

Heb. 9:23 *“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”*

“It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (ASV)

“Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (NKJV)

“Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (ESV)

Two worlds are being presented here: the physical and spiritual. The argument being made is that if it took animal sacrifices to cleanse the physical, then it would take a superior sacrifice to cleanse the spiritual. That which the blood of animals cleansed was a type of that which was far greater — the greater required a greater sacrifice.

Man has only ever been able to approach GOD when blood sacrifices are offered (for forgiveness), and the same is as true today as it was then. Because of the sacrifice of Christ’s blood, man has access to GOD in the Christian dispensation. He does not have to continually bring blood for His cleansing as did those under the Mosaic Law. One’s sins are cleansed today by a one time offering of blood on the cross by Jesus. Blood was offered by another for him — he does not offer blood for himself.

The following quotes are offered for one’s consideration regarding the cleansing of Heaven.

“The ancient tabernacle was purified or consecrated by the blood of the victims slain, so that men might approach with acceptance and worship; the heavens by purer blood are rendered accessible to the guilty” (Barnes, p. 214).

“Our author does not deny that such ritual cleansing was real and effective as far as it went. What he does deny is that cleansing of this kind could be of any use for the removal of inward and spiritual defilement. The various installations that were cleansed and fitted for the worship of God by the blood of animal sacrifices were but copies of the spiritual realities: where the spiritual realities themselves were concerned, a superior sacrifice and more effective cleansing must be forthcoming. It has frequently been asked in what sense the ‘heavenly things’ required to be cleansed; but our author has provided the answer in the context. What required to be cleansed was the defiled consciences of men and women; this is a cleansing which belongs to the spiritual sphere” (Barnes, p. 219).

“The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, should need to be purified with the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus. The fact itself seems to be clearly revealed in our text; but the reason for it is no so obvious” (Milligan, p. 336).

“Why should Heaven (as it now is) need a cleansing? That should be thought to be a problem. After all, there was in Heaven when Satan and his angels rebelled (Rev. 12:7-9). His act defiled Heaven, so that Heaven itself needed cleansing. And it would take better blood than the blood of bulls and goats — it would take the blood of Jesus to cleanse the heavenly things” (Reese, p. 161).

Heb. 9:24 *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us:”*

“For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear before the face of GOD for us:” (ASV)

“For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us;” (NKJV)

“For Christ did not enter the Holy Place made with hands, a copy of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us;” (ESV)

“figures” — antitupon — “corresponding (‘antitype’), i.e., a representative counterpart” (Strong); “a thing resembling another, its counterpart; something in the Messianic times which answers to the type prefiguring it in the O.T.” (Thayer); “corresponding to something that has gone before...copy, antitype, representation” (Bauer, p. 76); “copy” (Earle, p. 426); “this word properly means that which is formed after a model, pattern, or type; and then that which corresponds to something, or answers to it. The idea here is that the type or fashion – the true figure or form – was shown to Moses in the mount, and then the tabernacle was made after that model, or corresponded to it” (Barnes, p. 214).

This is the first direct statement that the sanctuary is Heaven itself. Christ never did enter into the Temple proper while He walked upon this earth. He did enter the court area where every Jew was permitted to go, but He could not enter the Temple proper because He was not born in the Levitical family. He did not come into the world to be a priest in the Levitical system; He came so He could become man’s High Priest in a better system. He came to be man’s High Priest in Heaven.

The Tabernacle was but a type of that better sanctuary in Heaven, a sanctuary which was not made with the hands of Human beings. The physical Tabernacle was simply a type (pattern) prefiguring that which was to come.

“but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for

us” The High Priest carried the blood of the atonement into the Tabernacle/Temple on the day of atonement each year. One of the great contrasts between the old and new testaments is found here. The superior atonement blood of the new covenant was offered one time only in a superior place — Heaven. It is obvious then that the carnal blood of bulls and goats could not be offered in the spiritual realm of Heaven. The High Priest offered the blood for the people (as well as for himself) — Christ now appears before GOD exclusively “for us.”

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of GOD, Who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25)

“In clinging to the service of the Levitical priesthood, the Judaizers are repudiating the one who has actually entered into the presence of God” (Zerr, p. 277).

Heb. 9:25-26 “Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the Holy Place every year with blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

“nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (ASV)

“not that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (NKJV)

“Not to offer Himself often, as the High Priest entered the Holy Place every year with the blood of another; For then it would have been necessary for Him to suffer many times since the foundation of the world, but now in the end of the ages He has appeared once for all to put away sin through the sacrifice of Himself.” (ESV)

Another contrast between Jesus and the Levitical High Priest has to do with the frequency of their offering. The superiority of Christ’s sacrifice is seen in that it only had to be made once — never to be

repeated. This sacrifice was so great that it could have covered the sins of every man who has or ever will live. A second contrast is found in verse twenty-five: the Levitical High Priests offered the blood of others (bulls, goats, etc.), whereas Christ offered His own blood.

If the sacrifice that Christ made was like that of the Levitical High Priests, then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. An annual offering would have meant an annual death.

“Every offering of Himself in heaven would of course imply an antecedent sacrificial death on earth. If, then, an annual offering were necessary, and annual sacrificial death would also be necessary” (Milligan, p. 339).

Again, it is emphasized that His death was a one-time event, a one-time event that suffices for all time.

“end of the world” The word **“world”** in this phrase is not the same as the first word **“world”** in this verse. Instead, it refers to **“the age”** and is equivalent to the **“last days”** of passages like Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Acts 2:17; Titus 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; and 2 Peter 3:3. At the end of the Mosaic age, the Word appeared on this earth in a physical form (John 1:1-2, 14 — in the form of a man), and ushered in the last age. Notice also that this passage clearly points out the purpose for which Christ came into the world. Jesus did not come into the world **“to begin an earthly kingdom, nor to erect an earthly throne, nor to restore a literal kingdom to Israel, but to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”** (Coffman, p. 206).

By dying on the cross, Jesus made it possible to remove both the stain of sin from the soul and the punishment of those removed sins. His death on the cross ended the Mosaic age and began the **“last days.”**

Heb. 9:27-28 **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”**

“And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation.” (ASV)

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (NKJV)

“Even as it is appointed for people to die once, and after that the judgment; So also Christ, Who was once offered to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without bearing a sin, but with salvation for those who look for Him.” (ESV)

One of the points being made here is that there should not be any expectation that there will be a second sacrifice for sin by Christ. The comparison used is that man has been appointed to die but once. Only in certain miraculous situations has anyone died twice (Lazarus, etc.). Only in certain miraculous situations has someone not died —

Enoch and Elijah (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). Since the miraculous age has ended (1 Corinthians 13), no one will physically die twice again in this world. Note also that it is appointed that man **will** die (Genesis 3:19). This was of course brought about by sin in the Garden of Eden.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Another important fact here is that there is no second chance. This passage completely destroys the false doctrine of re-incarnation. After death, the only thing man has in front of him is the judgment and an assignment to his eternal destination. No time frame is given between death and that judgment. It might be helpful for one to consider Luke 16:19-31 here. In that passage Jesus revealed the future after death. He revealed that man goes to the realm of the dead (hades) where he awaits the final judgment. There he will either be in the bosom of Abraham (paradise) or with the rich man (tartarus). Note, one does not leave this life to be in the bosom of Jesus, but rather the bosom of Abraham. A general resurrection has to take place before one can be in the “bosom” of the Lord.

“Death is not all. Man has to meet Christ as Judge as Jesus himself graphically pictures (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:25-29)” (Robertson, p. 404).

Look at the phrase, **“Christ was once offered.”**

“Is an intimation of Isaiah 53:4-6. God did indeed lay upon him the iniquity of us all. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. We did esteem him stricken of God and afflicted. The Jewish hierarchy had their little day with him; they humiliated him and crowned him with every conceivable insult; they inflicted the most terrible punishment that men could devise upon him; he was despised and rejected of men and thus died for the sins of many. But after death, there quickly appeared the judgment of God upon Christ. He rose from the dead. The Supreme Court of the Universe reversed the adverse judgments of the Sanhedrin and the Roman procurator; and Christ was elevated to the right hand of the Majesty on High” (Coffman, p. 207).

“once” Christ died one time and one time only as a sacrifice for sin. In the flesh He could only die once, as is the lot of all men. As was pointed out earlier, the purpose of Christ’s coming into the world was to pay the ransom price for sin.

Mary **“shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins”** (Matthew 1:21).

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“without sin” This does not imply that there was ever any sin in Jesus as He walked upon this earth, for He never sinned.

“we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the

feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

“He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

Those who were His enemies could find nothing in His life to convict Him of sin.

“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me” (John 8:46 — NKJV).

What is being shown in this passage is the purpose of His first appearance and of that which is to come. When Jesus first came to this earth, it was for the purpose of dealing with sin and making the atonement sacrifice for sin.

“GOD sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17)?

When Christ comes back it will not be necessary for Him to repeat those actions. His second coming will be, not as a sacrifice, but as the judge and to gather His own to Himself.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

“He first appeared as the man of sorrows to make atonement for sin. His second appearance will be as the Lord of his people, and the Judge of the quick and the dead, Matt. 25:31” (Barnes, p. 218).

“After His first coming no other sacrifice for sin is needed; and in His coming again nothing else will remain but for Him to gather in the fruits of His sacrifice” (Lightfoot, p. 178).

“there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

The above passage points out that salvation is for those who “look for Him.” The idea behind the phrase (“look for Him”), is that of remaining faithful until either death claims one or the Lord returns. **As individuals do we look forward to the Lord's coming?** If not, then our salvation is in jeopardy.

Hebrews Chapter Ten

Heb. 10:1 “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

“For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.” (ASV)

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.” (NKJV)

“For the Law had a shadow of good things to come; not the very image of the things. It could not with, with the same sacrifices offered continually year by year, make perfect those who came to it.” (ESV)

“**shadow**” — skia — “*shade’ or a shadow*” (Strong); “*shadow, i.e., shade caused by the interception of light...a shadow, i.e., an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object*” (Thayer); “*Particularly, an actual shadow or shade...Metaphorically, a foreshadowing, in distinct from to somma, the body (or reality), and heM eikomn, the full and perfect image; so also of the Jewish rites and dispensation as prefiguring things future and more perfect*” (Zodhiates); “*shade, shadow...foreshadowing (in contrast to reality)*” (Bauer, p. 755); “*the word shadow here refers to a rough outline of anything, a mere sketch, such as a carpenter draws with a piece of chalk, or such as an artist delineates when he is about to make a picture*” (Barnes, p. 220); “*a shadow suggests indefiniteness and unsubstantiality; a mere indication that a reality exists*” (Wuest, p. 172).

“**the law**” The context shows that this term refers to the entire law of Moses. It did not simply deal with the sacrifices prescribed under that law but with every command of that law (including the ten commandments).

“**The law**” was a “**shadow**” of good things which were to come. A shadow (at best) is a faint outline of the object behind the shadow. No details may be seen in the shadow; it simply affirms that there is a reality behind it. “*Shadow is from skia, shadow, faint outline*” (Littrell, p. 334). A shadow will often cause curiosity about the thing behind it, or at the least the desire to look more carefully at the thing which caused it. In this case it is the “**good things to come,**” which speaks of the benefits derived from the Gospel of Christ — forgiveness of sins which culminates in eternal salvation.

These shadows are not the “**very image**” of those good things.

“*Image is from eikon, likeness, image, form, appearance; statue. Here it appears that eikon is used of the genuine – the true substance that cast the shadow – the skia*” (Littrell, p. 334).

The Law of Moses only gave one an outline (so to speak) of the better things which came through the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Once the Law of Christ was given one could clearly see the difference between the type and anti-type. One could clearly see the salvation

offered and the means of attaining that salvation.

“Eikon (image) suggests what is in itself substantial and also gives a true representation of that which it images” (Wuest, p. 172).

Jesus told Philip, **“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”** (John 14:9).

“The idea is, that under the ancient sacrifices there was an imperfect representation, a dim outline of the blessings which the gospel would impart to men. They were a typical representation; they were not such that it could pretend that they would not answer the purpose of the things themselves which they were to represent, and that they would make those who offered them perfect” (Barnes, p. 220).

The fact that these sacrifices had to be offered yearly proved their inability to accomplish the completed goal of forgiveness. The Greek word for **“perfect”** (*teleioo*) means to bring to completeness, a state of completeness. The constant repetition showed that the sacrifices were not sufficient and that a better sacrifice was needed to obtain the desired results.

“They were only typical, carnal, earthly, material, and mortal devices, having no efficacy at all, except as they directed the minds of the worshippers to the holy and heavenly things prefigured” (Coffman, p. 210).

It did not matter how often these sacrifices were made; they could not be the perfect sacrifice which was needed. *“No repetition of the shadow can amount to the substance”* (Wuest, p. 172). No matter how many animal sacrifices were made, the one offering the sacrifice was always left short of the goal of forgiveness until the one-time perfect sacrifice was made — Christ on the cross.

Heb. 10:2 **“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”**

“Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins.” (ASV)

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.” (NKJV)

“Otherwise, would they not have ceased offering them, because those who offered them, having been once for all purified, would have no further consciousness of sins?” (ESV)

The argument is again made that these sacrifices would not have had to be continually offered if they were capable of completely cleansing the conscience of those offering them.

“When a man has full evidence that an atonement has been made which will meet all the demands of the law, and which secures the remission of sin, he feels that it is enough” (Barnes, p. 220).

The evidence presented here is that Christ, unlike the atonement

sacrifices of the law, was offered once and that one sacrifice was enough in GOD's eyes. If medicine is given to a patient and he is healed, there is no need to keep giving him the medicine.

"It follows that if a man obtains peace, he must have good evidence that his sins are forgiven through the blood of the atonement. No temporary expedient; no attempt to cover them up; no effort to forget them will answer the purpose...By the use of the word rendered 'conscience' here, it is not meant that he who was pardoned would have no consciousness that he was a sinner, or that he would forget it, but that he would have no trouble of conscience; he would have no apprehension of future wrath. The pardon of sin does not make it cease to be remembered (1 Timothy 1:12-15, RK). He who is forgiven may have a deeper conviction of its evil than he had ever had before. But he will not be troubled or distressed by it as if it were expose him to the wrath of God. The remembrance of it will humble him; it will serve to exalt his conception of the mercy of God and the glory of the atonement, but it will no longer overwhelm the mind with the dread of hell. This effect, the apostle says, was not produced on the minds of those who offered sacrifices every year. The very fact that they did it, showed that the conscience was not at peace" (Barnes, p. 221).

"A debt that has been once fairly and fully canceled is not to be paid a second time" (Milligan, p. 342).

When one feels troubled about some past sin in his life, maybe he ought to stop and ask himself if he really did what GOD commanded him to do in order to have his sins forgiven. If one has obediently asked for forgiveness, then he needs to leave that sin in the past and feel no dread of future punishment for it. If one has not properly taken care of his sin, then he needs to get serious about making the needed corrections. **Why?** Because his eternal destination hangs in the balance of what he does or does not do.

"Even though the Old Testament worshiper had performed the Divinely prescribed animal sacrifice, he went home with the awareness that something more than animal sacrifices was needed if sins were actually to be forgiven" (Reese, p. 168).

"They (atonement sacrifices, RK) reminded the people that their sins had not been taken care of; the sacrifice necessary for their removal still had not been offered" (Stringer, p. 43).

Heb. 10:3 **"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year."**

"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year."
(ASV)

"But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year." (NKJV)

"But in those sacrifices there was a remembrance of sins every year;" (ESV)

“remembrance” — anamnesia — *“recollection: remembrance (again)”* (Strong); *“a remembering, recollection: to call me (affectionately) to remembrance”* (Thayer); *“remembrance, a commemoration”* (Zodhiates); *“reminder, remembrance of something”* (Bauer, p. 58); *“a recalling to mind”* (JFB, p. 560).

The reference here is to the **“day of atonement”** held once each year for the sins of the people. Every time this day came their sins were called back to their memories. **What sins were called back to their memories?** All through the year they had made numerous sin offerings. On the day of atonement, all of those sins were brought back to their memories. If the blood of those offerings had taken away their sins, then there would have been no need for a yearly atonement sacrifice. Further, it would seem that each yearly sacrifice brought their sins back to remembrance from every year which they had lived. **Why?** Because it was made with an animal’s blood, imperfect blood, which was offered on the day of atonement. Animal blood never had the power to take away anyone’s sins!

“So far from remitting their sins, all that the sacrifices did was remind him that he was still a sinner. There was a remembrance of sin and not a satisfactory atonement” (Lightfoot, p. 184).

Under the Old Covenant, **every** animal sacrifice called to their minds their sins; but under the new law, forgiven sins are remembered no more.

“I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrew 8:12).

Under Christianity one does not come before GOD in worship to remember his sins, but to remember the one who paid the atonement sacrifices for his sins.

People are often heard to say that the sins of the people before the New Testament age were *“rolled forward”* until Christ shed His blood. That phrase is not a Biblical phrase. Their sins were not rolled forward, they were remembered. The atonement sacrifice did not roll them forward, it recalled their sins to their minds with an understanding that those sins had not been fully taken away to be remembered no more. It caused a joyous anticipation of the One whose blood could permanently remove them.

Heb. 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

“For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” (ASV)

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” (NKJV)

“For the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin.” (ESV)

“not possible” — adunatos — *“unable, i.e., weak (literally or figuratively); passively impossible: could not do, impossible, impotent, not possible, weak”* (Strong); *“without strength, impotent...impossible”* (Thayer); *“in an active sense, impotent,*

weak. In a neut. or pass. sense meaning impossible, not to be done” (Zodhiates); *“Powerless, impotent”* (Bauer, p. 19).

“take away” — ἀφαιρέω — “to remove: cut (smite) off, take away” (Strong); *“to take away sins, of victims expiating them”* (Thayer); *“to take off or away, to remove”* (Zodhiates); *“take away something”* (Bauer, p. 124); *“take off”* (JFB, p. 560).

The fact is, the mere blood of animals could never by itself cleanse the heart of any man; it could never make any sin soiled soul pure. This fact is clearly and emphatically stated by the Holy Spirit in this text.

Sin is costly. *What does any man possess which can be offered to GOD for His sins?* Man does not own anything in this world; therefore, man has nothing to offer. Man must understand this fact and accept it. Since man has nothing he can offer, he must understand that it took the perfect Son of GOD, coming in the form of man, offering Himself, to make a proper atonement for man’s sins.

“It was thus manifestly erroneous for man to think that by sacrificing some of his fellow creatures of a lower order than himself, and which like himself were the property of God, he could make any expiation for his sins” (Coffman, p. 213).

This writer is inclined to agree with Milligan’s statement which follows.

“That these sacrifices were of Divine appointment, is, of course, conceded by all who believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God; and that they served to secure for the Israelites symbolical forgiveness, and, as a consequence of this, continued membership in the symbolical Church of the Old covenant, is also equally obvious. But beyond this, they only served to direct the minds and hearts of the people to the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (p. 343).

The sins of those living under the Mosaic dispensation were forgiven only on the merits of Christ’s blood. This is true of any dispensation of time. All who do whatever GOD has told them to do will be forgiven only through the one time blood sacrifice of Christ.

Heb. 10:5-7 *“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O GOD.”*

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, But a body didst Thou prepare for Me; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O GOD.” (ASV)

“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, Behold, I have come--In the volume of the book it is written of Me--To do Your will, O GOD.” (NKJV)

“Therefore, coming in the world, He says, You did not want sacrifices and

offerings, but you prepared a body for Me. You were not pleased with whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, Behold I have come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, to do Your will, O GOD.” (ESV)

The above verses are a quotation from Psalm 40:6-8. The very first phrase takes for granted the pre-existence of Christ. He has always existed and He came to this world by a conscious choice to fulfill the will of His Father for the benefit of man.

Something more than animal sacrifices made by imperfect men was necessary for man to have forgiveness of his sins (10:1-4). Yet, in order for Christ to be the sacrifice, there needed to be a body to sacrifice. A spirit does not die, so GOD prepared/made provisions for a body for His Son in the womb of Mary (Matthew 1).

“Thus the principle is established that absolutely nothing less than the death of a man for the sins of man could prevail; and no ordinary sinful man would suffice for such a purpose” (Coffman, p. 215).

There are several things involved in the statements of verse five through six regarding the offerings and sacrifices — **“Thou wouldst not,” “no pleasure.”** First, the most obvious has already been pointed out — animal sacrifices were not sufficient. Therefore the Savior did not come into the world to offer bulls and goats for man; He came to offer Himself. Second, this passage is not saying that the sacrifices made under the Mosaic dispensation were not acceptable to GOD. It is obvious that they were acceptable as far as they went, because He had commanded their observance. They were acceptable for the purpose for which GOD gave them. By the time Christ came, these sacrifices had served their purpose, and now it was time for the final perfect sacrifice to be offered. Third, obedience was required before any sacrifice was acceptable, though the Jews had long overlooked this truth found in GOD’s Word. Many today ignore the same truth and think GOD will simply accept whatever they do. But listen carefully to what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

It did not matter how many sacrifices were made if they were not occasioned by the obedience of the one offering them. Be it remembered that both (sacrifices and obedience) were and are required. One must be a living sacrifice to please GOD.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

As noted above, one can offer sacrifices without being obedient to GOD.

“Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to

obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

“I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of GOD more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6).

“For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:16-17).

“The point is not that God took no pleasure in the offering of the Levitical sacrifices. These offerings were according to His will, and He did take pleasure in the fact that they were offered, since the act of offering them was in obedience to His will. But when it came to the place where they failed to pay for sin, God took no pleasure in them” (Wuest, p. 174).

In any system which GOD has given man, it is not the sacrifice itself that makes that man acceptable to GOD, but the obedience which that man expresses toward GOD in obeying His will and accepting the sacrifice offered for him.

“the volume of the book” is thought by almost all to be the Pentateuch. The possibility of more than the five books of Moses being recorded at this time must be recognized. For instance, what about the book of Job?

Jesus came into the world to do His Father’s will. This writer agrees with Barnes quoted below.

“He came to do the will of God (1) by perfect obedience to His laws; and (2) by making an atonement for sin — becoming ‘obedient unto death,’ Phil. 2:8. The latter is the principle thought here, for the apostle is showing that such sacrifices and offerings as were made under the law would not put away sin, and that Christ came in contradistinction from them to make a sacrifice that would be efficacious” (p. 228).

As has already been noted, Christ came as a volunteer. He came in obedience, because He wanted to come and sacrifice Himself for man. This is quite different from the sacrifices under the Levitical system, where the victim was chosen by someone else. Christ chose Himself, so to speak, and gladly made the sacrifice.

Heb. 10:8 “Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;”

“Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law),” (ASV)

“Previously saying, Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them (which are offered according to the law),” (NKJV)

“Having said before, You did not want nor have pleasure in sacrifices and

offerings and whole burnt offerings, and those for sin, being offered according to the Law.” (ESV)

This refers back to verse five. **When was it that GOD was not satisfied (pleased) by the sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, and sin offerings? Was He dissatisfied with them when they were offered during the Mosaic dispensation?** GOD was no longer satisfied with them after they had served their divine purpose. When did the dissatisfaction occur — when Christ perfectly fulfilled the law. Further, one should be able to see that it was not just the sacrifices which now displeased GOD; it was the entire Mosaic system which had been swept away by His obedient Son. That whole system was a shadow of that which came through Christ — not just the sacrifices.

“The sacrifices offered under the law could not atone because they did not present the attitude of perfect obedience God required to please him. Obedience will always lead to the proper sacrifices” (Stancliff, p. 160).

Heb. 10:9 “Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.”

“then hath He said, Lo, I am come to do Thy will. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.” (ASV)

“then He said, Behold, I have come to do Your will, O GOD.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.” (NKJV)

“Then He said, Behold, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first in order to establish the second” (ESV)

“taketh away” — anaireo — *“to take away, abolish”* (Thayer); *“To take away, abolish; to slay murder, take off; spoken of public execution; to take up”* (Zodhiates); *“take away, do away with, destroy”* (Bauer, p. 54); *“the Greek word is anaireo, to take up, to abolish, (of a man) to kill”* (Robertson, p. 577).

GOD has never had two systems of religion operating at the same time for His chosen people. The whole argument of the book of Hebrews is presented concisely here. That is, GOD replaced the first covenant (Law of Moses) with the second (Law of Christ), when His Son offered Himself on the cross.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Colossians 2:14).

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Ephesians 2:15-16).

Paul had already stated the premise of this verse in Hebrews 7:12.

“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.”

And as has been studied previously in this commentary, GOD had

long ago decided that the Old Law would be replaced with a New and better Law.

Heb. 10:10 **“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”**

“By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (ASV)

“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (NKJV)

“According to His will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (ESV)

“sanctified” — *hagiozo* — *“to make holy, i.e., (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate: hallow, be holy, sanctify”* (Strong); *“to set apart people and things for the service of God”* (Renn, p. 495); *“make holy”* (Earle, p. 426); *“to set apart for God. Here the work of sanctification refers to the placing of the believing sinner into the status of a saved person, with all the accompanying blessings and enablements which that act includes”* (Wuest, p. 175); *“to consecrate, cleanse, purify, sanctify”* (Littrell, p. 338).

By GOD’s will man can be sanctified. It is GOD’s desire that man may receive sanctification. But sanctification could only come to man through the sacrifice of His Son — through the offering of His blood. Added to His sacrifice is man’s part in sanctification. No man can be sanctified (set apart for GOD’s use, made holy) without that man first being obedient to the conditions GOD has set for His sanctification. When man accepts the will of GOD, when he is obedient to His conditions, then he is purified in the sight of GOD because of the atoning sacrifice which GOD made. One is not made holy by his own perfection, but through the perfection which is in Christ, through His perfect life and sacrifice.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17-19).

Sanctification of man comes about when he accepts and obeys the truth revealed in the Bible.

The offering of the body of Christ was **“once for all.”** This is the same idea as found in Jude 3. Because Christ had Himself aside, made Himself holy through perfect obedience there was no need for His sacrifice to be made a second time. Through His perfect obedience, the sacrifice of His blood was the perfect atoning sacrifice.

Just here a quotation of Wuest is given to show the lengths to which Calvinists will go in wresting the Scriptures to promote their false doctrines. Wuest translates this verse in the following way: *“By means of which we will stand permanently sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* (p. 175, emphasis mine, RK). In the Bible, this verse does not even come close to saying what Wuest makes it say. The word “permanently” could be

used with regard to the sacrifice Christ made for man (“once for all”), but it is dishonest to use “permanently” with regard to man’s sanctification. Calvinistic doctrine teaches that once you are saved you can never be lost — a doctrine the Bible never teaches, but which Wuest and others advocate as seen above.

“it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

One cannot fall from a height he never reached.

Multitudes of Scriptures could be used to show that a saved person may so sin as to be lost for eternity, but these will suffice (all you need is one). Faithfulness till the moment of one’s death, no matter what the cause of that death may be, is absolutely required for one to enter into Heaven.

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (The Revelation 2:10).

Heb. 10:11-12 “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of GOD;”

“And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of GOD;” (ASV)

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of GOD,” (NKJV)

“According to His will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifice; which can never remove sin.” (ESV)

Another contrast is shown in this passage — the “priest standeth daily” while Christ “sat down.” The priest stood, always ready to continue his tasks, realizing that theirs was a never-ending task. There were no chairs for them in the Tabernacle/Temple. Christ, on the other hand, offered a sacrifice which had no need of being repeated. Thus, one sees the continuing theme of the inadequacies of the sacrifices they offered because of their repetition, which was in contrast to the “once for all” sacrifice of Jesus. Their work with regard

to sin offerings was never done; His was done once, never to be repeated!

“Christ has not ceased from all work; because He intercedes, reigns, sustains all things by the word of His power, and administers the whole creation from the throne of God. Despite this, there is a sense in which Christ’s work was done when He ascended on high; it was the work of providing the atonement for man’s redemption” (Coffman, p. 218).

Again one finds the same basic statement that is found in verse four: **“which can never take away sins.”** There was no power in the blood of animals to take away the sins of man. The only blood which has that power is the precious blood of Jesus of Nazareth.

“He sat down there to return no more to our world for the purpose of offering sacrifice for sin. He will no more submit himself to scenes of suffering and death to expiate human guilt” (Barnes, p. 229).

“His offering of Himself on the cross was an act that has never-ending results and that needs no repetition” (Wuest, p. 176).

Heb. 10:13 “From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.”

“henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet.” (ASV)

“from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.” (NKJV)

“The rest of the time waiting until His enemies be made a foot-stool for His feet.” (ESV)

After Jesus offered His one time sacrifice, He sat down at the right hand of GOD — His work of atonement was finished. While He sits at the right hand of GOD, He patiently waits for the time when GOD will send Him forth as conqueror. The defeat of all His enemies is absolutely guaranteed.

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD” (Romans 14:11).

“at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Philippians 2:10).

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all

things under Him, that GOD may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

The figure of the footstool comes from the ancient custom of Eastern kings placing their feet on the throats of those whom they conquered (Joshua 10:24). This was an act of submission on the part of the conquered and of complete triumph for the conqueror. Christ will remain at the right hand of GOD until all His enemies are destroyed. **Who are these enemies?** They are the Devil, his messengers, the evil passions of the heart, and death.

“The idea is this, that all things are yet to be made subject to his will – either by a cheerful and cordial submission to his authority, or by being crushed under his power” (Barnes, p. 229).

Heb. 10:14 “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

“For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (ASV)

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (NKJV)

“By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (ESV)

Why was Christ able to sit “down on the right hand of GOD: From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool” (vv. 12-13)? It was by this one offering that Christ accomplished everything that all other offerings before His were incapable of accomplishing — providing forgiveness of sins. Unlike the temporary offerings which the Levitical priests continually repeated, His was permanent, self-sufficient sacrifice for all time. His sacrifice provides the basis for man’s (any man’s) forgiveness in any time or place.

“In the atonement made by the Redeemer there is a foundation laid for their eternal perfection, and it was with reverence to that that it was offered” (Barnes, p. 230).

When man is willing to accept the terms GOD has laid down through His Son (1:1), all of his sins are forgiven based on the sacrifice of Jesus. It is upon that basis that man has hope for the eternal redemption of his soul. It is upon that foundation that man must build for all eternity.

Who are the sanctified (those set aside to serve GOD)?

“For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11).

It is brethren (Christians) who are sanctified, those cleansed by the perfect blood of the Lamb of GOD.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried

with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of GOD. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in GOD” (Colossians 3:1-3).

Those who refuse to obey can never be sanctified!

Heb. 10:15-17 “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

“And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after He hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, saith the Lord: I will put My laws on their heart, And upon their mind also will I write them; then saith He, And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (ASV)

“But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them, then He adds, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” (NKJV)

“But also the Holy Spirit bears witness to us, for after saying, This is the covenant I will make with them, after those days, the Lord says, I will put My laws upon their heart, and I will write them upon their mind, says also, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will not remember again.” (ESV)

These verses are another clear indication of the Holy Spirit’s work. He told the prophets of the Old Testament what to say and write, just as He was telling the apostle Paul what to say and write in this letter.

“Paul informs us that he spoke words given by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13); and Peter tells us that the Scriptures were given by holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21). All Scriptures were thus inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17)” (Littrell, p. 341).

How does the Holy Spirit bare witness to man today? Does He do so through a miraculous even of some kind? Does He speak directly to man today? **No!** Hebrews 10:15-17 shows that the Spirit witnesses to man through the written words of inspired men.

The Holy Spirit confirmed what the apostle stated here through the prophets of old and the inspired apostles and writers of the New Testament. In particular, Paul again quoted Jeremiah 31. This same passage was quoted in chapter eight to show that the Old Covenant had been replaced with a new one. Here the same passage is quoted to show that the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah is where the complete forgiveness of sins would be found in the blood of Christ.

Thomas *“noted in this context the various functions assigned to several member of the Godhead, in these words, ‘We have*

the three-fold revelation of God in this passage, and very definite and practical exemplification of the Holy Trinity, in the will of God (v. 9), the work of Christ (v. 12), and the witness of the Spirit (v. 15)” (Coffman, p. 221).

Regarding sin, Westcott observed the following.

“The consequence of sin are threefold: debt which requires forgiveness, bondage which requires redemption, and alienation which requires reconciliation.’ All of these, forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation are found in Jesus Christ” (Coffman, p. 222).

How wonderful is the idea that when GOD forgives one’s sins, He remembers them no more. What a wonderful contrast between “remembrance again made of sins every year” (v. 3) and “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (v. 7). The constant repetition of the sacrifices of the Levitical priests showed that the question of forgiveness of sins had not been settled. Under the sacrifice Christ made, sins are not only forgiven, they are forgotten, i.e., in the sense that once forgiven they will never be held against one again.

Heb. 10:18 “Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” (ASV)

“Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” (NKJV)

“Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” (ESV)

When one studies the Bible, there is one method of instruction which is found over and over — repetition. One of this writer’s friends (Robert R. Taylor, Jr.) Was once asked what the secret to his vast memory of the Scriptures was. He replied, “*Repetition, repetition, repetition.*” **How does one learn the lessons GOD wants him to learn?** It is through a constant repetitious study of His word. This whole section of Hebrews is a good illustration of the repetition that GOD uses to drive points home to forgetful man. Someone reading this commentary may think, “*Bob sure is saying the same thing over and over.*” True, but Bob is simply trying to mimic the text and GOD’s way of teaching. :)

This verse is a summation of what the Spirit has been driving home. There was no need for continued sacrifices once a sacrifice was made which permanently took away sins. Christ has made such a sacrifice. Deity has paid the price for man that man could not pay for himself. Yet, there is one sacrifice left to be made. It is not a sacrifice for sin, but it is a sacrifice made because the ultimate sacrifice for sin has been made. Man must make himself a living sacrifice in the service of GOD because of what GOD has done for him.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not

conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD” (Romans 12:1-2).

It is reasonable for man to become a voluntary living sacrifice because of the price Christ paid for him.

Heb. 10:19 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,”

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,” (ASV)

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,” (NKJV)

“Having then, brethren, boldness to enter the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,” (ESV)

“**boldness**” — parrhesia — “*all out spokenness, i.e., frankness, bluntness*” (Strong); “*Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech...free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance*” (Thayer); “*Freedom or frankness in speaking. NT meanings: freedom in speaking all that one thinks or pleases; confidence of boldness, particularly in speaking*” (Zodhiates); “*Outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing*” (Bauer, p. 630); “*Freedom of speech, candor, boldness, public speech, categorical affirmation*” (Spicq, p. 56).

The apostle began this section by identifying himself as one of those to whom he spoke — brethren. All who have repented of their sins, confessed Christ as the Son of GOD, and been baptized for the remission of their sins are brethren in Christ. Because they are brethren, they can have, must have, boldness in entering into the Most Holy Place through Christ. This boldness is not an arrogant, brash attitude, but rather a confidence that one can enter through obedience because of the blood of Christ. It is the same concept found in Hebrews 4:16.

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

The Most Holy Place was the type of Heaven under the old system. Although one does not literally enter Heaven at this time, yet he has access to the very throne of GOD through Jesus Christ who is a Christians intercessor (Hebrews 7:25). That access allows one to speak to GOD on his own behalf, unlike the Jew who had to go through the priests to make his petitions to GOD. Remember that the word “**boldness**” means “*freedom in speaking.*” Because Jesus shed His blood, each Christian (a priest of GOD), can approach GOD with confidence.

Under the Law, the people were taught that they did not have direct access to GOD. The veil was a constant reminder, even to the priests, that they could not enter directly into the presence of GOD. But through the blood of Jesus, this has changed.

“*The great High Priest has offered a perfect and totally*

efficacious sacrifice of His own blood before the very presence of God and has opened up a way into that same holy presence, not merely for Himself, who has already entered there, but for us as well” (Coffman, p. 225).

“we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 6:1).

Heb. 10:20 *“By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;”*

“by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;” (ASV)

“by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,” (NKJV)

“By a new and living way that He has opened for us through the veil, that is, His flesh;” (ESV)

“new” — ~~προσφατος~~ — “previously (recently) slain (fresh), i.e., (figuratively) lately made: new” (Strong); *“Lately slaughtered, freshly killed...recently or for lately made new”* (Thayer); *“Originally it was used to refer to the newly-killed animal or man; hence, of flesh just killed, fresh meat, or of fresh vegetables just picked. In the NT, generally it means recent, new, as a new way”* (Zodhiates); *“New, recent...also in the sense ‘not previously existing’”* (Bauer, p. 719).

This “new and living way” can be attained by all men. But only those who become Christians actually partake of it. There are several things to notice about these terms. Christ instituted a new way.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

At the time the book of Hebrews was written, this was indeed a new way which had freshly been opened to GOD’s throne through the blood of Jesus. It was a way which was similar to, but unlike the old with regard to a number of areas (the blood offered, who was priest and High Priest, etc.). But notice that this new way was a **living way**. The contrast between the old and new seems to be the living sacrifice that was made for mankind. The old way had the life of the animal taken from it never to be returned to life. Christ arose from the dead never to die again — **He is alive**. Further, it should be pointed out that Christians are to offer themselves as a sacrifice, but again, it is to be a living sacrifice. A Christian’s Master is alive and they are to be alive.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

“we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

“The new and living way” has been “consecrated” by Christ Himself through the sacrifice He made on the cross. To whom was this way dedicated? To those who would obey Him. How was this accomplished? Through the veil which was His flesh. Under the old system, the way into Heaven was symbolized as going through the second veil of the Temple. This curtain kept the priests of GOD out, kept them from full access at any time to Heaven. Only the High Priest could go beyond the veil and then only one day each year.

The veil was a type of the flesh of Jesus. When He died on the cross, when the body and soul were separated, the veil of the Temple was torn apart from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:50-51). The way to the throne of GOD was now opened through Christ and His sacrifice. The only way to get to the Most Holy Place was through the veil from the Holy Place; today, the only way to get to Heaven is to go through Christ from the church. Man has access to Heaven only because the fleshly life Christ lived and the sacrifice He made to open the way for him.

Heb. 10:21 “And having an High Priest over the house of GOD;”

“and having a Great Priest over the house of GOD;” (ASV)

“and having a High Priest over the house of GOD;” (NKJV)

“And by a Great Priest over the house of GOD;” (ESV)

The Christian’s High Priest is of course the Christ (3:1), and He is over the “house of GOD.” What is the “house of GOD?” Is it a building like the Tabernacle? Under the Mosaic system, the Tabernacle represented the house of GOD (Matthew 12:4; Luke 6:4), and later that term represented the Temple (Psalm 42:4). Christianity does not have a physical building which represents the house of GOD, the place to worship. Instead, the “church” (those called out by the Gospel to serve GOD) is “the house of GOD.”

“if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of GOD, which is the church of the living GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

“the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of GOD: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of GOD” (1 Peter 4:17)?

Heb. 10:22 “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

“let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water;” (ASV)

“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (NKJV)

“Let us draw near with a true heart, with full assurance of faith, having the

hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and the body washed in pure water.” (ESV)

“true” — alethinós — “truthful: true” (Strong); “that which not only has the name and semblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name...in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real and true, genuine” (Thayer); “real, genuine” (Zodhiates); “true, dependable...true in accordance with truth...genuine, real” (Bauer, p. 37); “authentic, genuine” (Spicq, Vol. 1, p. 66).

“full assurance” — plerophotía — “entire confidence: (full) assurance” (Strong); “Fulness, abundance...full assurance, most certain confidence” (Thayer); “perfect certitude, full conviction, equivalent to, confirmation. Full assurance, or complete understanding” (Zodhiates); “full assurance, certainty...a wealth of assurance, such as understanding brings with full conviction” (Bauer, p. 670); “fullness, richness” (Spicq, Vol. 3, p. 120).

“Let us draw near with a true heart” The only way that anyone has ever been able to draw near to GOD, be in communion with Him, is through a true heart. A true heart is one fully dedicated to GOD, one without hypocrisy. Speaking of worship, which is what one does when he approaches the throne of GOD, Jesus said, “GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). If one wishes to approach GOD, the only way to do so is with an honest heart which is willing to listen to Him and obey Him.

“In full assurance of faith”...i.e., without doubt as to one’s acceptance by GOD. One’s faith must be one of total belief and confidence in Deity.

“without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

One cannot doubt the promises GOD has made to him; He has said what He means and means what He has said! **He will keep His promises!** The faith commanded is one which leaves no doubt regarding anything the Bible says.

“Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience” The “heart” spoken of in this passage is the intellect of man.

“when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts” (Mark 2:8)?

“The comparison is between the sprinkling of blood upon ancient worshipers in the old covenant, when blood was actually sprinkled upon their bodies; and, in the new covenant, the sprinkling not of men’s bodies but their hearts, by the blood of Jesus” (Coffman, p. 231).

It is spiritual cleansing which is spoken of here, and one should carefully note that the cleansing is done by GOD.

How can one approach GOD with full assurance? Only when his

conscience has been cleansed in the blood of Christ. Then notice man's part in having a cleansed conscience.

"our bodies washed with pure water" This is speaking about baptism, for the New Testament describes baptism as a washing which brings the convert into contact with the cleansing blood of Christ. Note the following passages:

"Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood"

(The Revelation 1:5, emphasis mine, RK).

It should be noticed that sins are washed away in blood — the blood of Christ. **Does the Bible tell one when this washing takes place?** Saul of Tarsus was asked the following question by Ananias.

"now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16, emphasis mine, RK).

When were Saul's sins washed away? When he was baptized, where he came in contact with the cleansing blood of Christ.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

While in the act of baptism, it is the outer body which comes in contact with the water; the inner man is being cleansed by Christ's blood.

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward GOD,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

These two actions appear to take place at the same time, i.e., the sprinkling of the heart and the washing of water. This makes perfectly good sense, since one cannot approach GOD without being sprinkled with the blood (GOD's part) and having his sins washed away in the blood (man's part). It is at that point that one begins a new life free from sin.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

About the only ones who will not admit the truth found in these passages are those who promote a "grace only" or "faith only" doctrine. Unfortunately, some of those who used to be faithful servants of GOD are now advocating these doctrines either actively or passively.

Heb. 10:23 "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)"

"let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised." (ASV)

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He Who promised is faithful." (NKJV)

“Let us hold, without wavering, the hope we profess, for He is faithful Who promised.” (ESV)

“**hold fast**” — katecho — “to hold done (fast) in various applications” (Strong); “to hold back, detain, retain...to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of” (Thayer); “hold fast, retain, or hold down, quash, suppress” (Zodhiates); “hold back, hold up. Hold back, hinder, prevent from going away” (Bauer, p. 422); “translate Greek tense, ‘keep on holding fast’” (Robertson, p. 578); “reflects the idea of ‘holding fast (i.e., clinging tenaciously) to’” (Renn, p. 492); “it speaks here of a firm hold which masters that which is held” (Wuest, p. 181).

“**profession**” — homologia — “acknowledgment: con- (pro-) fession, professed” (Strong); “objectively, profession (confession), i.e., what one professes (confesses)” (Thayer); “A confession, profession, or recognition” (Zodhiates, CD); “to say the same thing’ as another, thus ‘to agree with the statement of another,’ thus ‘to confess one’s faith in the statement of another’” (Wuest, p. 181).

“**without wavering**” — aklines — “not leaning (i.e. figuratively) firm: without wavering” (Strong); “not inclining, firm, unmoved” (Thayer); “steady, without inclining or giving way” (Zodhiates); “Unwavering, not leaning” (Robertson, p. 578); “stable, unchanging, firm...literally ‘which does not bend, is straight,’ signifies ‘stable, set,’ then ‘unmoving, at rest’” (Spicq, Vol. 1, p. 59); “the word ‘wavering’ is the translation of aklines. The word is made up of klino ‘to incline, bow;’ thus, ‘to lean towards,’ and Alpha privative, which when prefixed to a word makes it mean the opposite to what it meant originally. The writer urges the recipient not to lean back towards the first testament” (Wuest, p. 181).

“**faith**” — This word should be translated “**hope**” as it is in the ASV, NKJV, and ESV.

This passage is a plea for the Hebrew Christians to refuse to give in to any pressure they might be under to return to an inferior law (covenant, testament), which echos the plea of the entire book. Hold fast to the doctrine that Christ has given; pin it to your heart in such a way that it can never leave. Hold it firm as if your life depends on it — **BECAUSE IT DOES!**

“They were to ‘hold fast’ to the ‘profession of faith,’ not their confession that they have a hope, but their confession of the things that they believe in against a mocking and skeptical world” (Lightfoot, p. 190).

They were told not to waver; they were not to begin to even lean back toward the inferior, impotent system they had left behind. When the Israelites left Egypt, it was not long before they began leaning back toward their old way of life, even though that life was one of slavery and cruelty. Instead of looking forward to a new life, Lot’s wife leaned

back toward Sodom to her destruction. When man leans back toward the sin(s) he has left, it is not long until disaster strikes. The writer next gave them something with which they could fortify their hope: the faithfulness of GOD. GOD has always meant what He said, has always kept His promises; therefore, man should be faithful to Him. He was warning them not to turn back to an impotent system; instead, they were to lean with full assurance toward the faithfulness of GOD in all things.

Heb. 10:24 **“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”**

“and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works;” (ASV)

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,” (NKJV)

“Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works.” (ESV)

“consider” — katanoeo — *“to observe fully: behold, consider, discover, perceive”* (Strong); *“to perceive, remark, observe, understand: to consider attentively, fix one’s eyes or mind upon”* (Thayer); *“to observe, notice, consider, contemplate”* (Zodhiates); *“notice, observe carefully something. Look at (with reflection), consider, contemplate something”* (Bauer, p. 415); *“verb meaning ‘consider’ in the sense of ‘perceive,’ ‘notice,’ and ‘reflect on’”* (Renn, p. 208); *“‘consider’ is the translation of katanoeo which speaks of attention, continuous care. The exhortation is to take care of each other’s spiritual welfare”* (Wuest, p. 182).

“provoke” — paroxusmos — *“incitement (to good) or dispute (in anger): contention, provoke unto”* (Strong); *“an inciting, incitement...irritation”* (Thayer); *“to stir up, provoke. In a good sense, a sharpening; used figuratively meaning an encouragement to some action or feeling (Heb. 10:24). In a bad sense, a paroxysm, the stirring up of anger, sharp contention, angry dispute (Acts 15:39)”* (Zodhiates); *“stirring up, provoking”* (Bauer, p. 629); *“sharpened, stimulated, incited”* (Robertson, p. 578); *“the word ‘provoke’ is the translation of parousmos which means ‘an inciting, incitement, a stimulation’”* (Wuest, p. 182).

Someone once wrote, *“no man is an island unto himself,”* and it is the opinion of this writer that this is truer for the Christian than it is for anyone else. Not only is the Christian to be an example to the world of what GOD’s people can be, but he is also to be constantly influencing and caring for the spiritual needs of his brethren.

“be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, emphasis mine, RK. Some want to apply this only to preachers, which is a terrible mistake. It applies to all Christians, as evidenced by the present text.).

Christians must have an intense desire to see their brethren grow spiritually, so that they may go to Heaven. They must help each other grow beyond their weaknesses to full Christian maturity.

The word “**provoke**” is most often thought of as a negative word, i.e., provoking someone in such a way that he becomes angry, possibly even becoming violent. But this word also carries a positive connotation as in this text. After considering the spiritual needs of a fellow Christian, a means of stirring him up, inciting him to see and meet his needs must be found and exercised. The Christian must find the “button” which cause the one in need of spiritual growth to work toward obtaining the goal in whatever area his soul has a need. Christians must stimulate one another to “love” and “good works.”

Love of what? Is he speaking about stimulating one to love the brethren? While such is a good thought and needed, the context speaks of apostasy and turning away from the GODHEAD. The author was thus speaking of provoking love toward GOD and the work which GOD has prescribed for Christians to be involved in. When one truly loves GOD the way he should, then he will want to be involved in doing what GOD says, and he will love doing it. What GOD teaches man to do is always right; it is always good for the soul of man to be involved in those actions.

Love for brethren is not enough. Love for fellow human beings is often found in this world, but such does not have an eternal benefit for anyone. The writer’s goal is the get men to Heaven through a love of GOD which causes them to obey His commands. When man loves GOD as he should, only then can he truly love his fellow man in such a way as to stir him to obey GOD. Such love demands action. Christians cannot just sit back and watch the world go to Hell — they must be active like yeast, permeating the society in which they live.

Heb. 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

“not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.” (ASV)

“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (NKJV)

“Not forsaking our assembling, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.” (ESV)

“forsaking” — egkatalleipo — *“to leave behind in some place, i.e., (in a good sense) let it remain over or (in a bad one) to desert: forsake, leave”* (Strong); *“to abandon, desert...to desert, forsake”* (Thayer); *“to leave behind in any place or state”* (Zodhiates); *“leave behind...forsake, abandon, desert”* (Bauer, p. 215); *“not leaving behind, not leaving in the lurch”* (Robertson, p. 578); *“abandon”* (Renn, p. 588); *“to leave, forsake, abandon”* (Spicq, p. 400).

“assembling” — episunagoge — *“a complete collection; specifically a Christian meeting (for worship): assembling (gathering) together”* (Strong); *“a gathering together in one place...(the religion) assembly”* (Thayer); *“the act of gathering or assembling together”* (Zodhiates); *“meeting”* (Bauer, p. 301); *“To gather together besides”* (Robertson, p. 578); *“the gathering (assembling) of themselves together”* (Renn, p. 76); *“In Heb. 10:25, episynagogue is a religious term, designating not a ‘grouping together’ or a society of any sort, but a meeting for worship, at more or less regular intervals, of Hebrew Christians in a set place”* (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 64).

It is obvious from all first century literature found on the subject that the early Christians met together often and that their primary meetings took place upon the first day of the week (the Lord’s day).

It is not known exactly why these brethren were forsaking (abandoning, deserting) the assemblies. But one of the primary suspects for their desertion is persecution. Some wanted to turn back to Judaism, as is evident from the teaching in this epistle. That the Jews were heavy persecutors of Christians is also evident (Look at the very actions and comments of Paul in Acts for proof). The point here is that some were abandoning worship assemblies, gatherings that edified themselves (built one another up in the faith).

What assemblies, what gathering together is being spoken of in the text? Some have assumed that this passage speaks only of the assembly on the first day of the week and once that “obligation” was fulfilled they had no more obligation for another week. (One might add that that is exactly the way some view worship assemblies today — only as a cumbersome obligation.)

“GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

There is absolutely nothing in this text (or elsewhere in Scripture) which justifies such an attitude.

While the only assembly at which some Christians are required to gather together is the first-day-of-the-week worship assemblies. Let us ask the following question. **Why should a Christian not assemble with his brethren when they meet at various times?** It would not be a sin for them to miss any special meeting from a strict interpretation of the Scriptures. **But why would they not want to be with their brethren at every opportunity they have to do such?** It would seem to this writer that a lack of desire to be with one’s brethren during times of study, edification and fellowship says much about the lack of spiritual maturity of that individual, and it shows a lack of hungering after righteousness. Notice what Jesus said about that.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6, emphasis mine, RK).

Milligan lists three reasons why it is wrong to forsake the assemblies.

“1. By doing so, they neglect and set at naught an ordinance of God. 2. By neglecting this ordinance of God, the disciples

deprived themselves of many social and religious privileges. The Church of Christ is a social institution designed for the edification and improvement of all of its members. 3. Because of the bad example which they were setting before others. Christ intends that every one of the disciples shall be a living witness for truth” (p. 363).

Barnes made a correct observation when he basically asked the question, *how can one expect to grow and make advances in piety and religious knowledge if he does not attend the worship services which promote such* (p. 237)? Maybe some think they are so intelligent that they do not need anyone else to help them grow. The Bible indicates the opposite is true. *If these people did know so much, would it not be nice for them to help the rest of their brethren to a better understanding of GOD’s truths instead of selfishly, arrogantly, and pridefully keeping it to themselves?*

In First Corinthians 14:26ff, Paul showed that gathering together for edification is one of the prime reasons for these gatherings. Again, *how can one be edified by his brothers/sisters if he absents himself from the worship assembly or Bible studies?*

“Through his epistle (3:16, 13, etc.) the necessity for constant encouragement and exhortation of the believing community is emphasized. Mutual exhortation is the divine means of counteracting the host of evil influences and distractions which are the perpetual enemies of faith” (Coffman, p. 236).

By inspiration, Paul saw that the abandonment of the services would eventually lead to the utter destruction of an individual’s faith. Notice verse twenty-six.

“so much the more as ye see the day approaching” There are several views which are put forth regarding what *“day”* is spoken of in this text. (1) The day of Jerusalem’s destruction (signs were given so they could know when this event was about to take place); (2) The final day of judgment; (3) The end of an individual’s life; (4) Sunday worship services. Of these views, this writer tends to hold to the idea of the end of one’s life. The book of Hebrews was not written simply to those Jews of that time, but to all who might be tempted to turn away from Christianity no matter when they lived on this earth. With each passing day, one should realize that the appointment of *“the day”* (death) is drawing closer. As one approaches eternity, he ought to be seeking a closer companionship, not only with GOD, but with his fellow saints for the strength which each gives the other. Christians must exhort each other to greater faithfulness.

“Who can fail to see in himself indications that the time approaches when he must lie down and die? Every pang that we suffer reminds us of this; and when the last hair changes its hue, and time makes furrows in the cheek, and the limbs become feeble, we should regard them as premonitions that the messenger of death is drawing near, and should be more diligent as we see him in his steady and certain approaches” (Barnes, p. 239).

Heb. 10:26 *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the*

knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,”

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins,” (ASV)

“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,” (NKJV)

“For if we willingly continue to sin after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there is no sacrifice left for sins;” (ESV)

“**wilfully**” — hekousios — “*voluntarily: wilfully, willingly*” (Strong); “*voluntarily, willingly, of one’s own accord...is tacitly opposed to sins committed inconsiderately, and from ignorance or from weakness*” (Thayer); “*voluntarily, intentionally, Refers to sins committed willingly, those done designedly and deliberately in the face of better judgment*” (Zodhiates); “*willingly; without compulsion, i.e., deliberately, intentionally*” (Bauer, p. 243); “*it properly means willingly, voluntarily, of our own accord, and applies to cases where no constraint is used*” (Barnes, p. 239); “*sin wilfully means to sin deliberately or purposely, in contrast with that committed incidentally or through weakness*” (Zerr, p. 230); “*it is a sin of habit; a sin that is willingly and deliberately persisted in; a sin which is committed with a high hand and in open violation and contempt of God’s law*” (Milligan, p. 365); “*deliberate rejection of truth*” (Lightfoot, p. 193).

“**knowledge**” — epignosis — “*recognition, i.e., full discernment, acknowledgment*” (Strong); “*precise and correct knowledge*” (Thayer); “*it is more intense than gnosis, knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. In the NT, it often refers to knowledge which very powerfully influences the form of religious life, a knowledge laying claim to personal involvement*” (Zodhiates); “*this is full knowledge*” (Robertson, p. 578); “*refers to knowledge of moral and ethical values as well as of sin. It also refers to intimate acquaintance with God*” (Renn, p. 569).

The danger spoken against and warned against is total apostasy, as it has been throughout the book of Hebrews. Purposely not attending the worship service (Sunday) is an indication that one is in danger of total apostasy. Forsaking the assembly is a symptom of a greater problem. It is a visible evidence of a heart which lacks or is losing its saving faith. These Hebrew Christians were very much in danger of permanently leaving Christianity and returning to their former religion — Judaism. **What lesson can be learned and applied from this today?** Simply this: there are those today who leave false religions of the world (Islam, Hinduism, etc.), the false forms of Christianity known as denominations, the scientific religions of evolution and humanism, et cetera. They leave these false religions and become a part of the body of Christ through knowledgeable studies of GOD’s divine will (Bible). But then, they become

discouraged for whatever reason (persecution by relatives or friends, unchristian conduct by brethren, seductions of philosophy, etc.). Then they purposely give up Christianity for their former religion or no religion at all. Such have given up the truth which can save them; they have purposely turned their backs on the only Savior of the world. If they remain in their new state of rejection, they no new sacrifice for their sins to look forward to, because Christ made the only sacrifice for sin one time, for all time.

Under the Jewish system, GOD had given them a yearly atonement, but under the new covenant there is only one. If they turned their backs on Christ's atonement, there would not be another one for them. When anyone, whether then or now, deliberately rejects the only atonement that will cleanse him of his sins, there is not another sacrifice which can be offered. The picture drawn here is of one who knows the only sacrifice for sins is Christ, yet, seeks another way to gain forgiveness of his sins.

This passage does not deal with sins of oversight, inadvertent sins, sins of ignorance, backsliding — this is dealing with continued sins of presumption. These are deliberate rebellious sins which cause one to deny the Christ and His sacrifice for mankind. This is a continual action (as the verbs attest to), one who continually forsakes the assembly.

Consider the case of David here for a moment to illustrate this passage. In Second Samuel, chapter eleven, David committed adultery. Did David know adultery was a sin? Did David know murder was a sin? To ask is to answer — surely he did, yet, he committed both. The wilful sin is something more than simply doing something that one knows is wrong. David sought and received forgiveness according to 2nd Samuel 12:13. If David had continually involved himself in adultery or murder, then he could not have been forgiven until he repented and stopped such activities. This passage in Hebrews is speaking about continued rebellion from which one will not repent.

For one's consideration, notice some thoughts on this passage from other writers.

"The case is that a deliberate apostate — one who has utterly rejected Christ and His atonement, and renounced the whole gospel system. It has nothing to do with backsliding in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not hopeless; no case is hopeless except that of the deliberate apostate, who rejects the whole gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the gospel. To him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; for there was but the one, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected" (Clarke, p. 757).

"To sin willfully is to sin deliberately after one knows what is right and true. This does not refer to just one sin. The tense indicates it means to sin and keep on sinning. This does not

refer to the Christian who is striving to do right, but occasionally stumbles and sins. This refers to the Christian who turns away from Christ and his word and deliberately sins and keeps on sinning. It is the same as in Hebrews 6:6-8. This person similar to the person under the law of Moses who sinned with a high hand and there was no atonement for him (Numbers 15:27-31). Nor is this talking about the Christian who drifts away from Christ, sins grievously, but one day comes to himself, repents and returns to the Lord seeking forgiveness. As the parable of the prodigal son and others scriptures teach, an unfaithful Christian may be restored. However, when one deliberately and willfully turns away from Christ and keeps on sinning, he will be lost. The blood of Christ cannot save one who does not repent, nor can he be saved in any other way. It should be understood that this person received the knowledge of the truth. This means he knew it, obeyed it and became a sincere Christian. The writer is not saying that any of these Christians have done this. He teaches, if they do this. It is possible for a true Christian to fall away from grace and be eternally lost” (Sheerer, p. 1013).

The text here is very similar to that of Hebrews 6:1-6. 1st John 5:16 might also be considered.

The impact of passages like that found in verse twenty-six is often seen by those who advocate false doctrines. When such is the case, those who hold such a doctrine must find some way to deny the truth contained in such passages. Such an attempt is shown below.

“This sin could only be committed in the first century while the temple was still standing and only by an unsaved Jew or proselyte to Judaism. In this case, there can be no secondary application to present day circumstances or individuals” (Wuest, Vol. 2, p183).

This writer wonders **what other sin the New Testament condemns which can simply be written of by Wuest and others by simply saying that it could only be done in the first century?** Further, if this writer understands Wuest’s words, he denies that anyone spoken of in this text was ever really a converted Jew. To avoid the possibility of apostasy, he must deny they ever really became Christians. Wuest’s words are those of one who denies the Bible in order to uphold the false human doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”

Heb. 10:27 “But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

“but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.” (ASV)

“but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” (NKJV)

“But only a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.” (ESV)

“fearful” — phoberos — *“frightful, i.e., (objectively) formidable:*

fearful, terrible” (Strong); *“inspiring fear, terrible, formidable... affected with fear, timid”* (Thayer); *“dreadful, terrible, horrifying”* (Zodhiates); *“causing fear, fearful, terrible, frightful”* (Bauer, p. 862).

“looking” — *ekdoche* — *“expectation: looking for”* (Strong); *“expectation, awaiting”* (Thayer); *“a looking for, expectation”* (Zodhiates); *“expectation”* (Bauer, p. 239).

“devour” — *esthio* — *“to eat”* (Strong); *“metaphor to devour, consume”* (Thayer); *“to eat, consume food, spoken both of men and animals”* (Zodhiates); *“to (figuratively) eat”* (Robertson, p. 579).

The state spoken of in this passage is true of all sinners who persist in their sins, not matter who they are or what sin one speaks about. For such a person there is no room for hope, only a fearful looking for of judgment. An understanding of this fact should cause one to desire repentance which will lead to obeying GOD and gaining His forgiveness. The wilful sinner has only one thing to expect — the wrath of GOD. Anyone who voluntarily leaves the fold of GOD, after having embraced His law, has enough understanding of the way GOD operates to realize there is only deserved punishment ahead of him unless he repents. When one looks to the past, he can easily see how GOD acted toward those in rebellion to Him: Korah and his company (Numbers 16:35); Elijah’s prayer answered (1 Kings 18:38).

“God Himself is represented as a consuming fire (12:29), before whom all the wicked will finally perish (2 Thess. 1:8)” (Milligan, p. 36).

“God’s judgment on the wicked is often pictured as coming in fire (Isaiah 66:15-16; Zeph. 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Heb. 12:29; Rom. 2:8)” (Lightfoot, p. 194).

Fire is a term often used by GOD to describe His judgment and future punishment of the wicked. This is probably true because one can hardly think of anything more horrible than being burned alive. Paul’s warning here should cause the sinner to tremble and cause all weak-kneed and spineless Christians to examine themselves and start serving GOD faithfully. **All** adversaries of GOD **will be** devoured by GOD’s righteous indignation. Further, it should be noticed that the word *“devour”* is a present tense verb which indicates continued action. In other words, once this *“fiery indignation”* begins, it is eternal — never ending.

The former faithful Christian who becomes apostate is spoken of as GOD’s adversary. One is either on GOD’s side or he is against GOD. One fights for GOD or fights against Him. **No one can be neutral!** A danger which many face is thinking that the wicked are only those hardened criminals, non-Christians, et cetera. Jesus spoke of very religious people being lost.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord,

Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

A Christian who refuses to give up a sin in his life is just as much an adversary of GOD as is the atheist! People can be very moral people and not be religiously obedient to GOD; thus, they are GOD’s adversary and are eternally lost unless they repent.

Heb. 10:28 **“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:”**

“A man that hath set at nought Moses law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses:” (ASV)

“Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (NKJV)

“Anyone who despised Moses’ Law died without mercy on the basis of two or three witnesses.” (ESV)

“despised” — atheteo — *“cast off, despise, disannul, frustrate, bring to nought, reject”* (Strong); *“do away with — something laid down, prescribed, established...to thwart the efficacy of anything, nullify, make void, frustrate”* (Thayer); *“to displace, to abrogate, abolish, get rid of. In the NT to make void, render null”* (Zodhiates); *“declare invalid, nullify, set aside...reject, not recognize”* (Bauer, p. 21); *“reject”* (Renn, p. 275); *“to set aside, abrogate, reject”* (Spicq, p. 39).

The subject of the text is apostasy, and it is this sin of apostasy which is being described as one which deserves no mercy. Those who **“despised Moses’ law”** were those who would have done away with that law if it had been possible. Every commentator which this writer read agrees that the reference here is to Deuteronomy 17:2-7. In that passage, it is noted that it was the serving of other gods which was to be punished without mercy. It was the turning away from the right worship and object of worship (GOD) and turning to a god which was not GOD. Notice also that the law regarding apostates was an absolute law; there was no reprieve for the guilty one.

“This is the best possible commentary on our text. It proves beyond all doubt that for the apostate under the Old Covenant there was no forgiveness. And now he proceeds to show by an argument, a minori ad majus, that the case of the apostate under the superior light and privileges of the New Covenant, is even more intolerable” (Milligan, p. 367).

If under an inferior law the penalty for apostasy was so severe, one can only imagine what the penalty will be for those who apostatize under the superior law of Christ.

Heb. 10:29 **“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”**

“of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (ASV)

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of GOD underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (NKJV)

“How much sorer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under-foot the Son of GOD, and who considers the blood of the covenant in which He was sanctified an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (ESV)

Regarding why the punishment would be greater for the apostate under the New Covenant, Stancliff offered this observation.

“What has the man done who forsakes the assembly? He has spurned all three persons of the Godhead. First, he has insulted God by rejecting the saving power of His Son, Second, he has insulted Christ by refusing to follow His example and considering His blood as inconsequential. Third, he has insulted the Holy Spirit by ignoring the revealed will of God in the inspired scriptures” (p. 171).

The greatest punishment for the apostate Hebrew was physical death (or so they thought). They were afraid of physical harm from those who persecuted Christians. This passage deals with the eternal aspect of punishment. It makes sure these Hebrew Christians understood that there is a punishment beyond this life and that the apostate to Christ will suffer immensely more than physical death.

“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:47-48).

Three reasons for the severity of the punishment are now listed. “Hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD” There are obvious ideas involved in this word picture of being “trodden under foot.” There is the idea of the conqueror who placed his enemies under his foot in triumph. By so doing, he showed his contempt for them and declared his superiority over them. The second idea is that men walk on that which they consider despised, a relatively useless substance.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matthew 5:13).

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6).

The salt had once been worth something to the people, but when they

perceived that there was no longer any value in it, they cast it out and walked on it like they would on common dirt. So it was with these Hebrews Christians; they had once recognized the value of Christ, but then there came a time when they no longer considered Him of His sacrifice as being worthy anything. They no longer considered His blood to have saving power, so figuratively they cast Him out to be trodden under foot.

“hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing”

“The word ‘counted’ in the Greek text refers to a conscious judgment resting on deliberate weighing of the facts. Here it implies a deliberate, contemptuous rejection of the Messianic sacrifice of the Son of God” (Wuest, p. 185).

What is the blood of the covenant? It is the blood of Jesus, which sealed the covenant (Hebrews 9:16-20). By neglecting the Lord, by disobedience to His will, the person involved decided that the sacrifice which Christ made is worthless. By disobedience, by turning his back on Him (deserting Him), he declared the blood of Jesus to be common, no different from any other blood whether human or animal. But in fact, when he turned back to the Law of Moses, he was declaring that he thought the blood of animals was superior to Christ’s blood.

“How does one make the blood of Jesus common? By his indifference to it, by responding to it not at all, or half-heartedly, by neglecting to enter by means of the access provided through it, or, in short, either by non-Christian or anti-Christian conduct” (Coffman, p. 242).

It is only by the blood of Jesus that anyone can be sanctified. Those who turn away from Christ turn away from the blood, the only blood which can cleanse them of their sin. In turning away from that precious blood, the one turning away plainly declares that he is truly worthy of the **“sorer punishment”** which awaits him.

“wherewith he was sanctified”

This phrase “Is further evidence that the people addressed in Hebrews, and with such a powerful exhortation, were true Christians as far as previous experience was concerned, and that they were not merely those ‘superficially’ associated with Christianity” (Coffman, p. 242).

Amen. Where does that leave those who advocate the impossibility of apostasy doctrine? High and dry.

“Hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace” Those who deserve such punishment have treated the Holy Spirit with contempt. Here the Holy Spirit is called the **“Spirit of grace.”** The Spirit of GOD delivered His grace to mankind through words.

“no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the

Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:16-17, 26).

“For the grace of GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

When man turns his back on the instructions which GOD has given (His revealed grace, love, etc.), he has treated the Holy Spirit with contempt. He deserves the “**sorer punishment**” awaiting him.

Heb. 10:30 “For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people.”

“For we know Him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge His people.” (ASV)

“For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The LORD will judge His people.” (NKJV)

“For we know Him who said, The right to punish is Mine, I will repay. And again, the Lord will judge His people.” (ESV)

“For we know Him that that said” The words of Milligan cannot be improved upon here.

“The meaning is, we know the character of God: we know Him to be a God of truth; a God of justice; and a God of infinite power and holiness” (p. 369).

All of these qualities had been demonstrated in the past through GOD’s dealings with mankind. The Hebrew people addressed in this ext well knew the qualities of GOD.

This GOD Who is known, this GOD whose character is clearly revealed, has said, “**Vengeance belongeth unto Me**” (Deuteronomy 32:35) and “**The Lord shall judge His people**” (Deuteronomy 32:36). This passage has been interpreted to mean that GOD is going to vindicate and avenge His people for all of the wrongs they have received at the hands of their enemies. Others interpret it to be a declaration that GOD is so just that He will not allow the sins of His own children to pass unpunished. Both thoughts are definitely included in the apostle’s argument. The argument was being made to try to halt these Jewish Christians from walking into total apostasy. He caused them to think back and recognize the seriousness of their actions. They knew what GOD — because of His justice — had done to the enemies of Israel (Pharaoh, etc.); they also knew that He had not hesitated to bring judgment upon those of Israel who had disobeyed Him (Nadab and Abihu, Moses, etc.). It is the same GOD who dealt with their forefathers who would deal with them. They had

a choice to make — serve GOD faithfully or be counted as His enemy.

“The mere fact that they are his people will not save them from punishment if they deserve it, any more than the fact that one is a beloved child will save him from correction when he does wrong” (Barnes, p. 243).

The only intercessor with the blood man needs is Christ. If man turns his back upon Christ, he has no way to reach GOD. All **that man** has to look forward to is the vengeance of GOD. Hen one apostatizes, he walks away from the cleansing blood of Christ.

The word “**vengeance**” is not used here to indicate vindictiveness, as it is commonly used today. Instead, it is the idea of a just GOD who dispenses justice. This justice rewards the faithful and punishes the disobedient.

Heb. 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD.”

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD.” (ASV)

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD.” (NKJV)

“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD” (ESV)

There is a sense in which all should fear GOD, but the text here is particularly speaking about the coming judgment.

“I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him” (Luke 12:5).

For a faithful child of GOD, falling into His hands at judgment is not a terrifying experience. Rather, it will be a joyous event. But for the apostate, for the unbeliever, this will be a time of extreme fear. Now he will be under the total control of GOD, and will not be able to resist anything GOD may wish to do to him. He cannot resist the power of GOD. He will not have any more free choices to make.

Barnes listed the following reasons why he thinks falling into GOD’s hands is such a fearful thing.

“(1) Because he has all power, and can inflict just what punishment he pleases; (2) because he is strictly just, and will inflict the punishment which ought to be inflicted; (3) because he lives forever, and can carry on his purpose of punishment to eternal ages; and (4) because the actual inflictions of punishment which have occurred show what is to be dreaded” (p. 244).

GOD has demonstrated many times in the past that He can do anything He wants to do; He **is** all-powerful!

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them

that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Heb. 10:32 “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;”

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;” (ASV)

“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings;” (NKJV)

“But remember those earlier days after you were enlightened, in which you endured a great struggle with afflictions;” (ESV)

“afflictions” — pathema — “something undergone, i.e., hardship or pain; subjectively an emotion or influence” (Strong); “that which one suffers or has suffered; externally, a suffering, misfortune, calamity, evil, affliction” (Thayer); “suffering, affliction” (Zodhiates); “suffering, misfortune” (Bauer, p. 602).

After having warned these Christians of the dangers of apostasy in very stern language. Paul then encouraged them to do what was right, to remind them that they had once endured strong persecution and that they could do it again. They were to remember what had happened in the past, not simply for the sake of remembering, but to carefully consider the things which had taken place — to learn from them. The tense of the original word (anamimnesko) indicates that were to constantly remind themselves of those persecution. They were to carefully consider those events to learn from them and realize that they could endure in their present distress.

Specifically, they were to remember the days when they had been “illuminated.” He went on to remind them of all they had suffered during that time simply because they had become Christians. **What did he mean by the phrase “ye were illuminated?”** This was the time when they had been enlightened by the Gospel as to the will of GOD and had obeyed it. Having obeyed the Gospel, that obedience had cost them dearly. This may very well refer to those first years of Christianity when they were heavily persecuted by the Jewish countrymen. It is possible that some of those who read Paul’s words had been persecuted by Paul himself.

“Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:1-3).

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues,

that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:9-11).

What they had suffered is described as “a great fight of affliction.” This was not simply being made fun of or ridiculed because of their faith. Their nation had made them miserable in their opposition to Christianity. One of the things this writer has observe from the Bible is that those who are striving to obey GOD do not have to go looking for a battle — the battle will come to them! Jesus and the apostles did not go out **looking** for a fight with the unbelievers — the enemies of truth. The persecutors came to them simply because of their stand for truth. Christians do not have to wage campaigns against the proponents of error; they simply have to teach the truth against error wherever it is found. When such is done, the promoters of error will wage war on faithful Christians.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20).

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12).

It would be helpful in understanding the persecutions (“afflictions”) the Christians of this text endured by reading Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Heb. 10:33 “Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.”

“partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used.” (ASV)

“partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;” (NKJV)

“Partly by being made a public display to insults and tribulations, and partly

by being partners to those who were living like this.” (ESV)

“gazingstock” — theatrizo — *“to expose as a spectacle”* (Strong); *“to bring upon the stage; hence to set forth as a spectacle, expose to contempt”* (Thayer); *“to be an actor in the theater, make a public spectacle. In the NT, to make a public spectacle of, to expose to public scorn”* (Zodhiates); *“put to shame, expose publicly...publicly exposed to reproach and affliction”* (Bauer, p. 353); *“late verb to bring upon the stage, to hold in derision”* (Robertson, p. 579); *“denotes an exhibition of something for people to gaze at with contempt”* (Zerr, p. 231); *“To bring upon the stage, to set forth as a spectacle, expose to contempt”* (Wuest, p. 187). In modern times this is the word from one gets “theater.”

“reproaches” — oneidismos — *“contumely: reproach”* (Strong); *“a reproach”* (Thayer); *“reviling, upbraiding”* (Zodhiates); *“reproach, reviling, disgrace, insult”* (Bauer, p. 570); *“reproach, cursing, mockery, blasphemy...oneidismos is shameful, causes blushing, and is dreaded above all else, because it implies scorn”* (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 585); *“to upbraid, to revile, to cast in one’s teeth”* (Wuest, p. 187).

“afflictions” — thlipsis — *“pressure: afflicted anguish, burdened persecution, tribulation, trouble”* (Strong); *“a pressing, pressing together, pressure...oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits”* (Thayer); *“to crush, press, compass, squeeze, which is from to break. Tribulation, trouble, affliction”* (Zodhiates); *“pressing, pressure...in the figurative sense oppression, affliction, tribulation”* (Bauer, p. 362); *“it occurs around fifty times with the predominant sense of ‘affliction’ or ‘tribulation,’ with an underlying sense of deep-seated anguish and suffering”* (Renn, p. 20).

“companions” — koinonos — *“a sharer, i.e., associate”* (Strong); *“a partner, associate, companion...a partaker, sharer”* (Thayer); *“a partaker, partner, companion”* (Zodhiates); *“companion, partner, sharer. One who takes part in something with someone”* (Bauer, p. 439); *“co-sharers in, partakers with someone else”* (Wuest, p. 188).

Studies of Greek and Roman life show that they often took prisoners to the theater so that the people could view, abuse, and insult them. The Christians of this text had been publicly shamed in some way for their belief. It is possible that these occasions would be used in an attempt to get them to renounce their Christianity through the pressure exerted by the mob’s abuse of them. While the world looked upon and treated them with contempt, think of the Father in Heaven looking down upon them with pride because of their faithfulness. Think of the desire the angels must have had for them to remain faithful to Christ.

The apostle broke their afflictions down into two groups. First,

some were made “a gazingstock.” But how were they made gazingstock? “Both by reproaches and afflictions.”

*“The word **reproaches** (oneidismoi) has reference to the reproachful epithets which were heaped upon the Christians by the persecutors; and the word **afflictions** (thlipseis) denotes the various sufferings and calamities which they endured”* (Milligan, p. 371).

Second, there was the group of afflictions brought about because they were directly under attack and were joined by those who made themselves partners with them in their “reproaches and afflictions.”

When they became Christians, they were so concerned about pleasing GOD and loved their brethren so much, that when they saw the cause of Christ under attack, they were willing to align themselves with them.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:24-26).

They were willing to let the persecutors know that they were Christians too. They knew that when they came to the support of their brethren, they would then be subjected to the same abuse their brethren were suffering. Imagine the love for Christ and their brethren that this would take. One cannot help but ask himself, *Would I do the same thing they did in similar circumstances today?*

“The appeal in these words is to the truly heroic and faithful endurance of those Hebrew Christians who, at the first, had stood against every persecution and insult, and had endured every hardship, and had continued in spite of every shameful thing done to them, never deviating and never turning back” (Coffman, p. 246).

In leaving this verse, notice the translation Wuest gives for this passage.

“On the one hand, this, while ye were being made a spectacle as in a theater by means of both revilings and distresses, and on the other hand, this, while ye made yourselves fellow-partakers of those who fared thus” (p. 188)

In the next verse it will be shown the reward which made such suffering worth enduring.

Heb. 10:34 “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

“For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of you possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.” (ASV)

“for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.” (NKJV)

“You had sympathy for those in prison, and you accepted cheerfully the seizure of your property; knowing of yourselves that you have a better possession, one that is permanent.” (ESV)

“spoiling” — harpazo — *“pillage: extortion, ravening, spoiling”* (Strong); *“the act of plundering, robbery...plunder, spoil”* (Thayer); *“robbery”* (Zodhiates); *“robbery, plunder...what has been stolen, plunder...greediness, rapacity”* (Bauer, p. 108); *“A noun found three times meaning ‘to extort’”* (Renn, p. 925); *“Steal, carry off, drag away”* (Earle, p. 427); *“the word ‘spoiling’ is the translation of harpazo which here refers to the violent, unjust seizure of the property of these who were being persecuted”* (Wuest, p. 189).

“enduring” — meno — *“to stay (in a given place, relation or expectancy)”* (Strong); *“to remain, abide...to continue to be, i.e., not to perish, to last, to endure”* (Thayer); *“to remain, abide, dwell, live”* (Zodhiates); *“remain, stay...of someone who does not leave the realm or sphere to which he finds himself: remain, continue, abide...last, persist, continue to live”* (Bauer, p. 504).

These Christians had shown compassion, i.e., their feelings of sympathy had been extended to their suffering fellow Christians. Ancient prisons did not coddle prisoners as is done today. If they had a need and it was not supplied by friends or family — they did without. To be placed in prison in those days could be the same as a death sentence if one did not have friends/family to help him. Often times they did not even provide food.

The apostle notes that their compassion had cost them the **“spoiling of your goods.”** Their earthly possessions were taken from them — implying they were forcibly taken. It is not known whether this theft was accomplished by government confiscation or by the mob’s taking advantage of their lack of popularity to steal their possessions — maybe both.

“‘when a Jew,’ says Ebrard, ‘shows himself determined to become a Christian, he is disinherited by his relatives; his share of the property is withheld from him; his credit and every source of gain, withdrawn; and he falls into a state of complete destitution’” (Milligan, p.372).

These Christians had not endured the loss of their physical property, but the text shows they endured it with joy. **How could they lose their possessions and be joyful (happy)?** The answer can be found in their belief of the words of Jesus.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

These Christians could accept and be joyful at the theft of their earthly goods because they understood that you cannot take it with

you. They understood that there was a treasure awaiting them which could not be taken from them. Their treasure was in Heaven. As long as they remained faithful to Christ, it was stored for them. (They could give it away by refusing to be faithful, but it could not be taken from them by unbelievers.)

While teaching His disciples, Jesus pointed out the reward for His faithful servants. On one occasion He spoke of those who were “blessed” as those who came to Him when He was in prison (Matthew 25:36). In verse forty-three of that chapter, He condemned those who had **not** visited Him in prison. Jesus did not actually spend time in prison (unless you count the night of His trial). Jesus was preparing His disciples for the time when they would be persecuted and imprisoned simply because they were His disciples. They were not to be ashamed of their brethren under those circumstances, but to provide for them. Thayer says the word “visited” in Matthew 25:43, means *“to look upon in order to help of benefit, i. q., to look after, have a care for, provide for”* (p. 242). Thus, a failure to care for brethren during trying times is a failure to love the Lord enough to have cared for Him. See the next verse for a confirmation of this thought.

Heb. 10:35 “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.”

“Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.” (ASV)

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” (NKJV)

“So do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward;” (ESV)

“Cast not away” This is an action which in this context only believers can do. It is a throwing away of something which was in their possession. They had a great reward which could not be taken away from them, but they could cast it away by a failure to continue in a faithful walk with the Lord. Considering the context, the apostle may be telling them not to light-heartedly cast away their hope as if it were not very valuable or important. At one time they had thought this reward to be so valuable that they had suffered persecution for it.

“The writer exhorts the Jewish recipients of this letter not to throw away that cheerful courage, that boldness, that free and fearless confidence which they were displaying while they were enduring this persecution referred to in verses 32-34” (Wuest, p. 189).

They were not to cast away their boldness in the Lord. Barnes noted the following idea regarding the words “cast away.”

“May be an illusion here to the disgrace which was attached to the act of a warrior if he cast away his shield. Among the Greeks this was a crime which was punishable by death...A similar disgrace would attend the Christian soldier if he should cast away his shield of faith” (p. 246).

The writer of Hebrews reminded his readers if they would stand firm and fight the battles, they had a **“great recompence of reward”**

awaiting them. This passage echoes Paul's parting message to Timothy.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

The word "reward" is used in this passage to motivate Christians to continue in faithful service to GOD. This reward is not something one earns in the sense that GOD owes him something for faithful service. No matter how much one does or suffers in faithful service to GOD, his eternal salvation is still a gift.

"when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

GOD gave each one life and a Savior — man owes Him. Yet, it cannot be denied that there is a reward (gift) which GOD gives for faithful service.

"thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).

Heb. 10:36 "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of GOD, ye might receive the promise."

"For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of GOD, ye may receive the promise." (ASV)

"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of GOD, you may receive the promise." (NKJV)

"For you have need of endurance so that, after doing the will of GOD, you may receive the promise." (ESV)

"patience" — hupomone — "*cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy: enduring patience, patient continuance (waiting)*" (Strong); "*steadfastness, constancy, endurance; in the N.T., the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings*" (Thayer); "*a bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances*" (Zodhiates); "*patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance*" (Bauer, p. 846); "*the word 'patience' is the translation of hupomene which means literally 'to remain under,' That is, these Jews are exhorted to remain under the persecutions and not seek to escape them by renouncing their professed faith in Messiah*" (Wuest, p. 189).

The word "patience" is the same word found in 2nd Peter 1:6. It is

perseverance (endurance) even in the middle of the strongest persecutions, as can easily be seen in this text. The crown of victory does not go to those who are faithful when it is easy to be faithful. It goes to those who remain faithful even in times of severe persecution. The crown of victory goes to those who endure everything in this life and “keep on keeping on.”

“he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

“ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (The Revelation 2:10).

Patience is steadfast endurance.

The Hebrew Christians needed to continue their formerly strong efforts for Christ and not give way to the persecutions which were meant to cause them to renounce their faith and go back to serving Satan. The need for endurance under these trials is pointed out by the word “after.” It is after they had done the will of GOD that they would suffer. By remaining steadfast through these persecutions, one can “receive the promise” (eternal life with GOD).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

“One of the hardest things for the fleshly mind to realize is that the victory of faith is not achieved by one brilliant campaign but by a lifetime of patient and faithful service. It is not so much the glory of a promising start that the Lord desires as it is the glory of a faithful finish. It is such a fidelity to the end that is urged by the author here” (Coffman, p. 247).

Heb. 10:37 “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

“For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.” (ASV)

“For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.” (NKJV)

“Yet a very little while He who is coming will come and not delay.” (ESV)

This passage seems to be quoted from two different passages (cf. Isaiah 26:20; Habakkuk 2:3-4). In studying this passage there are three different views which were seen. These views are presented below for consideration by the reader.

1. *“The time of their deliverance from their trials was not far removed” (Barnes, p. 246).*

2. *“Little while is comparative, for the endless term of the reward will make even the centuries of waiting seem but a short time”* (Zerr, p. 231).
3. *“It is quite possible that the reference is not to his coming for the final judgment, but to his coming in judgment on Jerusalem. When he came figuratively in that judgment, the Christians were delivered from the Jewish persecution to which they had been subjected”* (Stringer, p. 49).

In considering the context in which this passage is found, it would seem that the passage is talking about the final judgment when the Lord will come with His mighty angels. It must be remembered that earthly time is relative when compared to eternity. Isaiah and Habakkuk spoke these words hundreds of years before the time of the book of Hebrews; yet, the writer of Hebrews still spoke of the time as being soon. **What is a hundred years of suffering in this world compared to eternity? Can a hundred years even be considered a speck in light of eternity?**

It should be remembered that Paul was encouraging them to endure, no matter what difficulties they might face in this life. The persecution of Christians is temporary, and their faithfulness to the Lord during these times will gain a reward that is everlasting.

Heb. 10:38 *“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”*

“But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.” (ASV)

“Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” (NKJV)

“But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he thinks back My soul will have no pleasure in him.” (ESV)

“just” — dikaios — *“equitable; by implication innocent, holy”* (Strong); *“righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be...contextually, approved of God, acceptable to God”* (Thayer); *“righteous, just. Used in the neuter, that which is right, conformable to right, pertaining to right, that which is just”* (Zodhiates); *“upright, just, righteous”* (Bauer, p. 195).

“faith” — pistis — *“persuasion, i.e., credence; moral conviction (of religious truth or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher) especially reliance upon Christ for salvation...by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity”* (Strong); *“conviction of the truth of anything, belief...in the N.T. of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it...when it relates to God, is the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through*

Christ...in reference to Christ, it denotes a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of GOD” (Thayer); “Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively meaning that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith” (Zodhiates); “pistis is the most common term denoting ‘faith’ in the New Testament, with the underlying senses of ‘belief,’ ‘trust,’ and ‘conviction’ in the person of God and Christ as the only means of salvation, forgiveness of sin, and guarantee of eternal life. In most cases, the meanings ‘belief’ and ‘faith’ are interchangeable” (Renn, p. 360).

“draw back” — hupostello — *“to withhold under (out of sight), i.e., (reflexively) to cower or shrink (figuratively) to conceal: draw (keep) back, shun, withdraw” (Strong); “to draw one’s self, i.e., to be timid, to cower, shrink: of those who from timidity hesitate to avow what they believe” (Thayer); “to haul down, lower, referring to a sail, to contract, furl. In the NT with heauton, himself, or the middle hupostellomai, to draw oneself back, out of sight, hence, generally to shrink or draw back, to withdraw oneself, retreat” (Zodhiates); “draw back, withdraw...draw back in fear...keep silent about something in fear” (Bauer, p. 847); “to draw one’s self under or back, to withdraw” (Robertson, p. 580).*

“pleasure” — eudokeo — *“to think well of, i.e., approve” (Strong); “to be well pleased with, take pleasure in” (Thayer); “To be well-pleased, to think it good. It means to think well of something by understanding not only what is right and good, but stressing the willingness and freedom of an intention or resolve regarding what is good” (Zodhiates); “be well pleased. Consider good, consent, determine, resolve...be well pleased, take delight with or in someone...also delight in, like, approve” (Bauer, p. 319); “a verb meaning to be (well) pleased.’ ‘Please,’ or ‘take pleasure in’” (Renn, p. 741).*

The **“just”** one in this passage is a Christian, any faithful Christian. **Who is the faithful child of GOD in whom He will have pleasure?** It is the one who lives by faith. This faith must be a constant, continuous confidence in GOD until the end of life in this world. Paul had been encouraging Christians to be persistent in following the Christ in the face of every obstacle which might be placed before them. If one persistently follows the Lord’s teaching, his habit of life will give him the strength needed to overcome any persecution the Devil may hurl his way.

This passage is a quotation of Habakkuk 2:4. In that passage, Habakkuk was pleading to know why GOD’s people had to suffer at the hands of the Babylonians and when they might be relieved of that suffering. GOD’s answer to Habakkuk was to remind him that GOD was in control and that their suffering would be relieved in His own

time. Human nature often feels that when it wants something, it should be attained immediately. GOD does not operate according to man's time schedule, but at the appropriate time He will act.

“if any man draw back” In this phrase the words **“any man”** are not found in the original. Thus the phrase, **“if draw back”** refers to the **“just”** of the first part of this passage. This passage is not speaking about “any man” drawing back from true faith (fulness); it speaks of a Christian drawing back. A non-Christian may hear the Gospel and draw back from it, but he is not the one being talked about here. Noticing the definition above, this drawing back refers to the one who, because of fear, pulls back from expressing and/or living what he formerly believed enough to have at one time proclaimed and practiced it. Fear of persecution which causes one to draw back from a clear stand for the truth is thus based solely on a lack of faith.

A firm, true belief in GOD and what He has provided for man will mean that no obstacle the Devil and his messengers place before one will hinder him from faithfully completing the journey to Heaven. The Lord does not take pleasure in quitters. If the Lord could endure what He did to order to give man the opportunity for salvation, then man can endure the trials of this life. Christian — DO NOT BE A QUITTER! **YOU CAN BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH!**

Heb. 10:39 **“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”**

“But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.” (ASV)

“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (NKJV)

“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction; but of them who believe to the saving of the soul.” (ESV)

“perdition” — apoleia — *“ruin or loss: damnable (-nation), destructive, die, perdition, perish, pernicious ways, waste”* (Strong); *“the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life, eternal misery, perdition, the lot of those excluded from the kingdom of God”* (Thayer); *“in the NT, apomleia refers to the state after death wherein exclusion from salvation is a realized fact, wherein man, instead of becoming what he might have been, is lost and ruined”* (Zodhiates); *“destruction”* (Bauer, p. 103); *“utter destruction...the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life; eternal misery, perdition”* (Wuest, p. 191).

Notice the word **“we.”** Paul placed himself with them and encouraged them to be as he was — faithful to his charge. He had previously warned them and shown them how they were moving toward apostasy. Then he expressed confidence that they would not go all the way into apostasy but rather would return to faithfulness which would grant them eternal life. **How did he do this?** By reminding them of the eternal destruction (perdition) which awaits those who **“draw back.”** He was letting them (us) know that they can overcome their temptations — they can be saved.

It might also be noticed that this is a clear and precise statement by Paul that, even if some of them did not draw back to their own destruction — he would not! All that Paul wrote shows that the faith which obeys and endures is that which saves the soul.

“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Look at the absolute confidence Paul had in his salvation and ask one’s self — **Do I have that confidence? If not, why not? Is out faith what it should be and can be?**

Hebrews Chapter Eleven

Heb. 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

“Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.”
(ASV)

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (NKJV)

“Now faith is the foundation of hopes, the evidence of things not seen.” (ESV)

“substance” — hupostasis — *“a setting under (support)”* (Strong); *“confidence, firm trust, assurance”* (Thayer); *“in general, that which underlies the apparent, hence, reality, essence, substance; that which is the basis of something, hence, assurance, guarantee, confidence”* (Zodhiates); *“substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality”* (Bauer, p. 847); *“substance, firmness, confidence, collection of documents establishing ownership, guarantee, proof. [The commentaries of the church fathers and the medievals followed this line of interpretation; faith contains substance of eternal life, which is the prima inchoatio (first beginning) of the object of hope. It already possesses that hope, perhaps only faintly, but nevertheless in its true essence... Faith is a title of ownership on property that is in the future.]”* (Spicq, Vol. 3, p. 421). *“That which stands under, a foundation...the whole body of documents bearing on the ownership of a person’s property, deposited in archives, and forming the evidence of ownership”* (Wuest, p. 193); *“a word which means basis or foundation on which something rests”* (Zerr, p. 232).

“evidence” — elegchos — *“proof, conviction: evidence, reproof”* (Strong); *“a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested”* (Thayer); *“conviction. Metonymically, meaning certain persuasion”* (Zodhiates); *“proof, proving”* (Bauer, p. 249); *“it means properly proof, or means of proving, to wit, evidence; then proof which convinces another of error or guilt; then vindication or defense; then summary or contents”* (Barnes, p. 252).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for” Regarding faith, Wuest stated:

“Faith apprehends as a real fact what is not revealed to the senses. It rests on that fact, acts upon it, and is upheld by it in the face of all that seems to contradict it. Faith is real seeing” (p. 193).

The Hebrew writer used the term **“faith”** to speak about what faith does. This is seen in the rest of the chapter where he spoke of an individual’s faith and then shows what it caused them to do. It may be good here to translate the word **“faith”** as “faithfulness.” For proof of this, notice verse thirty-eight of the previous chapter; **“now the just shall live by faith.”** He spoke of living by faith, and now he expanded on that by showing **how** one can live by faith.

The faith spoken of in this text is not some blind leap into the dark. Biblical faith only exists when it is built upon evidence. Biblical faith in the existence of things which one cannot physically see rests on the visible evidence all around him. For example, one cannot physically

see GOD, but faith in Him derives from the evidence of a Creator in the physical universe.

“the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

The evidence of an intelligent, superior being’s (GOD’s) existence is provided by an orderly universe, the intricate nerve system of the human body, the complexity of the human brain, et cetera. All these things and an unfathomable multiplicity of other evidences point to an all-powerful intelligence with the power to create all things — GOD. Faith in GOD is not built on a whim of desire or someone’s imagination — it is built upon solid evidence which may be seen.

Once the existence of GOD is established, then one turns to the testimony He has presented to man — the Bible. Examining His word causes faith in that which cannot be seen (Heaven, Hell, etc.) to grow. Faith in His word is established through its consistency and its never-ending accuracy. With observations of nature, man may know without doubt that there is a GOD; but from nature alone, **what does man know about GOD?** From nature alone, **what can man know about how GOD wants His creation to live and worship?**

Once this faith in GOD and His revelation is established, one has the foundation which allows him, in the face of all adversity, to maintain his faith. Once this faith is established, it becomes the foundation for all for which one hopes. In this text, the English word “substance” has often been disparaged as not being sufficient, i.e., not giving the true meaning. This is not the case, instead, it is the best English word which could be used. Today, man uses the word “substance” to speak of the essence of something. But the original word is a compound word: **sub** — “*under, beneath, below*” and **stance** — “*to stand*” (Webster). This totally agrees with the definition of the Greek word used in this text.

The idea, then, is that faith is the ground upon which all of one’s hope is built. Using the term “title deed” (as seen in the above definition), the following illustration may help one’s understanding here. When a mortgage on a house is obtained there is all kinds of legal paperwork which must be filled out. This paper work is a guarantee that the house belongs to the buyer (in the future). Yet, there is a condition involved — he must **faithfully** make all of the payments. His hope in actually owning the house (future) rests upon his faith in all of those documents. Upon faithfully meeting the conditions of ownership, the house actually becomes his.

“In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

Receiving the place our Lord is preparing in Heaven for one depends upon his faithfully observing the Lord’s will.

All of a Christian’s hope for eternity with GOD is based on the faith he has. This faith will cause him to do what GOD tells him to do in

order to obtain that reality which he cannot presently see with the human eye, but which is seen through the eye of faith.

Heb. 11:2 “For by it the elders obtained a good report.”

“For therein the elders had witness borne to them.” (ASV)

“For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” (NKJV)

“In this the elders gained approval.” (ESV)

“report” — martureo — “to be a witness, i.e., testify” (Strong); “To be a witness, to bear witness, testify” (Thayer); “to be a witness, bear witness...to bear witness, to testify to the truth of what one has seen, heard, or knows” (Zodhiates); “bear witness, be a witness...be witnessed, have witness borne by someone...be well spoken of, be approved” (Bauer, p. 493); “To bear witness to” (Wuest, p. 194); “were testified of” (JFB, p. 566).

The word “elders” in this verse does not refer to the office held in the New Testament church. It refers to the “fathers,” those saints who lived in Old Testament times. These fathers obtained a “good report.” Who gave them this “good report,” and upon what basis was it given? GOD bore them this witness, and they received it because they acted upon the faith described in verse one. They viewed the evidence provided, they acted in obedience to it, and GOD immortalized them on the pages of Scripture. This honorable testimony is not only given in this chapter, but the detailed record of them in the Old Testament also bears them honorable testimony.

In considering this chapter, the conclusion is reached that the only thing which matters is receiving GOD’s commendation. The praises of the world are temporary at best and often times hardly worth receiving. These people were immortalized in Scripture, not because of what man thought of them, but upon GOD’s view of their lives. So it is with Christians who will receive Heaven or Hell — not because of man’s view of them, but by how GOD see their lives. That is exactly why no man can “preach” someone into Heaven or Hell. Milligan’s words are well worth consideration here.

“They believed God’s Word; and they were, therefore, constrained to look upward for life, health and happiness. They set their affections on things that are above, and not on things that are on the Earth, knowing that they were strangers and pilgrims in this world. This unwavering confidence in God and in the word of His grace, gave them even while here a realization of good things to come, and enabled them to endure with meekness and fortitude the severest trials and afflictions” (p. 387).

Heb. 11:3 “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of GOD, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

“By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of GOD, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.”

(ASV)

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of GOD, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” (NKJV)

“By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of GOD, so that things seen were not made out of things that appear.” (ESV)

“**were framed**” — katartizo — “*to complete thoroughly, i.e., repair or adjust: fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect*” (Strong); “*to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust*” (Thayer); “*the fundamental meaning is to put a thing in its appropriate condition, to establish, set up, equip, arrange, prepare, mend*” (Zodhiates); “*prepare, make, create*” (Bauer, p. 417); “*to mend, to equip, to perfect*” (Robertson, p. 580); “*from the etymology and usage of the word, its basic sense is to put in or restore to a condition, to make n objet fit for its purpose, prepare it and adapt it to its usage, hence to adjust and perfect*” (Spicq, Vol. 2, p. 271); “*to fit out or equip, so that a person or thing thus equipped or fitted out might subserve the purpose for which it was made*” (Wuest, p. 195).

“**word**” — rhema — “*an utterance*” (Strong); “*that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, things spoken, word*” (Thayer); “*that which is spoken, a statement, word. Particularly a word as uttered by a living voice*” (Zodhiates); “*that which is said, word, saying, expression*” (Bauer, p. 735).

“**Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of GOD**” The Hebrew writer took his readers all the way back to the creation to illustrate what he had said in the first two verses. It is through faith which is based on evidence that one can understand how the world (the entire universe and all that exists outside this universe) came into existence. **This world exists, so from where did it come?** The only **reasonable** answer is that intelligence brought it into being; therefore, because no human being was there to see it being brought into existence, belief on a Creator stands on faith. (Yes, this means that the evolutionists and “big bangers” are unreasonable. They would not believe a computer just happened to come into existence or that an explosion created it. They have not used the intelligence GOD gave them in a proper way.) **How did the world come into existence?** The evolutionists and big bang **theorist** are forced to go back at some point to an inanimate speck of something to arrive at the present universe. Faith in GOD causes one to accept the fact that GOD — an intelligent being — created every physical thing which exists from NOTHING. **How did He do this?** By speaking it into existence. When GOD speaks, that is it!

There are some who have thought that the word “**word**” in this passage is speaking about the agent GOD used: His Son. They base this on John 1:1, where the word “**Word**” is from the Greek word logos. But the word “**word**” in the present text is rhema. From the definitions above, it is seen that this word refers to words which are

spoken by a living voice, not the person speaking. GOD spoke, and all material existence came into being. When one turns back to Genesis chapter one, he discovers that the term “**GOD said**” is found ten times (vv. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). This writer believes this passage stresses that there is no physical evidence of how this world was created and there never will be! As hard as geologists try to explain everything in naturalistic terms they are only guessing. There is an unseen force (GOD) which does not submit itself to experimental science — this is the object upon which one’s faith must be based.

“so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” With clear and forceful language, this statement teaches that matter is not eternal! It also forcefully guides one to understand that GOD is eternal! The physical things seen in this world were not molded out of pre-existing materials.

“God created the matter and then framed that which was ‘without form, and void;’ for His purpose” (Keith Mosher, Sr.). GOD produced the material, made the “parts” from that material, and then precisely put them all together in a work of perfection.

“**GOD saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good**” (Genesis 1:31).

What GOD states about the existence of all of this universe is completely contrary to all human theories. Man says it could not have happened this way; GOD could not have parted the Red Sea; the blind cannot be made to see; the dead cannot be raised; on and on the unbeliever rants.

“**For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts**” (Isaiah 55:9).

Oh how it galls the man filled with pride in his own “knowledge” to think that there is a being superior to himself.

Heb. 11:4 “By faith Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, GOD testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

“By faith Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, GOD bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.” (ASV)

“By faith Abel offered to GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, GOD testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” (NKJV)

“By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice to GOD than Cain did, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous; GOD testifying to his gifts, and by it he, being dead yet speaks.” (ESV)

For historical background, read Genesis 4:1-15.

Why was Abel’s sacrifice acceptable to GOD, while Cain’s was refused? The answer is that Abel offered his sacrifice “**by faith.**” Romans 10:17 states that, “**faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD.**” Abel could not have offered an acceptable

sacrifice to GOD by faith unless he had first been instructed by GOD as to what was an acceptable sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable because he listened to GOD, believed GOD, and trusted GOD enough to obey His directions.

"He obtained witness that he was righteous" Abel was righteous, i.e., he did that which was right in GOD's eyes. With regard to Abel being righteous, notice what John wrote.

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:12).

In studying this passage it becomes obvious that a *"faith only"* doctrine is in error. By faith Abel offered the sacrifice which GOD commanded (11:4), which John called a work. If Abel had not had a working faith by doing what was commanded of him, GOD would not have accepted his offering.

"By it he being dead yet speaketh" In the written record, Abel is GOD's first martyr. His obedience to GOD cost him his life. Even though he is dead, the account of his life tells one the kind of faith GOD requires from His faithful children. Abel is declared righteous because of his obedience; whereas, Cain is declared unrighteous by his disobedience. The message should be clear to all through the ages.

Cain was a lot like many people today and of all ages. He relied upon his own thinking and not revelation to determine what was acceptable to GOD. He seemed to have reasoned that his own good works, as manifested by the produce which he had grown, would please GOD. I worked, I produced, GOD likes work and production. But GOD, at that time, had obviously instructed that a blood sacrifice should be offered. He also seemed to have had the idea that if he could get rid of the one whose righteous deeds condemned his unrighteous deeds, then everything would be all right. He also did not truly believe that GOD saw everything and he could not hide his evil deed from Him.

On the other hand, Abel, did not try to usurp GOD's authority in any way. By obeying GOD, he acknowledged the right of GOD to dictate the sacrifice which would please Him. He acknowledge GOD's right to dictate acceptable worship. His faith, which acted according to GOD's decree, saved him.

Heb. 11:5 "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because GOD had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased GOD."

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because GOD translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto GOD:" (ASV)

"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because GOD had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased GOD." (NKJV)

"By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God had taken him, for before his translation he had the witness that he was well pleasing to GOD." (ESV)

“was translated” — metatithemi — **“to transfer, i.e., transport”** (Strong); **“to transpose two things, one of which is put in place of the other...to transfer one’s self or suffer one’s self to be transformed, i.e., to go or pass over: to fall away or desert from one person or thing to another”** (Thayer); **“denoting change of place or condition, and to place. To transpose, put in another place and hence to transport, transfer, translate”** (Zodhiates); **“Change (the position of)...literally convey to another place, put in another place, transfer”** (Bauer, p. 513); **“convey to another place”** (Earle, p. 427).

For historical background, read Genesis 5:21-24; also note Jude 14.

Enoch was translated, i.e., he was moved from an earthly existence to a spiritual position (Hades, in particular paradise), without experiencing physical death. In all the Bible, there are only two men who were allowed to leave this earth without going through the pains of death — Enoch and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11; Genesis 5:24). The Bible teaches that all other men will die under normal circumstance (Hebrews 9:27). The Bible also teaches that there will be a time when others will not have to suffer death in order to go to their eternal reward.

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The fact that there have been two in the past for whom this exception was made proves that those alive (and faithful) when the Lord comes will be transported to a spiritual award without having to go through the pains of death, just as the Lord’s resurrection proves that there will be a resurrection at the end of time.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **Wherefore comfort one another with these words”** (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, emphasis mine, RK).

The next thing to notice in this passage is that he **“was not found.”** This indicates that when he was translated, a search was made for him, probably by associates and/or family members. From Jude, one learns that he was a prophet, and such a valuable person would indeed be sought for if he came up missing. When Enoch disappeared, he was missed because he was a servant of GOD. The question could be asked, **If a Christian disappeared from the scene today, would he be missed? If not, why not?**

One of the things to note about the translation of Enoch is that it was a bodily translation. There is nothing said about shedding his

body so that the spirit could be freed to go to paradise, and this fits perfectly with the change noticed in the passage above from Thessalonians. Enoch's body did not suffer the decay normally associates with physical death.

Why did GOD translate Enoch? It was because he lived an exceptional life which pleased GOD — he **“walked with GOD.”** When one puts the accounts of Genesis and Jude together, he can learn what kind of faith will save a man — a faith which obeys. One cannot walk with GOD without obeying His will, and one will not obey unless he first believes. Enoch was not translated because he was perfect, i.e., he had never sinned, for the Bible shows that that is impossible. **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD”** (Romans 3:23).

Heb. 11:6 **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”**

“And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him; for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.” (ASV)

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (NKJV)

“Without faith it is not possible to please Him for he who comes to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who eternally seek Him.” (ESV)

“without” — choris — **“at a space, i.e., separately or apart from”** (Strong); **“apart from”** (Thayer); **“separately from, without...besides, exclusive of”** (Zodhiates); **“separately, apart, by itself”** (Bauer, p. 890).

“impossible” — adunatos — **“unable, i.e., weak; passively impossible”** (Strong); **“without strength, impotent...impossible”** (Thayer); **“impossible, not to be done”** (Zodhiates); **“powerless, impotent...impossible”** (Bauer, p. 19).

“must” — dei — **“it is necessary (as binding)”** (Strong); **“it is necessary, there is need of it, it behooves, is right and proper... necessary in reference to what is required to attain some end”** (Thayer); **“needs, is necessary, has need of, is inevitable in the nature of things”** (Zodhiates); **“it is necessary, one must or hast to, denoting compulsion of any kind”** (Bauer, p. 172).

In its simplest form, this verse presents an axiomatic statement; **“Without faith it is impossible to please Him”** (GOD). **How does one please GOD?** By doing what He tells him to do. Without faith, one does not have the strength, the power, to please GOD. Without faith it is impossible to reach GOD. Second, this tells one that before any man can come to GOD, that man must believe two things: (1) That GOD is, and (2) that GOD rewards those who diligently seek (serve) Him.

Notice that this statement immediately followed the example of Enoch, but it is true of all who wish to please GOD. Enoch had this kind of faith, and see how richly he was blessed. If a man does not believe that GOD will reward them for diligent effort, he will not seek to obey Him. The principle behind this statement is seen in James 1:6-7, where the context talks about prayers for wisdom.

“let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

One who serves the Lord but does not really believe he will be rewarded will in fact receive nothing but condemnation.

Heb. 11:7 “By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

“By faith Noah, being warned of GOD concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” (ASV)

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” (NKJV)

“By faith Noah, being warned by GOD of things not yet seen, moved by godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” (ESV)

“being warned” — chrematizo — *“to utter an oracle”* (Strong); *“To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed”* (Thayer); *“To have a business affair or dealings, manage a business, especially in trade and money affairs...spoken in respect to a divine response, oracle, or declaration, to give response, speak as an oracle, warn from God, used in an absolute sense”* (Zodhiates); *“impart a revelation or injunction or warning”* (Bauer); *“warner’ is an old word for oracular or divine communications”* (Robertson, p. 581).

“moved with fear” — eulabeomai — *“to be circumspect, i.e., (by implication) to be apprehensive; religiously to reverence”* (Strong); *“to act cautiously, circumspectly...to reverence, stand in awe of”* (Thayer); *“to be cautious, thoughtful, circumspect, to receive well. To be afraid, to be moved or impressed with a natural or religious fear”* (Zodhiates); *“be afraid, be concerned...reverence, respect”* (Bauer, p. 322); *“to take hold well or carefully”* (Robertson, p. 581); *“a rare noun denoting ‘godly fear’”* (Renn, p. 373).

“prepared” — kataskewazo — *“to prepare thoroughly...by implication to construct, create”* (Strong); *“of builders, to*

construct, erect, with the included idea of adorning and equipping with all things necessary (Thayer); *“to prepare fully, put in readiness”* (Zodhiates); *“make ready, prepare something...build, construct, erect, create...furnish, equip”* (Bauer, p. 418); *“to equip, prepare, make ready”* (Wuest, p. 347).

“an ark” — kibotos — *“a box”* (Strong); *“a wooden chest, box”* (Thayer); *“an ark or a wooden chest, coffer, a hollow vessel”* (Zodhiates); *“box, chest”* (Bauer, p. 431).

“condemned” — katakrino — *“to judge against, i.e., sentence: condemn, damn”* (Strong); *“to give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn...by one’s good example to render another’s wickedness the more evident and censurable”* (Thayer); *“to pronounce sentence against, condemn, adjudge guilty...followed by the acc. of person and the dat., of punishment...by implication, to condemn by contrast, i.e., to show by one’s good conduct that others are guilty of misconduct and deserve condemnation”* (Zodhiates).

“righteousness” — dikaiosune — *“equity (of character or act); justification: righteousness”* (Strong); *“in the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be, righteousness; the condition acceptable to God”* (Thayer); *“justice, righteousness...in both the OT and NT, righteousness is the state commanded by God and standing the test of His judgment. It is conformity to all that He commands or appoints”* (Zodhiates); *“uprightness, justice...righteousness”* (Butler, p. 196).

For the historical record read Genesis 6:9-22.

“Being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet” Noah was warned by GOD, i.e., he received a divine communication which revealed the destruction which GOD was going to bring upon the wicked. It should be noted that GOD has always given man a warning regarding His judgments. Thus, the New Testament was written to warn mankind of impending judgment which will determine each one’s eternal destiny. **About what did GOD warn Noah?** Things which had never been seen before. The people of Noah’s day (all the way back to Adam) had never seen rain or a flood. The Bible says that the earth in pre-flood days was watered by a mist which came up out of the ground.

“There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the earth” (Genesis 2:6).

A mist excludes rain and certainly could not produce a flood.

Think of the tremendous trust and faith which this required of Noah. GOD said these events would take place, and Noah accepted Him at His word, even though nothing like this had ever happened before. For four hundred and eighty years Noah had been on the

earth when the Lord spoke to Him about the flood, and he had never seen or heard of such a thing, and neither had anyone else — ever! After GOD told him what was going to happen, he spent the next one hundred and twenty years preparing for that flood (Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came (Genesis 7:6).

“Moved with fear” An understanding of the word **“moved”** in this text helps one understand how fear motivated Noah to act. The original word shows that GOD’s warning caused him to act in a cautious and reverent way. This word shows the careful way in which Noah reacted to GOD’s warning and indicates how he would go about doing what GOD instructed him to do. The word **“fear”** does not carry the idea of “shaking in one’s boots,” but rather the idea of reverence and awe. Because of the respect and awe Noah had for GOD, he did what GOD told him to do. **What were the immediate results of Noah moving with fear?** His family was saved from destruction while the rest of humanity died.

One of the great lessons to notice here, is the care Noah took to insure the safety of his family. Not only did GOD’s instructions require much hard physical labor but they probably subjected him and his family to much ridicule. Yet, he continued to faithfully follow GOD in order to save his family and anyone else who would listen to his warnings.

There was another result of Noah’s moving with fear to do GOD’s will — **“by the which he condemned the world.”** The word **“condemned”** means to give judgment against or to judge one worthy of punishment. This would not only speak of his verbally warning the people of his day but primarily indicates the life that he lived. In comparison to their godless lives he lived to the best of his ability as GOD would have him to live. He listened to GOD, he accepted what GOD said, he acted upon what GOD said, and was saved just as GOD said he would be.

The word **“world”** must be interpreted according to its context. When one studies the Bible he finds this word used to mean the physical world including the universe, the inhabitants of the world, the ungodly people of the world, and worldly affairs. Common sense tells one, as well as a study of the Genesis account, that the word **“world”** is being used in this context of the ungodly multitudes which lived in Noah’s time. Noah’s faith and actions passed judgment on all of those who would not listen to GOD as he had. Noah’s condemnation of the world resulted from his faith which caused him to **accept GOD’s just condemnation of the ungodly masses.** People sometimes make the comment that if they are in Heaven and know some loved one is lost for eternity, **how could they be without tears?** It will be because those in Heaven will fully accept the justice of GOD and thus His judicial decrees — **AND AGREES WITH THEM.**

“became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” Noah’s faith caused him to believe GOD, build an ark (chest, box), and condemn the world. This faith caused him to receive a reward for faithfulness. This means a reward which comes to one because his faith led him to seek a righteous life.

Noah was called a **“righteous man,”** not because of his own

goodness or merit. The text says he received this righteousness as an heir which signifies that the righteousness was given to him by an outside source. His works did not earn him anything.

“His faithful obedience pleased God who made him an heir of the righteousness yet to be revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ who, in the fulness of time, would appear and indeed ‘fulfill all righteousness’” (Coffman, p. 263).

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

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (ASV)

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” (NKJV)

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go into a place he was to receive as an inheritance, obeyed, and he went, not knowing where he was going” (ESV)

For historical background read Genesis 12:1-8.

Notice some information about the dwellings in the city of Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham had lived before taking his journey to the land of promise.

“An average dwelling measured forty by fifty-two feet, and had a side yard fifteen feet wide. The lower walls were built of burned brick, the upper of mud brick, and the whole wall was usually plastered and whitewashed. An entrance lobby led into the central court, on which all the rooms opened. On the lower floor were located the servant’s room, the kitchen, the lavatory, the guest chamber, and also a lavatory and wash place reserved for visitors. In addition there was a private chapel at the back of the house. Thus, all of the first floor was utilized for the servants and guests. The second floor housed the family, providing five rooms for their use. The entire house of the average middle-class person had from ten to twenty rooms” (Free, p. 49).

The point being made in this context is that when Abraham (Abram) was called, he showed his faith in GOD by his immediate obedience.

“The participle called (kalovmenos) is in the present tense, suggesting that no sooner was the call given than it was obeyed” (Lightfoot, p. 209).

Abraham was called from Ur (a place he knew) to go “somewhere,” and receive an “inheritance” (land) that he knew nothing about. He had to leave the land he was accustomed to, friends he had made in his youth, his relatives, a great city of its time, et cetera, to go “somewhere.” He did not know where he was going, but his great faith in GOD caused him to act immediately. Consider

the tremendous faith this required. When one looks at the actions of Abraham's life, it is little wonder that he alone of all the "worthies" who ever lived, is called the father of the faithful and even the friend of GOD (Isaiah 41:8).

The apostle was calling on the Hebrew Christians of his day, and of all the ages to follow, to exercise the same kind of faith that Abraham exhibited. The call is to leave this world of sin and journey toward an inheritance (Heaven) which no human being can behold. A place that so little is known about, yet when one obeys GOD's call, and continues to obey Him, he like Abraham, will be guided to that unseen place.

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

"By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:" (ASV)

"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;" (NKJV)

"In faith he lived as a stranger in the promised land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow-heirs of the same promise:" (ESV)

"sojourned" — paroikeo — "to dwell near, i.e., reside as a foreigner: sojourn in, be a stranger" (Strong); "to be or dwell in a place as a stranger; to sojourn" (Thayer); "to be a stranger, dwell or sojourn as a stranger, to dwell at a place only for a short time" (Zodhiates); "in the LXX mostly of strangers, who live in a place without holding citizenship" (Bauer, p. 628).

"strange country" — allogrios — "another's, i.e., not one's own; by extension not akin, hostile" (Strong); "belonging to another, not one's own...foreign, strange" (Thayer); "belonging to another, not one's own" (Zodhiates); "belonging to another, not one's own, strange" (Bauer, p. 40).

For historical background, read Genesis 12:1-5.

Abraham is listed with Isaac and Jacob, because none of them own the property on which he lived. They were sojourners, foreigners on land which belonged to others. It is interesting that they owned no land except a burial place for Sarah (Genesis 23:16). Yet, this land was promised to them. Wuest stated that the definite article is in the Greek before the word "promise" (p. 201). That being the case, the text should read "in the land of the promise," which spoke of a particular promise, i.e., the promise given originally to Abraham. **When would the land promise be fulfilled?** When their descendants returned from Egyptian captivity (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:16; 26:3; 28:13).

Their faith was exhibited in their willingness to live in tents,

traveling from place to place in the land. They knew that GOD would fulfill His promise in the fulness of His time table. But there is something more, as the context of Hebrews reveals. There was an understanding on the part of these patriarchs that GOD's promise dealt with more than the physical.

"It was squarely here, in his de-emphasis of the present world, that the glory of Abraham chiefly centered...He treated the world as a mere bridge, something to pass over, but not a place to dwell" (Coffman, p. 267).

If these three patriarchs had been like many of all ages, they probably would have reasoned something like this: *"This land is the land which GOD has promised, so let us purchase it all or conquer it right now."* Instead, they were willing to obey GOD and leave the fulfillment of His promise up to Him. In essence they were saying, *"GOD made us a promise, and when He is ready, He will keep the promise, and we will receive it."*

As Christians travel through this world, they must remember that they are only traveling through it. The ultimate dwelling place of all men is not found on this planet. Ultimate joy or heartache is not found here. The dwelling place for Christians can only be found in Heaven with GOD. Therefore, the temptation to make all of one's goals the attainment of this world's goods will be understood by the Christian to be a waste of time. Instead of placing so much emphasis on these things, a Christian puts his primary interest and effort into gaining the eternal home, just as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abraham was indeed blessed richly with material things, but he fully understood that they were not an end within themselves. Abraham knew his material blessings were not permanent.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living GOD, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1st Timothy 6:17).

Heb. 11:10 *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD."*

"for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD." (ASV)

"for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD." (NKJV)

"For he was looking for a city with foundation, whose architect and builder is GOD." (ESV)

As one looks at this verse, he should take particular note of the ASV (1901) quoted above, paying particular attention to the definite articles which appear. It is *"the city"* and *"the foundations."* Reese states that the Greek says, *"He kept looking for the city which has the foundations"* (p. 199). *Why was Abraham satisfied to live as a sojourner in this life? Why did he put no stock in the accumulation of this world's goods?* Because he was always looking for a specific city, a heavenly city — Heaven itself. Stancliff tells an interesting story about Albert Einstein which illustrates the kind of attitude

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had.

“Einstein lived a very simple life. Much of the time he spent at home was limited to a small bedroom. It had a bed, a plain chair and little else. Someone asked him one day why he did not live up the atmosphere with a few more nice furnishings. His reply was that he tried to live in such a way that he could part with any of his possessions at a moments notice” (p. 188).

Friends, should this not be the way all Christians feel about their “possessions?” After all, there is a moment coming when instantaneously all of the “possessions” one has will be lost to him — the moment of death. Abraham knew that nothing he had was his — it had been loaned to him for a time. Abraham understood that he needed to be content with whatever GOD gave him.

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1st Timothy 6:8).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5).

The city Abraham looked for was not a city built with human hands on a foundation laid by human beings. These things would decay with time. Rather, he looked for a city which truly had a permanent foundation which could not be moved with time nor destroyed by enemies. *Why was the city these fathers looked for permanent?* Because its architect and builder is GOD!

This context clearly shows that the “ancient” had far more knowledge about the future than some are willing to admit. This is but one of several passages in Hebrews which indicate this truth. When Abraham looked for a home which GOD had revealed to him — a home where he would be with GOD eternally.

Heb. 11:11 *“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.”*

“By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted Him faithful who had promised:” (ASV)

“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.” (NKJV)

“By faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive when she was past age, because she considered Him faithful who had promised.” (ESV)

“judged” — hegeomai — “to lead, i.e., command (with official authority); figuratively to deem, i.e., consider” (Strong); *“to consider, deem, account, think”* (Thayer); *“to lead or go before, go first, lead the way...Metaphorically, to lead out before the*

mind, i.e., to view, regard, esteem, count, reckon” (Zodhiates);
“*Lead, guide...think, consider, regard*” (Bauer, p. 343).

“**faithful**” — *pistos* — “*objectively trustworthy; subjectively trustful*” (Strong); “*trusty, faithful, of person who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties*” (Zodhiates); “*worthy of belief, trust, or confidence...trustworthy ...Faithful in duty to oneself and to others, of true fidelity*” (Zodhiates); “*trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith*” (Bauer, p. 664).

For historical background, read Genesis 17:15-22; 18:9-15.

When a careful study of the history of this event is considered, several things stand out. The context of Genesis chapter seventeen is the impending destruction of the five cities of the plain (Sodom, etc.). Three angels approached Abraham, but at first they were not recognized as heavenly beings; they appeared simply to be men. **Is it little wonder then, thinking that these were merely men, that Sarah would doubt when they said she would have a child during the next year?** Remember, Sarah was ninety years old at that time and Abraham was ninety-nine. Further, Sarah was apparently sterile all of those years. True, GOD had promised them a year earlier that they were going to have a child, but why should she believe these men at this time — so she laughed. But notice the text carefully. After she laughed, they revealed what she had done, and this caused her to realize exactly who these “men” were. Sarah understood that no mere man could have known what she did or may have thought. Upon that evidence, she believed and is listed in this text as one of the great “heros of faith.”

Notice the word “**judged**” with regard to the above reasoning. She considered what was said and done on this occasion; her mind was led by the speaker in such a way that she could mentally view the evidence and accept the conclusion drawn. Strictly human thinking without evidence to the contrary would have declared the impossibility of the proposed action. Only faith which came by hearing GOD’s Word could cause her to believe that she would have a child (Romans 10:17).

Heb. 11:12 “**Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.**”

“wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.” (ASV)

“Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” (NKJV)

“Therefore there were born of one, and him as good as dead, descendants

as the stars of the heaven in multitude, and as countless as the sand along the sea shore.” (ESV)

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Romans 4:18-21).

The word “dead” signifies as far as reproductive powers were concerned, Abraham’s possibility of producing a child was as good as a dead mans. Yet, because he and Sarah remained faithful to GOD, believing His promises, they became the parents of a multitude too large to count.

“This is, therefore, an illustration of the nature of faith. It does not depend on human reasoning; on analogy; on philosophical probabilities; on the foreseen operation of natural laws; but on the mere assurance of God — no matter what may be the difficulties to human view, or the improbabilities against it” (Barnes, p. 269).

This multitude included not only those of the Hebrew race, but also includes all Christians who are Abraham’s children by faith.

“if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

“as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD” (Galatians 6:16).

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of GOD” (Romans 2:28-29).

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

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (ASV)

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (NKJV)

“These all died in faith, without having obtained the promises; but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them, and professed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (ESV)

Who are the “these” of this passage? There is little doubt that this word refers to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob; because they were the ones who had received the promises. This passage could not refer to Enoch, since he did not die. Nor could the word “these” refer to Abel and Noah, because they did not receive the promises, though they died in faithfulness to GOD. The promises were those made to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:1-2), Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4), and Jacob (Genesis 28:13-14). In particular, the context seems to deal with the land promise and the descendants which would come from them. While these patriarchs lived, they did realize the fulfillment of many of the promises of GOD made to them.

The saints of old lived as “strangers and pilgrims” in this world. The only place they owned in the land was a burial place. They lived in the land as “strangers,” i.e., foreigners. A foreigner is one who has no rights of citizenship. GOD’s people are not citizens of the world, for their citizenship is not physical but rather spiritual. The citizenship of GOD’s people is in Heaven.

“our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

“Pilgrims” are those who move from place to place, having no permanent home — nomads so to speak.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

The first phrase in this verse could be translated “*These all died according to faith.*” The point being made is that their faith allowed them to continue with the knowledge that GOD keeps His promises in His own time. They did not physically see their descendants receive the land nor grow to be so numerous that they could not be counted. Through the mind’s eye of faith, they knew all of these things would be accomplished. They were “persuaded” (“*induced to believe*”) by GOD that He would fulfill His promises. How? By the fulfillment of all the other promises He had made to them. Notice how He had physically taken care of them. Being persuaded that GOD’s promises were true, they received these promises joyfully, embracing them.

Every indication is that they did not expect to personally receive the promises of this text. They were content to live on the land as strangers and sojourners. Thus, they lived faithful lives and died in that state, still believing His promises to the moment of death (cf. Genesis 23:4; 47:9).

“In the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus, probably of the second century, there occur these words concerning Christians: ‘They inhabit their own country, but as sojourners: they take part in all things as citizens, and endure all things as aliens: every foreign country is theirs, and every country is foreign’” (Wuest, p. 203).

Heb. 11:14 “For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”

“For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after

a country of their own.” (ASV)

“For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.”
(NKJV)

“For those who say such things declare that they are seeking a homeland.”
(ESV)

As all men do, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were seeking a homeland, a fixed abode. But the testimony given is that they recognized that this world is not a permanent situation. They understood that this physical life is, at best, a passing moment of time. GOD said that the very land upon which their tents sat would belong to their posterity, yet they considered themselves to be “strangers and pilgrims” while residing there (v. 11, Genesis 23:4; 47:9; Psalm 39:12).

The country they sought, the fatherland of their hopes, was not the physical world in which they existed; it was the eternal home with GOD. Christians are told to think the same way that they did. It must be understood that this earth, all that is physical, is not a permanent dwelling place for an eternal soul. This is not all there is to life. It is not wrong to have possessions while here on this earth, but while having these things it must be understood that they are temporary. One’s trust should not be placed in these things for his well-being.

“And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But GOD said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward GOD” (Luke 12:13-21).

In a growing secular society Christians need to be reminded on a daily basis that what is most important in life is not the pursuit of material things, but rather the pursuit of the eternal home with GOD.

“we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:1-2).

In connection with this verse, one should also observe John 14:2-3.

“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I

go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Christian, prepare for a permanent dwelling place in Heaven. The patriarchs realized that everything they “owned” was temporary, that it was only loaned to them for a short time — so is everything we “own.”

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Heb. 11:15 “And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.”

“And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.” (ASV)

“And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.” (NKJV)

“And indeed if they had been remembering that land they had come from, they might have had an opportunity to return;” (ESV)

It has been noted in these studies that the patriarchs had been seeking a permanent home — a father land. It has also been noticed that they called themselves strangers, pilgrims and sojourners in the land of Canaan. If they had considered Ur of the Chaldees as their homeland, they could easily have returned there any time they chose. Ur was not a matter of faith, for it was something Abraham had seen. It would not have been a matter of faith for him to have returned there. Instead, by faith, he chose to faithfully obey GOD. These patriarchs were willing to endure the hardships of sojourners in order to receive the promise GOD made.

This emphasizes the voluntary nature of their stay in the land of Canaan. It is doubtful that GOD would have forced them to stay in the land if they had chosen to go back to UR, because GOD demands voluntary service from those who seek Him. GOD has never forced anyone to be His faithful servant.

Every Christian needs to keep the fact clearly in focus that no one forced him to serve the Lord. If a Christian decides that he wants to go “home” to the world, he is free to make that choice. But it must be understood that if that is his choice, that he will be forced in time to accept the consequences of that choice — an eternal home with the Devil.

“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia” (2 Timothy 4:10). Seems to indicate that Demas was not willing to die for his faith.

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put

away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Timothy 1:19-20).

Heb. 11:16 “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore GOD is not ashamed to be called their GOD: for He hath prepared for them a city.”

“But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore GOD is not ashamed of them, to be called their GOD; for He hath prepared for them a city.” (ASV)

“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore GOD is not ashamed to be called their GOD, for He has prepared a city for them.” (NKJV)

“But they were reaching out for a better, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore GOD is not ashamed to be called their GOD, for He has prepared a city for them.” (ESV)

“**desire**” — oregomai — “to stretch oneself, i.e., reach out after (long for): covet after, desire” (Strong); “to stretch forth...to stretch one’s self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something” (Thayer); “literally, to stretch out especially with the hands, to snatch. In the NT, only in the mid. oregomai, to stretch oneself, reach after something, and hence metaphorically meaning to covet, long after, desire, try to gain” (Zodhiates); “stretch oneself, reach out one’s hand, and figuratively aspire to, strive for, desire” (Bauer, p. 579); “old word for stretching out after, yearning after” (Robertson, Vol. 5, p. 424).

“**better**” — kreitton — “stronger, i.e., (figuratively) better, i.e., nobler” (Strong); “more excellent” (Thayer); “better, i.e., more useful, more profitable...better in value or dignity, nobler, more excellent” (Zodhiates); “more prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better...more useful, more advantageous, better” (Bauer, p. 449).

“**ashamed**” — epaischunomai — “to feel shame for something: be ashamed” (Strong); “ashamed of” (Thayer); “to bring shame upon oneself, to be ashamed of” (Zodhiates); “be ashamed...of someone” (Bauer, p. 282).

“**prepared**” — hetoimazo — “prepare, provide, make ready” (Strong); “to make ready, prepare: absol. to make the necessary preparations, get anything ready” (Thayer, p. 255); “to prepare, make ready. Particularly the way of a king as was customary for oriental kings in their journeys...Of God as having in His counsels prepared good or evil or men, i.e., to destine, appoint” (Zodhiates); “put or keep in readiness, prepare” (Bauer, p. 316).

While on earth, the patriarchs set their affections not on the physical, but the spiritual (Heaven). The word “**desire**” means “*to stretch one’s self out in order to touch or grasp something, to reach after or desire something*” (Thayer). It thus carries the idea of an extra or supreme effort being given toward the attaining of some goal. In this case, one sees that their goal was a better (superior) country than the one in which they temporarily dwelt or the fatherland (Ur) which they had left. They had no interest in going back to the old world, but earnestly moved toward the new world (Heaven). The permanent dwelling they longed for was with GOD.

Why was GOD not ashamed to be called their GOD? Because of the great faith which they exercised toward Him and their longing to be with Him. They believed His promises and held on to that hope in the face of every adversity which faced them. They demonstrated their faith in Him by the way they viewed this world.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:36-38).

This would also indicate that they were not ashamed let it be known whose followers they were.

Doubtless there are those who claim to be GOD’s people for whom GOD would be ashamed to be known as the GOD they profess to serve.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

GOD labels such people as being adulterous (unfaithful to their mate, see Ephesians 5:23-33). He will not acknowledge such to be His children, no matter how much their mouths may proclaim Him.

Those for whom GOD is not ashamed to call His own have a city, or an abiding place, prepared for them by GOD for eternity. Christians must indeed be like the Psalmist who wrote:

“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation” (Psalm 40:9-10).

“For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

There is no doubt that when this life is over, there is another place, an eternal home, where one can live in peace with GOD forever. Here it is called a “**city;**” in John 14:1-3 it is called a “**mansion.**”

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Heb. 11:17 “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,”

“By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;” (ASV)

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,” (NKJV)

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered Isaac as a sacrifice, even he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.” (ESV)

“was tried” — peirazo — “to test...scrutinize, entice, discipline: assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt” (Strong); “to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself” (Thayer); “to try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt...generally and in a good sense in order to ascertain the character, views or feelings of someone...in a bad sense, with ill intent. Hence by implication, to try one's virtue, tempt, to solicit to sin” (Zodhiates); “try, make trial of, put to the test, to discover what kind of person someone is” (Bauer, p. 640); “to put to the test” (Wuest, Vol. 2, p. 204).

“only begotten” — monogenes — “only born, i.e., sole” (Strong); “single of its kind, only; used of only sons or daughters (viewed in relation to their parents)” (Thayer); “unique, one of a kind, one and only” (Zodhiates); “unique (in kind) of something that is the only example of its category” (Bauer, p. 527); “a noun found in nine contexts denoting an ‘only child’” (Renn, p. 103).

For historical reference, read Genesis 22:1-19.

When Abraham was “tried” he “offered up Isaac.” There are two basic ideas for this word, one good and the other bad. There is the idea of something which is wrong being used to solicit one to commit sin (such as Jesus being tempted by the Devil — Matthew 4:1ff). There is also concept of testing to determine the faithfulness of one. The word “tried” is used in this passage in the sense of Abraham's faith being tested. This test, being imposed by GOD, could not have been a solicitation by GOD to cause Abraham to sin.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man” (James 1:13).

GOD simply does not test someone with the hope that they will violate His law and thus be lost without repentance — that is what the Devil does. Abraham's faith was put to the test through GOD's instruction to offer Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice. At this point someone is bound to ask, **What about Ishmael?** Ishmael was indeed a son of Abraham, but Ishmael was not the seed of promise. GOD had told Abraham, **"Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him"** (Genesis 17:19). Abraham knew the promise to his and Sarah's son — not a son by any other woman. He named that son according to GOD's instructions. He knew this was the son GOD promised and that he was the only one of his kind. **How then could he so willingly sacrifice him and GOD's promises be fulfilled in him?**

Yet, Abraham did not hesitate. He gathered his son, took him to the designated mountain, and prepared to offer him. His faith and trust in GOD were absolute. He left the details up to GOD as to how He would fulfill His promises, knowing that in some way GOD would keep them. In the past, Abraham had tried to help GOD out in fulfilling His promise of a son (Genesis 16). This had caused many problems and heartaches. Any time man tries to help GOD out, his efforts end in disaster. Abraham had obviously grown since that time. Now he was willing to leave everything in GOD's hands. GOD commanded — Abraham simply obeyed without question.

One other note here about trying to help GOD out with His plans. As stated already, when man tries to help GOD out, it always ends in disaster. By this it is meant that we are to evangelize and so use every tool that is afforded (TV, internet, text messages, books, videos, et cetera). One is to use every means to "preach" (teach) GOD's word. But when man starts watering down the message, using gimmicks, emotion, et cetera — he is walking outside of GOD's directions. GOD expects us to do things His way. It is too bad that many in this time think they have to ape more and more of the entertainment world into spreading the Gospel — doing what appeals to man instead of what GOD commanded. The power is in the word, not entertainment. The power is in the word, not in dramas. The power is in the word, not emotions. The power is in the word, not praise teams, choirs or quartets.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

How was Isaac the "only begotten son" of Abraham? He was the only son of Abraham and his beloved Sarah. Beyond that, he was the only son of promise, i.e., upon whom the promise rested.

"Abraham is a type of the Father not sparing His only-begotten Son to fulfill the Divine purpose of love" (JFB, Vol. 3, p. 569).

Heb. 11:18 "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:"

"even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called:"

“of whom it was said, In Isaac your seed shall be called,” (NKJV)

“To whom it was said, In Isaac shall your seed be called.” (ESV)

All of the promises GOD had made to Abraham center on Isaac. They could not be fulfilled in any other because GOD had decreed it. A numerous posterity had been promised through Isaac, and it was that posterity through whom the Messiah would come. That promise was not made through the descendants of Ishmael or any descendant from Keturah. The world would be blessed through Sarah and Isaac. Only through him would the land promise be fulfilled. Only through him would the spiritual blessings be achieved.

Heb. 11:19 “Accounting that GOD was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

“accounting that GOD is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back.” (ASV)

“concluding that GOD was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” (NKJV)

“He accounted that GOD was able even to raise him from the dead; from whence he received him in a figure” (ESV)

“**accounting**” — logizomai — “to take an inventory, i.e., estimate: conclude” (Strong); “to reckon, count, compute, calculate...to take into account...by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer” (Thayer); “to reckon, impute, number. Actually, the verb logizomai means to put together with one’s mind, to count, to occupy oneself with reckonings or calculations” (Zodhiates); “reckon, calculate...think (about), consider, ponder, let one’s mind dwell on...think, believe, be of the opinion” (Bauer, p. 476); “occurring about forty times with the underlying sense of logical, rational expression” (Renn, p. 789).

In this event in the life of Abraham, one is treated to a great display of faith. Marshall Keeble illustrated the kind of faith Abraham had and which one should have in any era. He said, “*If God commanded that he try to run through a brick wall, it was his job to do the running, and God’s job to make the hole*” (Stancliff, p. 194).

By studying the word “**accounting**,” one sees that Abraham obviously thought this thing through very carefully. He considered and carefully weighed this startling command against the promises GOD had made. His conclusion was that somehow GOD would have to bring Isaac back from the dead to fulfill those promises. His meditations had no bearing on whether he was going to obey the command or not. Abraham, from the moment he heard GOD’s command, was going to do what GOD told him to do! He immediately pursued obedience to GOD; the meditation probably took place during the trip to the place of sacrifice.

“**Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you**” (Genesis 22:5, emphasis mine, RK).

Abraham did not tell his servants, *"I will come again."* He told them that he and his son would go worship and come again. He knew the promise and command of GOD, and the only way he could see them reconciled was if GOD raised up Isaac after his death. He expected an immediate resurrection.

Since there is no indication that a resurrection had ever taken place before, **was there any precedent upon which Abraham could have based his reasoning?** This writer believes there was. When Abraham carefully considered all of the facts in the case, he could realize that the GOD who made Sarah's dead womb alive so as to allow the birth of Isaac was also the One who could raise a dead body back to life. GOD had made that which was dead alive, and he could do it in another area as well.

"received him in a figure" Isaac was not literally sacrificed, therefore he did not literally come back from the dead. Remember, Abraham had fully intended to slay his son, as GOD had commanded, and leave the fulfilling of GOD's promises up to Him. While Isaac lay bound upon the altar, he took up the knife to kill him, but GOD stopped his hand. In Abraham's mind, his son was as good as dead. When GOD told him not to kill his son, it was as if he had received him back from the dead.

One passing thought here: think of the faith required by Isaac on this occasion. There is every indication that he simply submitted to his father's instructions. Isaac was not, as many of one's childhood lesson books present him — a small boy. Isaac was by every account probably between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-three years old at this time. The Jewish historian Josephus says he was twenty-five (Moffit, p. 465). It would take a great deal of faith and courage to allow someone to take his life, even if it was the great man of faith, his father Abraham.

Heb. 11:20 "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come."
(ASV)

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." (NKJV)

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to be" (ESV)

For the historical record read Genesis 27:1-40.

Esau was born before Jacob (broke the womb before Jacob) and would normally be listed first. Because he gave up his inheritance, the order was changed as seen in this text. It was by faith, or because of his faith, that Isaac gave the blessing to his sons. Note, the blessings which he gave were future — things which could not be known at this time except through belief in GOD's promises. GOD had to tell him these things.

Once the blessing was given, Isaac did not attempt to take it back or nullify them in any way. His faith caused him to see the hand of GOD in these matters and accept that the blessings would be granted

as they were given. Before these sons were born, GOD had looked ahead at the character of these two boys and determined that Jacob would carry the burden of being the patriarch through whom the blessings would flow. **What was the difference in the blessings given to these two men?** Jacob's was primarily spiritual, whereas Esau's was primarily physical.

Heb. 11:21 "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." (ASV)

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." (NKJV)

"By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." (ESV)

"worshipped" — proskuneo — "*prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to adore): worship*" (Strong); "*to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence...to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence...by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication*" (Thayer); "*to worship, do obeisance, show respect, fall or prostrate before. Literally, to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage. The ancient oriental (especially Persian) mode of salutations between persons of equal ranks was to kiss each other on the lips; when the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek; when one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees and touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, throwing kisses at the same time toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that Gr. writers express by proskuneo, in the NT, generally to do reverence or homage to someone, usually by kneeling or prostrating oneself before him. In the Sept. it means to bow down, to prostrate oneself in reverence, homage*" (Zodhiates); "*Used to demonstrate the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground, etc.; the Persians did this in the presence of their deified king, and the Greeks before a divinity of something holy; (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully*" (Bauer, p. 716).

For the historical record read Genesis 48:1-20.

According to the customs of that time the eldest son was to receive the greater blessing. Isaac had been told that Jacob was to be blessed above Esau, but Isaac desired that Esau should have the greater blessing, and was determined to give Esau the first blessing. If Jacob had not deceived his father into giving him the greater

blessing, one can be sure that GOD would have intervened to accomplish His purpose. It should be understood that Jacob's actions in this affair were sinful.

In the present text, when the time came for Jacob give his sons their blessings, he was almost blind (He knew someone stood before him but could not determine who they were. Read this writer's notes in Genesis for further explanation.) When it was time for the blessing upon Joseph, his two sons were brought before Jacob. **He could not clearly see them, so how did he know to cross his hands so that his right hand rested upon the younger (Ephraim)?** It was not because he was told which was which, because when he placed his hands on these two boys, Joseph tried to correct what he thought was a mistake. The answer has to be that GOD directed him to do this, and he willingly (by faith) complied with GOD's direction.

Jacob gave them blessings which would not come to pass for about four hundred years, when Israel would be a mighty nation in another land. This too was by faith, for at that time they had set up what appeared to be permanent residence in Egypt. Jacob appears to have learned that appearances can be quite deceiving.

There is a great deal of discussion in commentaries on whether Jacob leaned on his staff or bed. In the Hebrew, there is one letter which distinguishes between the two words. Since the word **"worshipped"** in our text refers primarily to the idea of prostrating oneself toward the object or person worshipped, this writer's opinion is that he was on his bed.

There is also discussion among some that his worship actually came before he issued the blessings. Again, in this writer's opinion, it would make absolute sense to do so. It has often been rightly argued that, before making any major decision or undertaking some action, one should approach GOD in prayer (which is an act of worship).

Heb. 11:22 "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

"By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."
(ASV)

"By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones." (NKJV)

"By faith Joseph, at the end, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave directions relating to his bones." (ESV)

For the historical record read Genesis 50:22-26.

Two prophecies are important to remember in this text, because they shed light on Joseph's request. (1) In Genesis 12:7; 13:5; 15:7, the prophecy stated that the land of Canaan would be given to Abraham's descendants. (2) In Genesis 15:13-14, the prophecy stated that Abraham's descendants would be in bondage for four hundred years in a strange land (land not their own). These are

important because, by his request, Joseph was acknowledging that GOD was in control and that what he had said would come to pass. This would thus encourage the Israelites in the hard years to come. Men live and die, but GOD's promises transcend generations until they are fulfilled.

Humanly speaking, there was nothing to indicate that Joseph's people would ever leave Egypt, for while he lived, his people had prospered and made Egypt their home. Shortly though, the time would come when they would no longer prosper but live as slaves in the land. One wonders if they had not been reduced to cruel and hard slavery if they would have left Egypt. This thought is based on what happened later when the Israelites were allowed to go home after only seventy years of Babylonian captivity, because most chose to stay where they were rather than return to Judea. GOD had spoken, and Joseph knew that what GOD had predicted would come to pass. Thus, his request was an affirmation of his trust and faith in GOD.

When the Exodus from Egypt finally took place, the promise made to Joseph (Genesis 50:22-26) was honored.

“Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you” (Exodus 13:19).

“the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph” (Joshua 24:32).

Heb. 11:23 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.”

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.” (ASV)

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.” (NKJV)

“By faith Moses, when he was born was hidden for three months by his parents, for they saw he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.” (ESV)

“proper” — asteios — “handsome: fair” (Strong); “elegant (of body), comely, fair” (Thayer); “one who dwells in a city and by consequence is well-bred, polite, eloquent, as the inhabitants of cities may be in comparison with those of the country. Used only of Moses, meaning elegant in external form (Acts 7:20; Heb. 11:23). The Greeks used to call the opposite of asteios, the urban person, the agroikos, the one who comes from agros, field or countryside. Therefore asterios came to be

assumed as one who is fair to look on and attractive, a suggestion of beauty but not generally of a high character” (Zodhiates); “beautiful, well-formed of bodily grace and charm... acceptable, well-pleasing” (Bauer, p. 117); “of polished manners, genteel” (Robertson, p. 582); “the construction in the Greek text is dative of respect. He was comely with respect to God. That means that in the sight or estimation of God, Moses was comely” (Wuest, p. 205).

For the historical record read Exodus 2:1-10.

When thinking of the honor-roll of faith in this chapter, it is quite natural to think of Abraham, Moses, David, et cetera, for they are mentioned by name. In this passage, one should take the time to think of the parents of Moses though not specifically named — Amram and Jochebed. Faith in GOD caused these two godly parents to hide Moses, in spite of the severe penalty they would have received if their actions had been discovered. This child was special: (1) he would lead his people from bondage, (2) guide them in and through the wilderness, (3) intercede for them before GOD, and (4) give them the laws which could guide them toward the “Promised Land” (Canaan and Heaven). Since faith comes by hearing GOD’s word (Romans 10:17), there must have been some communication from GOD to Moses’ parents regarding the special nature of this child; otherwise they could not have acted by faith.

Why are Moses’ parents listed in this honor-roll of the faithful? Because they defied the king’s command. **Why did they defy Pharaoh’s command?** Because they trusted GOD. **Did they sin in defying Pharaoh’s command?** The Scriptures indeed affirm that one should obey the laws of the land in which he lives, for to violate such is sin.

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:1-2, emphasis mine, RK).

But the Scriptures also teach that when a man makes a law which is contrary to a law which GOD has given, then GOD’s servant must disobey the man-made law.

“Then the High Priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life...Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey GOD rather than men” (Acts 5:17-20, 28-29).

Far too often over the centuries, men have buckled under the pressure of those who make secular laws contrary to GOD’s laws

because of fear of what those men will do for breaking their laws. Christian's must learn Who they are to fear and why they should fear Him. Man may cast one into prison or even murder him for refusing to obey an "anti-GOD law," but that one will have a home with GOD for eternity because he put GOD first (remained faithful to Him).

"fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Matthew 10:28).

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (The Revelation 2:10).

"...Be faithful even if you must die" (The Great Book).

Heb. 11:24 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"

"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" (ASV)

"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," (NKJV)

"By faith Moses, when he was grown, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," (ESV)

"refused" — arneomai — **"to contradict, i.e., disavow, reject, deny, refuse"** (Strong); **"not to accept, to reject, refuse, something offered"** (Thayer); **"to deny, refuse...related to previous meaning with the acc. of person, to refuse someone, not to know or recognize him, to reject him either in the face of a former relationship or better knowledge"**(Zodhiates); **"refuse, disdain...deny...repudiate, disown with acc. someone or something"** (Bauer, p. 107).

For the historical record read Exodus 2:11-15 (cf. Acts 7:22-29).

It should be remembered that the lists in this chapter were meant to encourage these Christians to be faithful to GOD. These people were faithful, and one can be, too, in whatever generation one finds himself.

"By faith" This shows a knowledge of GOD through training. This training would have come at the feet of Amram and Jochebed as they cared for Moses. **When was this faith shown?** When he had **"come of age."** This shows that his decision was not the impulsive decision of youth, but rather the decision of one who had matured beyond those years. JFB records the following interesting comments of Josephus here.

"Thermutis, Pharaoh's daughter, adopted him, with the king's consent. Josephus states that, when a child, he threw on the ground the diadem put on him in jest: a presage of his

subsequent rejection of Thermutis' adoption. Faith made him to prefer the adoption of the King of kings, unseen, and to choose things the last which flesh and blood relish" (p. 570).

Moses' faith was seen by his refusal to be "called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." There is no indication that this was some formal statement made by Moses before the court. Rather, the context seems to point to Moses' making a conscious decision that he would rather be identified with GOD's people because they **were** GOD's chosen people. Imagine how hard this decision would be for most people — to give up the power of the throne, the delicacies of the court, the wealth of the elite, et cetera. That is because people too often do not compare the two rewards — one is short-lived, and the other is eternal. One can be seen and the other can only be imagined. Moses chose the unseen, he chose the eternal.

Coffman gives some things to think about with regard to Moses' refusal to be identified with the Egyptians.

"Profound lessons come from a study of these refusals. Christians too must forbear the world's adoption and must not be fashioned according to the world (Rom. 12:2); they must not understand the world as other than evil (1 John 5:9), nor allow themselves to be spotted by it (James 1:27), not be enamored with its wisdom (1 Cor. 3:19), not love it (1 John 2:15), nor become a friend of it (James 4:4), for the world is crucified unto Christians (Gal. 6:14). The world's adoption must be rejected by them that would receive the 'adoption of sons' through Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:5)...Like David, Christians should reject the armour of this world, preferring 'the whole armour of God' (Eph. 6:14); like Daniel, they should reject the world's dainty fare, and like Jesus, any crown the world might offer, preferring the 'incorruptible' crown (1 Cor. 9:5) the 'crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. 4:8) the crown 'of glory' (1 Pet. 5:4), and the 'crown of life' (Rev. 2:10)" (p. 289).

Heb. 11:25 "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"

"choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" (ASV)

"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin," (NKJV)

"Choosing rather to suffer with the people of GOD than to have the pleasures of sin for a season;" (ESV)

"suffer affliction with" — sugkakoucheo — "to maltreat in company with, i.e., (passively) endure persecution together: suffer affliction with" (Strong); "to treat ill with another; passive to be ill-treated in company with, share persecutions or come into a fellowship of ills" (Thayer); "only in the passive, to be mistreated or tormented with others, to suffer affliction with someone" (Zodhiates); "suffer to be mistreated with someone else" (Bauer, p. 773); "to treat ill with" (Robertson, p. 582).

“a season” — ~~proskairos~~ — “for the occasion only, i.e., temporary” (Strong); “for a season, enduring only for a while, temporary” (Thayer); “for a season, transient, temporary, enduring for a while” (Zodhiates); “lasting only for a time, temporary, transitory” (Bauer, p. 715).

Moses had a choice to make. The Spirit was telling these Hebrews that a choice must be made by all men and used Moses to illustrate this. It is a choice between what is temporary and that which is eternal.

It can be learned from this text that sin indeed has its “pleasures,” but it is also learned that those pleasures are only for a little while (“a season”) and then they are gone. On the other hand, Moses’ choice indicates that there is something worthwhile in suffering afflictions here on earth because one chooses to serve GOD. Moses did not simply look at the present, he looked at the whole picture and made a comparison of the two choices. By faith he believed GOD and the promises GOD held out to him. He thought about these matters and weighed the evidence carefully, which caused him to come to the conclusion that those pleasures offered by the world (Egypt) did not compare with the reward that GOD held out to man. He understood the temporary nature of wealth, influence, power, et cetera, when compared to the eternal nature of GOD’s blessings.

“On one hand was all the splendor of Egypt, with its rare treasures and its magnificent heritage; to be in Pharaoh’s palaces and to possess perhaps even the throne. To be in a position of power and in a place of privilege and refinement — all the things (the author describes as the fleeting pleasures of sin) and ancient empire could offer. On the other hand were poverty, contempt, and affliction; for Israel at this time was a nation of slaves, groaning under its heavy load, with broken spirits and vanished hopes, hemmed in inexorably to daily abuse” (Lightfoot, p. 215).

Note the basis upon which Moses’ decision was made. Moses based his decision upon where GOD was! Moses wanted to be where GOD was, on GOD’s side. *After weighing the evidence, he realized that GOD was with the Israelites and not with the Egyptians. In all decisions of life, one must ask himself where would GOD have him to stand? If one chooses course “A” as compared to course “B,” will he walk alone or with GOD?* Careful consideration must be made regarding all choices man makes, because his eternal destination hangs in the balance. Moses understood what too many have not understood through all the generations of time. He understood that the pleasures of sin are temporary. He also understood that whatever affliction one might face in this life because he follows GOD is also temporary, whereas the reward GOD offers is eternal.

It should again be emphasized Moses **deliberately** chose this course after careful analysis. His course of action was not something forced upon him by the Egyptians, the Israelites, or for that matter, by GOD. His understanding of the temporary versus the eternal is illustrated by the following set of conditions. (1a) Who was the Pharaoh who persecuted the Israelites? (1b) Who delivered the

Israelites from bondage? (2a) Who were the ten spies who gave the evil report in the wilderness? (2b) Who were the faithful spies who opposed them and said that GOD had promised it and they could thus conquer the land? The great men of faith are held up and remembered, but seldom does one remember even one of the names of those who opposed GOD's will. Christians are called upon daily to choose which path they are going to follow. The apostle Paul urges all to follow the path Moses walked, the one where GOD leads them to His eternal home.

Heb. 11:26 “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

“accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.” (ASV)

“esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” (NKJV)

“Considering the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking for the reward.” (ESV)

“**esteeming**” — hegeomai — “*to lead...figuratively to deem, i.e., consider*” (Strong); “*to consider, deem, account, think*” (Thayer); “*to lead or go before, go first, lead the way...Metaphorically, to lead out before the mind, i.e., to view, regard, esteem, count, reckon*” (Zodhiates); “*lead, guide...think. Consider, regard*” (Bauer, p. 343).

“**had respect**” — apoblepo — “*to look away from everything else, i.e., intently regard*” (Strong); “*to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on some one thing...to look with steadfast mental gaze*” (Thayer); “*to behold or look toward something, to fix the eyes earnestly or attentively*” (Zodhiates); “*Pay attention at or to something*” (Bauer, p. 89); “*to look away from all else at one object*” (Abbott-Smith, p. 48).

The student of Hebrews will recall as he studies these verses that Paul was writing to people who were fearful of suffering reproach for the name of Christ. The first part of this verse dealt with suffering reproach for serving Christ or having the treasures of Egypt (the world). The assumption of the writer is that whenever one serves Christ (GOD), he is going to receive reproach from an unbelieving world! Those to whom Paul wrote were obviously suffering at the very time this letter was being penned because they had given up the Mosaic law to follow Christ. They were in danger of falling away because of the abuse they suffered and their own weakness. Moses was used to show that this is the way it has always been. Those who serve GOD faithfully are always going to suffer reproaches for their decision.

All have a choice to make, and it should be as thoughtful a choice as the one made by Moses. Moses knew he could have chosen the treasures and pleasures of Egypt. But he purposely chose the

reproach which comes from a decision to obey GOD. The evaluation Moses made ended in making a correct decision: that to suffer for godly actions was worth more than all the riches of Egypt, yea, all the combined riches of the world.

“when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:34-38).

“for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” The word “respect,” as noted above, means *“to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on some one thing...to look with stedfast mental gaze”* (Thayer). Because of his developed faith and clear intense thinking which he had done on this matter, Moses was able to turn his mind away from the desires of the worldly. They were no longer the goal of his life. Instead, he could look with stedfast gaze, with purpose of mind, toward the goal which GOD desires for all men to attain — eternity with GOD. Moses looked with singleness of heart for the reward which GOD promises to the faithful.

The “reward” of eternity is not to be scoffed at as a motivating factor for obedience to GOD. It should not be the primary factor for one’s obedience, for the primary factor should be love for GOD. Nevertheless, GOD has offered a reward for faithfulness, which is evidence that GOD wants man to consider this in his decisions in this life. Such motivation caused Moses to concentrate on one thing — reaching the eternal abode of Heaven. When one keeps his eye on the goal, desiring that reward above all else, he will attain it. It is only when one allows the distractions around him to break his concentration on that goal that he begins to fail. **Remember the example of Peter in Matthew chapter fourteen?** As long as Peter kept his eyes on the goal (the Lord), he was successful. When he looked upon the distractions around him (the storm), he began to fail. Do not let the storms of life distract one from attaining the goal of Heaven.

Paul told them that they could make the same choice that Moses made to be faithful in spite of the afflictions which came upon them. Making the same choice would cause GOD to label them as men of faith, just as he had so labeled Moses. The same is true for all Christians today.

Let it clearly be understood that it is an unavoidable fact the followers of Christ will suffer reproach from an unbelieving world. This is simply a natural occurrence as righteousness encounters the antagonism of evil.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Heb. 11:27 “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.”

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.” (ASV)

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.” (NKJV)

“By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured patiently, as seeing Him Who is unseen.” (ESV)

“endured” — *kartereo* — “to be strong, i.e., (figuratively) steadfast (patient): endure” (Strong); “to be steadfast” (Thayer); “to be strong, steadfast, firm, to endure, hold out, bear the burden. In Heb. 11:27, meaning that he endured severe yet voluntary exile with strength and courage” (Zodhiates); “be strong, be steadfast, hold out, endure” (Bauer, p. 405).

When was it that Moses fled without fear of Pharaoh? Notice that the subject of this context is making a choice to follow and serve GOD no matter what he might face. His flight from Egypt showed a man who was more concerned about what GOD said than anything man could say or do to him. Moses was willing to give up Egypt (and all it had promised him) to take a stand with GOD’s people; “he forsook Egypt.” Consider also that Moses had already determined to cast his lot with the people of GOD before he killed the Egyptian. He was not afraid to take that stand.

With the assertion this writer has made, there “appears” to be a problem. **First, was Moses afraid?** The answer is obviously **yes** according to Exodus 2:14. The question should then be asked, **Of what was he afraid? Was Moses afraid of Pharaoh’s reaction to his choice to follow GOD?** That is the basic choice spoken of in the context. **Is not Moses praised for having great faith because he purposely chose a course which would cause him to suffer afflictions with the people of GOD, rather than enjoy the pleasures of Egypt? What was the reason for Moses’ fear when he fled Egypt?** It was the fear of being punished for murdering the Egyptian, **not** fear for choosing to serve GOD.

“Moses and his parents both feared the tyrant, so far that they thought it necessary to use all lawful means for their personal safety, but they did not fear him so far as to disobey God on this account, nor had they any fear that he would ever be able to nullify or set aside the decrees and purposes of GOD concerning Israel” (Milligan, p. 412).

This author does not believe it was fear for Moses’ life which caused Jochebed to make an ark and put Moses in the river. Nor was she afraid of Pharaoh. It was fear of, respect for, GOD’s plan for her son and thus His people.

What were the Hebrew Christians to which Paul wrote facing? Persecution which was threatening to cause some of them to give up their faith. Moses made his decision to follow GOD and did not turn back from that decision, even if he had to give up everything around

him. These Hebrews might have to give up their businesses, their former friends and everything they had held as being precious. The example for them (and us) was that Moses had to make that decision and gladly gave up everything in order to be faithful to GOD. They (we) are being urged by this text to follow his example!

“The result of Moses’ faith in the invisible God was that the king of Egypt no longer inspired him with fear, thus proving that the more men fear God the less they fear any man, however powerful” (Coffman, p. 291).

Moses’ faith in the invisible One gave him the strength to endure whatever he faced. GOD was as real to Moses as anything he physically saw around him. And his GOD was understood by him to be more powerful than any earthly ruler could ever be.

Heb. 11:28 “Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

“By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.” (ASV)

“By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.” (NKJV)

“By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the one destroying the firstborn might not touch them.” (ESV)

For the historical record read Exodus 12:3-4.

The instituting of the passover and the sprinkling of blood took place at the same time. The words to the effect that Moses “**kept the passover**” gives one the idea that he did something that had already been done before, but such is not a correct understanding. The English word used here does not do justice to the meaning. The original word means *“to make, which in this context means to institute”* (Thayer). There had been no passover before this time, nor had anything like the destroyer been observed by the Israelites or Egyptians. Further, Moses’ faith is exhibited in that he instituted this feast simple upon the basis of GOD’s word (possibly without a clue as to what was about to happen that night). GOD said to do it, and that was all Moses needed to hear.

The feast itself was instituted before the event which it was meant to memorialize (so was the Lord’s Supper). The passover feast was given to call to the minds of later generations the deliverance GOD had given their firstborn while destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians, including the firstborn of all the animals (Exodus 11:1-6). Further, the passover typified the Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7). Only because of a deep abiding faith on Moses’ part could he institute such a marvelous memorial.

The Passover Feast

1. Lamb of the first year which had no blemish chosen on the tenth day of Nisan.
2. Lamb killed on the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan.
3. Blood sprinkled on the door posts and lintel of their houses.

4. Lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.
5. Nothing of the Lamb was to be left over until the next morning.

Whereas the passover feast was held annually to remind Israel of GOD's delivering them from Egyptian bondage, the Lord's Supper is to be observed weekly to remind Christians of the sacrifice GOD made to deliver them from the bondage of sin. **Why weekly?** Because the sacrifices they offered on a continual basis reminded them of what GOD had done. Christ made His sacrifice once, never to be repeated.

Coffman gives the following list which links the passover lamb of the Israelites with the Christian's Passover Lamb — the Christ.

"Note the following: (1) the perfection of the lamb (1 Pet. 1:19), (2) that no bone was to be broken (Psalm 34:20), (3) that it was slain at 3 P.M., the hour Christ died, (4) that it was eaten with unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:7-8) and (5) that there was no safety for them not under the protection of the blood" (Coffman, p. 292).

Who was the "destroyer" of the tenth plague? It is beyond the ability of any human being to say with absolute certainty. The Bible refers to this one as an angel. This could have been any one of the heavenly order known as angels, even an archangel. Since the word **"angel"** means **"messenger,"** this could even mean it was the Lord Himself, sent by the Father to accomplish this judgment. Consider Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 with regard to this thought.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

In the end, one must simply acknowledge that he does not know exactly who this destroyer was, because GOD did not reveal this information.

Heb. 11:29 "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up." (ASV)

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned." (NKJV)

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry ground, while the Egyptians, in attempting, were drowned." (ESV)

"assaying" — peira — **"a test, i.e., attempt, experience: assaying trial"** (Strong); **"a trial, experiment, attempt: to attempt a thing, to make trial of a thing or a person"** (Thayer); **"to perforate, pierce through to test the durability of things or simply to pass through. Experience, trial, attempt"** (Zodhiates); **"Attempt, trial. Experiment...make an attempt or make trial of someone or something"** (Bauer, p. 640); **"of which taking trial"**

(Robertson, p. 582).

“drowned” — katapino — *“to drink down, i.e., gulp entire: devour, drown, swallow (up)”* (Strong); *“to drink down, swallow down: to devour...to swallow up, destroy”* (Thayer); *“to swallow as in drinking, whether in a natural or figurative sense”* (Zodhiates); *“drink down, swallow...devour”* (Bauer, p. 416); *“to swallow”* (Renn, p. 307); *“to drink down, to swallow down”* (Robertson, p. 427).

For the historical record read Exodus 14:21-31.

It was faith which allowed the Israelites to cross the Red Sea on dry ground, surrounded otherwise by water (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). They had reached a point where they had enough faith to launch out into the sea bed. Their faith had not been mature enough to turn to GOD when they believed themselves trapped. But they finally had enough faith when He told them what to do to escape death. Moses told them, **“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace”** (Exodus 14:14). This promise was not made to the Egyptians.

On the other hand, the Egyptians made a trial of GOD, they were tempting GOD in venturing out into the sea bed (see definitions of **“assaying”** above). The Egyptians tried to do the same thing the Israelites did. The difference was faith and obedience in GOD. *“What was faith in Israel was presumption in the Egyptians”* (JFB, p. 570). Note that *“faith alone”* did not save them, for if they had not obeyed in crossing, the Egyptian army would have destroyed them.

The Red Sea was a boundary line between the old life of bondage and the new life of freedom. Just so for Christians; baptism being the boundary line between an old life of bondage to Satan and a new life of freedom in Christ. Just like the Israelites, the only way this boundary line works is by obedience in crossing it. A failure to cross that line results in continuance to satanic bondage.

Heb. 11:30 “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.”

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.” (ASV)

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.” (NKJV)

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after they were encircled seven days” (ESV)

For the historical records read Joshua 6:12-20.

As told to children, the account of the walls of Jericho crashing down is fascinating. But one of the things often overlooked is the particular way in which this was accomplished. The wisdom of man and his battle plans were not consulted or involved in Jericho’s destruction. Man’s military inventions played no part in Jericho’s fall

(battering rams, etc.). It was simple faith obeying the commands which brought the victory to Israel and the walls tumbling down. One of the keys to understanding how faith rewards is the word “after” in this verse. *Did the walls fall when by faith the Israelites marched around the city on the first day? The second? Did the walls fall and then faith was produced because they saw the wall fall? NO!* The faith which saves (rewards) is the one which **completely obeys all** GOD tells one to do.

The walls fell according to GOD’s instructions, which no man could possibly conceive as being an effective way to cause such. Notice the faith which had developed in these Israelites. They could have said, *“I cannot see how all of this marching, can possibly have any effect on these walls, so I will not march.”* They did not say any such thing. They simply accepted the fact that these wall were going to fall because GOD said they would; therefore when GOD said march — they marched.

The walls of sin around man’s heart will never fall so that GOD can conquer that heart until man is willing to believe and obey GOD. Only after faith leads one to obey can that one receive the reward. One can say he believes GOD, but his actions will prove whether he really does or does not.

Heb. 11:31 *“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”*

“By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.” (ASV)

“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.” (NKJV)

“By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient, after she had received the spies with peace.” (ESV)

“harlot” — porne — “a strumpet; figuratively an idolater: harlot, whore” (Strong); “a woman who sells her body for sexual uses; properly a prostitute, a harlot, one who yields herself to defilement for the sake of gain...any woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse, whether for gain or for lust” (Thayer); “a harlot or prostitute” (Zodhiates).

For the historical record read Joshua 2:1-21.

The people of Jericho are referred to as those who “believed not” or, as the ASV states they were “*disobedient*.” This raises a question. *If the people of Jericho were condemned for being disobedient, then to what were they disobedient?* Obviously they had been disobedient to GOD and His law. But it may be asked, *What law?* They did not live under the Mosaic law which had been given only to the Israelites. The only answer which can be given is that there was a law under which GOD ruled the Gentiles just as He ruled the Israelites. If there were no law under which they were accountable, then condemnation could not be justified. Since GOD is a just GOD, then there must

have been a law beside the Mosaic law for them. In the future all would one day be united under a single law — the law of Christ. Until that time they were still accountable to GOD under this law of the Gentiles.

Jericho and all of the other cities which were destroyed were destroyed because of their own corruption, decadence, and sin. Notice that Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre, Babylon, Nineveh; they all had the *“same pattern of excessive sin, reprobacy, judgment, and destruction”* (Coffman, p. 295).

One writer pointed out that it was interesting that the writer of Hebrews was instructed to skip over the wilderness wanderings, with no example of great faith mentioned until Rahab is named. She had a faith which overcame much in her life.

(1) Her occupation (her occupation would not predispose her to righteousness). (2) Patriotism (rejected by her own city and race). (3) Lack of popularity (Israel’s cause was unpopular to the general population). (4) Religious or irreligious conviction which she might have had (most were idol worshippers).

Her occupation as a prostitute (see definitions above), would have caused many to reject her as a possible candidate for salvation. The Lord knew that many of this occupation would be receptive to His invitation if it was offered to them.

“Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of GOD before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him” (Matthew 21:31-32).

The lesson should be learned that no matter who or what a person is, there is always the possibility that he will obey GOD **if** he is given the opportunity.

Regarding Rahab’s occupation, consider this thought. There have been many who have tried to water down what she was by calling her an inn-keeper. (Yes, the politically correct crowd has been around a lot longer than many wish to admit.) Maybe some did this to avoid explaining to their children what a prostitute was, but GOD used a Greek word that describes her, not as an inn-keeper, but a prostitute. Regarding a prostitute, *How do Christians view them?* Yes, they should be viewed as sinners — **but, are they also viewed as a soul which might accept GOD’s word and obey it?**

Heb. 11:32 *“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:”*

“And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets:” (ASV)

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:” (NKJV)

“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David; also of Samuel and the prophets;” (ESV)

Paul reached the point where he could not continue listing all of the great people of faith from the Old Testament individually. Proving this point a number were listed to which it would have been easy to list others like Elijah, Elisha, et cetera. For the purposes of this commentary, a little will be said about each one of these who are listed.

Gideon (Judges 6-7).

1. Son of Joash from the tribe of Manasseh, the fifth judge of Israel.
2. Surnamed Jerrubbaal (“*Let Baal plead*”).
3. Angel told him to break down Baal’s altar.
4. Took ten of his father’s servants and destroyed the altar.
5. Baal’s servants wanted to kill Gideon.
6. Gideon placed fleece before GOD twice.
 - a. Dew on the fleece, the ground dry.
 - b. Fleece dry, the ground wet.
7. GOD did not want all of the Israelites to fight.
 - a. Told the fearful to go home (22,000 went).
 - b. Those who drank water on their knees sent home (9,700 went).
 - c. Gideon was left with 300 against an innumerable host.

Barak (Judges 4-5)

1. Israel under captivity to Jabin (king of Canaan).
2. Captain of Jabin’s host was Sisera.
3. Deborah was the prophetess.
4. GOD delivered the host into Barak’s hands.
5. Jael killed Sisera in a most unusual way.

Samson (Judges 13-16)

1. Israel was being oppressed by the Philistines.
2. Samson was a Nazarite from birth.
3. Desired Philistine women contrary to Mosaic law.
 - a. Killed the lion with his bare hands.
 - b. Riddle made known — killed thirty Philistines.
 - c. Burned Philistine crops with foxes.
 - d. Bound by men of Judah and killed one thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone.
 - e. Carried away the gates of Gaza.
 - f. Betrayed by Delilah.
 - g. Died destroying the Lord’s of the Philistines and their temple.
4. Great lesson from Samson — renewed faith brings forgiveness.

Jephthae (Judges 11-12).

1. Son of Gilead and a harlot.
2. Half-brothers rejected him, refused his inheritance, drove him

away.

3. Ammonites afflicted Israel.
4. Israelite elders asked Jephthae for help.
5. Jephthae's rash vow.
6. Ammonites defeated.

People have often argued as to whether or not Jephthae actually killed his daughter. If he had, he would have violated GOD's law and could not have been listed here with the faithful, for there is no evidence of repentance as in the cases of David or Samson. There are several things one should consider regarding Jephthae and his daughter. First, when Deuteronomy 12:30-31 is consulted, one learns that GOD commanded His people not to follow the ways of the heathen in their worship and particularly mentioned the disgust He had for human sacrifice. The clincher in this argument is found in Judges 11:40.

“the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.”

The key word here is **“lament.”** The Hebrew word is tah-nah, which literally is **“talk with.”** This Hebrew word is only used in one other place in the Bible (Judges 5:11), where it is translated **“rehearse.”** Further evidence that lends weight to the belief that he did not kill her on an altar is seen in word studies of the Hebrew word tah-nah.

tah-nah — **“to give (praise)”** (Young's, p. 583); **“a verb meaning to commemorate; to rehearse”** (Zodhiates); **“to rehearse; to talk with or of; to celebrate”** (Wilson); **“to recount, rehearse, tell again”** (BDB).

It should also be remembered that the first-born of Israel, whether human being or animal, belonged to the Lord and was subject to sacrifice. But, in the case of human beings, a substitute was required instead of their actual death.

David (1 Samuel 13 — 2 Samuel 7)

1. Killed Goliath.
2. Chased all over the country by Saul.
3. Defeated all the enemies of Israel and brought peace to them.
4. Brought the ark to Jerusalem
5. Gathered the materials for the construction of the Temple.

Samuel (1st Samuel)

1. Born to Elkanah and Hannah.
2. Trained by Eli the High Priest.
3. Philistines subdued through Samuel's instructions.
4. Anointed the first king of Israel (Saul).
5. Anointed David to succeed Saul.
6. Served as Judge, Priest, and Prophet.

Heb. 11:33 “Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,”

“who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,” (ASV)

“who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,” (NKJV)

“Who through faith conquered kingdoms, worked righteousness; obtained promises; stopped the mouths of lions;” (ESV)

Verse thirty-three begins to describe the victories and the hardships which the faithful have endured throughout the ages. Let it be remembered that these were offered for consideration to let these Hebrew Christians know that they were not alone in suffering for obedience to GOD. Their fathers had suffered for faithfulness (as well as do all who faithfully serve GOD through the ages). The point to be made is that they received these things, accomplished these things, because of their great faith — a faith which could be developed in these Hebrew Christians, as well as in those who live in any generation.

“**subdued kingdoms**” David overcame the kingdoms of the Philistines, Moabites and Syrians through faith (2 Samuel 8). Joshua subdued the nations of Canaan; Gideon subdued the Midianites; Jephthae subdued the Ammonites; et cetera.

“**wrought righteousness**” Righteousness (right doing, right actions), was the characteristic mark of these men and women. They were not perfect, but they continued to grow, and their life patterns showed a continual pattern of right doing. They were men who strove to do and live the will of GOD.

“**obtained promises**” Because of their faith and obedience, they received promises from GOD. For example, Abraham received promises regarding a homeland. Posterity, and the coming of the Messiah because of his strong faith (Genesis 12). Notice also the fulfillment of promises made by GOD in Joshua 21:43-45. As Zerr pointed out, “*They obtained the fulfillment of them because they had the faith to comply with the conditions on which the promises were made*” (p. 235).

“**stopped the mouths of lions**” Samson literally stopped the mouth of the young lion he faced in Judges 14:5-6, through the superhuman strength GOD gave him. The faith and trust of Daniel caused GOD to stop the mouths of lions (Daniel 6).

Heb. 11:34 “**Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.**”

“quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.” (ASV)

“quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” (NKJV)

“Quenched the power of fire; escaped the edge of the sword; from weakness were made strong; became mighty in battle; put foreign armies to flight.” (ESV)

“**Quenched the violence of fire**” The ASV renders the word

“**violence**” as “**power,**” which more correctly defines the original word. Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all must bow before the golden image he erected of himself. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that GOD would not nor bless them, nor be pleased with such idol worship, so they refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar’s command. Their faith said, “*Whether GOD delivers us or not, we must obey Him no matter what may happen to us.*” GOD delivered them from the fire completely unharmed (Daniel 3) and allowed them to see His Son in the fire.

“**escaped the edge of the sword**” The examples of this are too numerous to count, but probably the one thought of most would be David, who was delivered on numerous occasions from the wrath of Saul. Also consider Elijah fleeing from Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 19) and Elisha’s deliverance from the Syrian king (2 Kings 6). Notice also the deliverance of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26) or Micaiah (1 Kings 22).

“**out of weakness were made strong**” Gideon was taken from a position of being the least in his father’s house to being the deliverer of Israel in spite of his doubts, because of a faith which grew in GOD (Judges 6-8). Jephthae rose from being the despised son of a harlot to a judge in Israel (Judges 11-12). Consider Esther as she stood before the king, after initially being afraid to approach him. Her actions allowed GOD to use her in saving her people from great persecution. These are but a few of the many illustrations which could be used of weakness made strong.

“**waxed valiant in fight**” When this writer thinks about this phrase, he is reminded particularly of Jonathan, the friend of David, in First Samuel fourteen. There Jonathan and his armour bearer smote the host of the Philistines so that they turned on each other and delivered a great victory to Israel. This could also be said of all the great commanders of GOD’s armies: Joshua, David, et cetera.

“**turned to flight the armies of the aliens**” Many times the Israelites were able to turn to flight the heathen because of their faith in GOD. The smiting of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Sier come to mind in Second Chronicles twenty. The armies under Joshua turned to flight by GOD and Joshua. All who stood before the armies of Israel under David’s command, et cetera.

Heb. 11:35 “**Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:**”

“Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” (ASV)

“Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” (NKJV)

“Women received their dead raised, but others endured torture, not accepting release, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” (ESV)

“**tortured**” — tumpanizo — “*to stretch on an instrument of torture resembling a drum and thus beat to death*” (Strong); “*to*

beat the drum or timbrel. To torture with the tympanum, an instrument of punishment...the tympanum seems to have been a wheel-shaped instrument of torture, over which criminals were stretched as though they were skins, and then horribly beaten with clubs or thongs” (Thayer); “to scourge, torture, beat. The Tumpanon, drum, in the East consisted of a thin wooden rim covered with a membrane with brass bells or rattles hung around it as our tambourine, used chiefly by dancing women. But the tumpanon was also an instrument of torture, a wooden frame probably so-called since it resembled a drum on which criminals were bound and beaten to death. The same instrument was called trochos, wheel. Hence, tumpanizoM means to drum, to beat the drum or timbrel. In the NT, to scourge upon the tumpanon, to torture, to drum to death, or break upon the wheel (in the pass. in Heb. 11:35)” (Zodhiates); “broken on the wheel’...the sufferer was stretched on an instrument like a drumhead, and scourged to death” (JFB, p. 571).

“Women received their dead raised to life again” Two cases of women receiving their loved ones back from the dead are found in the Old Testament. Elijah raised the widow of Zarephath’s son (1 Kings 17), and Elisha raised the Shunamite’s son (2 Kings 4). The great faith of these women was instrumental in receiving their sons back from the dead.

“others were tortured” The word **“tortured”** actually tells the type of torture involved (see definitions and notes above). This was not a general word for torture, but signified a particular kind of torture. The verb is a word which means; *“to stretch on the tumpanon.”*

“Apparently the victim was stretched on a frame, perhaps like a wheel, and beaten to death with sticks and rods” (Lightfoot, p. 220).

Thayer’s definition adds **“thongs,”** which are strips of leather usually with some item like pieces of iron, broken pottery or some other item attached. This would cause the lashes to open up the flesh. Anyone who was placed on these instruments was considered as good as dead (simply a matter of time). No particular example of this death sentence is recorded in the Bible.

“Not accepting deliverance” Apparently some who faced these tortures were given the opportunity to be released. But they refused, probably because they would have had to renounce GOD or one of His laws. The price of release was obviously too high. They were being tortured because of their faith in, and obedience to, GOD. If a denial of GOD or any of His instructions was the only way to preserve physical life, then one can fully understand why they would refuse deliverance. It would be perfectly acceptable to renounce some man-made doctrine in order to live, but never so with GOD’s directives.

On February 22, 156 A.D., Polycarp was killed by the Roman authorities for refusing to say **“Lord Caesar”** and offer sacrifices to him. When brought before the Pro-consul he was offered freedom if he would revile Christ. Listen to his classic answer.

“For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has

done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me” (Mattox, p. 64).

“Obtain a better resurrection” In comparison to a physical resurrection back into the world, that which awaits the faithful is far superior — the heavenly resurrection. Notice the words of Polycarp when they threatened him with death by fire.

“You threaten me with fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment” (Mattox, IBID).

As mentioned earlier, to be placed on the “tympanum” was to be as good as dead. To then be offered life from such a death would be a kind of resurrection — BUT AT WHAT PRICE? To be delivered from physical death by denying GOD was not a victory! One is reminded of the Lord’s words in Matthew 10:28.

“fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.”

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

What gave those who were tortured the strength and power to face and accept such deaths? **It was their great faith in GOD!**

“In the prospect of death under the infliction of torture on account of religion, or under the pain produced by disease, nothing will better enable us to bear up under the suffering than the expectation that the body will be restored to immortal vigor, and raised to a mode of life where it will be no longer susceptible of pain” (Barnes, p. 287).

They would not compromise in order to prolong their earthly lives, for to do so was to accept condemnation from the only One who should be feared. GOD help us to be strong if the time would come when we should have to face such trials as they did in our time.

Heb. 11:36 “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:”

“and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.” (ASV)

“Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.” (NKJV)

“Others received trial of mocking and scourging, and in addition, chains and imprisonment.” (ESV)

Verse thirty-five spoke of those who were murdered for following GOD. Not all who followed Him then or now were put to death for being His disciples.

“cruel mockings” An example of this is found in Second Kings

2:23, where Elijah was subjected to cruel mockings by children. Two she-bears came out and tore forty-two of the children. Another instance of cruel mocking directed toward a servant of GOD is found in First Kings 22:24. Micaiah, the true prophet of GOD, had told Ahab that Israel would be defeated in battle, even though all the lying prophets had claimed that he would be victorious. Zedekiah slapped Micaiah, mocked him, and placed him in prison on a bread and water diet.

“scourgings” Possibly the only Old Testament example of this is in Jeremiah 20:2, where Pashur **“smote”** Jeremiah and placed him in stocks. Beatings were common in ancient times, especially before imprisonment or executions (See Paul in Acts 16:23). Probably the best remembered scourging in the Bible is that of the Lord in the New Testament (Matthew 27:26).

“bonds and imprisonments” One of the best examples of a servant of GOD being placed in bonds for doing GOD’s will is Joseph (Genesis 39:20). As noted earlier, Micaiah and Jeremiah were both placed in prison for prophetically teaching the truth (1 Kings 22:27; Jeremiah 20:2).

Heb. 11:37 **“They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;”**

“they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated” (ASV)

“They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (NKJV)

“They were stoned, tempted; they were sawed in two, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, afflicted, mistreated;” (ESV)

“stoned” Among the Jews, this was a common form of capital punishment. In Second Chronicles 24, Zechariah (the son of the priest Jehoiada), spoke out against the transgressions of the people and told them that GOD had forsaken them. The king ordered him killed, and they stoned Zechariah in the court of the Temple itself. In First Kings 21, Jezebel had righteous Naboth stoned in order to steal his vineyard for Ahab.

“sawn asunder” There is no direct account of an individual case of this in the Bible. Tradition says that Isaiah suffered this death (Wuest, p. 210).

“temptation” This tends to seem mild in comparison to some of the other trials just mentioned. But it should not necessarily be viewed as such. Consider the constant temptations faced by Lot in the cities of the plain, of which it is said, **“that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds”** (2 Peter 2:8).

“Not only life, but wealth and honor were frequently proffered in the midst of torture most agonizing to the human frame

(consider the temptations of Jesus by Satan in Matthew 4 – RK), *in order to tempt the martyrs to forsake their religion. Such a temptation as this is by no means to be reckoned among the lighter trials of good men*” (Stuart as quoted by Milligan, p. 426).

“Suppose, when a father was about to be put to death for his religion, his wife and children were placed before him, and should plead with him to save his life by abandoning his religion, we can easily imagine that no pain of the rack would cause so keen torture to the soul as their cries and tears would” (Barnes, p. 288).

In considering the above words of Barnes, let one consider the spiritual pain such an episode would bring upon the one facing death for his faith. Consider his realization that his own family was asking him to abandon GOD, to disobey His will.

“slain with the sword” Some escaped the sword, but others did not. King Jehoiakim had Urijah brought out of Egypt so he could kill him with the sword (Jeremiah 26:23), while Jeremiah was spared because of Ahikam (Jeremiah 26:24). In speaking to GOD, Elijah made the following pertinent statement.

“I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” (1 Kings 19:10).

Doeg destroyed the priests’ city (Nob) and murdered eighty-five priests plus women and children (1 Samuel 22).

“sheepskins and goatskins”

“The dress of sheepskins, and that of the still rougher material, that of goatskins, was worn, not as a professional uniform, but because they had no other material for clothing” (Wuest, p. 210).

Why did they have to wear this kind of clothing? Because they were **“destitute, afflicted, tormented.”** This condition was brought about because of the cruelty of the enemies of GOD. It should be considered that Israelites were the ones who did these things to GOD’s faithful servants. GOD’s “people” are often the tormentors of the truly faithful.

Heb. 11:38 **“(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”**

“(of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth.” (ASV)

“of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.” (NKJV)

“Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts; on mountains; in caves and holes in the ground.” (ESV)

“worthy” — axios — **“deserving, comparable or suitable”**

(Strong); *“befitting, congruous, corresponding, to a thing...of one who has merited anything worthy...worthy of one’s fellowship, and of the blessings connected with it”* (Thayer); *“an estimate of value. Some believe it refers to a set of scales where the weights bring of draw down (agousi) the beam to a horizontal level when the weights are equal on each side. Worthy, indicating inherent value as contrasted to timios, worthy from attributed value”* (Zodhiates); *“of things, in relation to other things, corresponding, comparable worth”* (Bauer, p. 78).

“Of whom the world was not worthy” What a powerful statement!

The worldly often look down on those who strive to be faithful servants of GOD. They often claim GOD’s servants lack *“sophistication,”* because they do not join them in their immorality, promiscuity, depravity, and self-indulgence. Their attitude is very often that they do not want the Christian around them, as if they might contaminate them in some horrible way. But GOD declares that it is the worldly which are not worthy of having His servants among them.

“They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” Why did they wander from place to place and live/hide in places like those mentioned in this text? Because the world mistreated them and drove them from their presence. Elijah is a good example of one who was forced to flee from men and hide in deserted places (1 Kings 17). In driving GOD’s faithful from its presence, the world was closing a door of blessings from itself.

Heb. 11:39 “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”

“And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise,” (ASV)

“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,” (NKJV)

“And even though all these received a good report through faith, they did not receive the promise;” (ESV)

All of those spoken of in this chapter, and those faithful who are not named, had their faith attested to, not by men, but by GOD. It can safely be said that that is all any of the faithful has ever desired — to be accounted faithful by GOD. GOD’s people have to develop a “tough skin” which basically ignores what the worldly may say about them, or how they treat them. The only things which matters is what does GOD say about him.

“received not the promise” They lived in faith, and they died in faith; but they did not receive the promise. This does not mean that they did not receive any promises GOD made to them.

“Abraham, for instance, received the promise of a son by Sarah; the Twelve Tribes received the promise of the earthly inheritance; and Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, and Daniel, received many other promises during their earthly pilgrimage” (Milligan, p. 428).

Although they received many promises which GOD had fulfilled, there was one promise they did not see — **“the promise.”** They did not live to see the fulfillment of the Messianic promise. They did not see the promised One, nor the beginning of His reign. They did not see forgiveness of their sins as do Christians, because the only blood which could offer complete cleansing had not been shed yet.

The point Paul was trying to get across is that they persisted in their faithfulness, even though they did not see this promise. They remained faithful until they died, knowing that GOD would, in His own time, fulfill this promise, as well as all others He had made. Christians must be persistent in their faith as they march toward the final judgment of GOD’s promises (eternal Heaven). That home with Him cannot be seen, it has not become a reality yet for them, but one’s faith gives him the strength to hold out against sometimes seemingly impossible to hear him say, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”** (Matthew 25:21).

Heb. 11:40 **“GOD having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”**

“GOD having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (ASV)

“GOD having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” (NKJV)

“GOD foreseeing something better for us; so that apart from us they would not be completed.” (ESV)

“better” — kreitton — *“stronger, i.e., better, that is nobler: best, better”* (Strong); *“more useful, more serviceable...it is more advantageous”* (Thayer, p. 359); *“better, i.e., more useful, more profitable...better in value or dignity, nobler, more excellent”* (Zodhiates, CD); *“more prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better...more useful, more advantageous”* (Bauer, p. 449).

“The ‘better thing’ here spoken of is evidently the new and better covenant which was established on new and better promises, including all the superior blessings and privileges of the Gospel dispensation” (Milligan, p. 429).

This would especially include the fulfillment of the Messiah coming to the world from His home in Heaven. They remained faithful, even though they did not physically see the fulfillment of that prophecy. Today, Christians can look back, see that the Messiah has come, and thus remain faithful and thankful for being allowed to see it.

“they without us should not be made perfect” The entire system of revelation was not completed in any one age (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian). They were given the promise, and the fulfillment came in the Christian dispensation. GOD had not planned for them to see the completion of His redemptive work. When the time was right (**“fulness of time”** – Galatians 4:4), He sent His Son to complete the work He had designed before the beginning of time. The fruit of this work is

the perfecting of all dispensations through the death of His Son. The faithful of all dispensations of time will equally share the reward.

“For I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38).

Hebrews Chapter Twelve

Heb. 12:1 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin

which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,”

“Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,” (ASV)

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,” (NKJV)

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses around us, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” (ESV)

“run” — trecho — “to walk or run hastily” (Strong); “by a metaphor taken from the runners in a race, to exert one’s self, strive hard; to spend one’s strength in performing or attaining something” (Thayer); “To run...to spend one’s strength in performing or attaining something” (BDB); “figuratively in comparisons drawn from the public races and applied to Christians as expressing strenuous efforts in the Christian life and cause” (Zodhiates); “run...exert oneself to the limit of one’s powers in an attempt to go forward, strive to advance” (Bauer, p. 825); “the Greek tense translates, ‘let us keep on running’” (Robertson, p. 583).

“patience” — hupomone — “cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy” (Strong); “steadfastness, constancy, endurance; in the N. T. the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings” (Thayer, p. 644); “steadfastness, constancy, endurance” (BDB); “patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance” (Bauer, p. 846); “patient, endurance, perseverance; staying with the project” (Littrell, p. 371).

“Wherefore” Because of all that had previously been said, because of the examples of faith previously given. There should not have been a chapter division here because a conclusion is being given to what had been shown, especially in the last chapter.

“great cloud of witnesses” Paul often compared the Christian life to athletic events (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Here he compared the Christian life to a race, probably drawing the picture of what is called the Olympic games today. Great crowds or people attended these events, as is done to this day, encouraging their favorites to strive for and gain the crown of victory. The witnesses spoken of in this text are those who had faithfully endured the trials before them in the ages gone by, and a sample of them is seen in chapter eleven.

How the faithful of past ages are or can be witnesses is a disputed matter. (1) Some believe they are simply “witnesses of faith.” In other words, one can look at their lives and observe what great faith was able to do for them. Through them one can see the “nature, power, value and sure rewards of faith” (Milligan, p. 440). (2) Some

believe that they are presently spectators to Christians' endeavors as they run the race. But Solomon said the dead cannot see what goes on here (Ecclesiastes 9). (3) Some believe that they are witnesses in the same sense that they can be witnesses of the possibility of one being faithful to GOD no matter what he may face. These witnesses are listed in chapter eleven. (4) Some combine the first and second thoughts given above. This writer believes a combination of numbers one and three is in order here.

“lay aside every weight” *“The word is ogkon ‘bulk, mass,’ hence, ‘a swelling, superfluous flesh’”* (Milligan, p. 213). The allusion is to the training and conditioning that is involved in the preparation of the athlete. When their day of the contest arrives, the athlete has been prepared to give the best he can possibly give in order to obtain the prize. It is commonly understood that this refers to laying aside the weight of sin, but Expositors also adds the following thought.

“The Christian runner must rid himself even of innocent things which might retard him” (Wuest, p. 214).

Christians must rid themselves of anything that would keep him from being faithful.

What are some innocent things a Christian might become involved in, which would keep him from being what GOD would have him to be? Sports, clubs, vacations, vacation homes, television, internet, face book, twitter, hunting, golf, volunteer groups, business, job, et cetera. These things are not sinful in and of themselves. But when they are allowed to dominate one's time and energy to the neglect of study GOD's word and then applying that word in our lives — they become sinful. Many Christians sin against themselves (and GOD) by allowing their time, talents, and money to be pre-empted by secondary things which hinder their faithfulness and cannot get them to Heaven.

“the sin which doth so easily beset us” *“Easily beset...skillfully surrounding”* (Thayer). *What is the sin which “doth so easily beset us?”* Viewing the context, this sin is **unbelief**, which involves itself so many sins which Christians commit (occasionally one may be involved in a sin of ignorance). A Christian is thus encouraged to lay aside anything, no matter how trivial that thing may seem, which will hold him back from accomplishing the purpose of GOD in his life. Lay those things aside, cast them off, and run with patience the Christian race.

Thayer states that the word *“run,”* calls for exertion and striving hard in order to obtain something. The word *“patience”* means endurance. From these two words it is to be understood that a Christian must give every effort at his disposal to accomplish the goal GOD has set before him; and when the going gets tough, he does not quit, but continues to seek a way to go forward. (*“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”*)

The tendency of some is to begin the Christian race like a rocket and then burn out rapidly, “falling back to earth,” never to rise again. Others go forward and upward for a while as things go well, but then adversity strikes and they fade from the picture. Some go back and forth between faithfulness and unfaithfulness. Some indeed begin

well, but as they walk life's pathways they become faint and give up. Paul urges Christians to keep on trying, gradually overcoming the obstacles in their way, until the goal is finally reached.

“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Luke 8:5-8).

A Christian must run this race no matter what it may cost him — no matter what may have to be cast aside as being worthless when compared to the goal of eternal life. He must **“persevere through all trials and difficulties even to the end”** (Milligan, p. 443). Let one not fool himself — the cost can be very high in human terms. The Christian life may cause him friends, family, jobs, and even his life.

“the race that is set before us” This shows the voluntary nature of the Christian life. No one will force him to run (live) this race; one must voluntarily step up to the line and begin running. Once one begins the Christian race, no one will make him continue the race. One can quit anytime he wants to, but there will be no crown of victory for such a one.

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

Quitters never win!

Jesus said, **“IF any man WILL come after Me, LET HIM deny himself, and TAKE up his cross, and FOLLOW Me”** (Matthew 16:24, emphasis mine, RK). Jesus said **“Come unto Me”** (Matthew 11:28), **not “I will force you to come to Me.”** Christianity is strictly voluntary in nature.

Heb. 12:2 “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD.”

“looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of GOD.” (ASV)

“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of GOD.” (NKJV)

“Looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of the faith, who considering the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross without regard for its shame, and is seated at the right of the throne of GOD.” (ESV)

“Looking unto” — aphorao — **“to consider attentively”** (Strong); **“To turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something”** (Thayer); **“to look away steadfastly or intently**

toward a distant object. Metaphorically, to behold in the mind, to fix the mind upon (Zodhiates); *“look away, fix one’s eyes trustingly to or on someone”* (Bauer, p. 127); *“to look away from all else at, fix one’s gaze upon”* (Earle, p. 429); *“to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something. The word also means to turn one’s mind to a certain thing”* (Wuest, p. 214).

“endured” — hupomeno — *“to stay under (behind), i.e., remain; figuratively to undergo, i.e., bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere”* (Strong); *“to remain, i.e., abide, not recede or flee...to endure, bear bravely and calmly”* (Thayer); *“to remain under, i.e., to persevere, endure, sustain, bear up under, suffer, as a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions or provocations with faith”* (Zodhiates); *“remain instead of fleeing”* (Bauer, p. 845).

“despising” — kataphroneo — *“to think against, i.e., disesteem: despise”* (Strong); *“to contemn, despise, disdain, think little or nothing of”* (Thayer); *“to hold in contempt, to think lightly of, despise”* (Zodhiates); *“look down on, despise, scorn, treat with contempt...care nothing for, disregard, be unafraid of”* (Bauer, p. 420).

Christian endeavors are to be considered by a **“great cloud of witnesses,”** they must also points out that one must also consider the example of Jesus. The Lord knows what it is like to stand against evil. He also knows the consequences of such a stand, and He is pulling for (rooting for) His disciples to win the race. The emphasis seems to be, that after looking for a brief time at the witnesses of chapter eleven, one is to turn his gaze to Jesus as the perfect example. Having turned his mind to Jesus he is not to take his eyes off of him (see definitions above). Keeping one’s eyes on Jesus and the eternal home He offers will keep one from getting off course (neither deviating to the right or the left of the path) on his journey to his heavenly home.

Jesus is next proclaimed as the **“author and finisher of our faith.”** The Greek word for **“author”** is the word which signifies the **“originator.”** He took the lead and set the example for saving faith through His own obedience in the face of every adversity Satan could throw at Him.

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

He believed whole-heartedly in the plan His Father had devised for mankind’s salvation to the point that He was willing to die for that plan in the most despised way possible. Yet, He considered what he went through (His suffering) as if it were nothing of importance.

Not only is Jesus called the author of the faith, but He is the **“finisher,”** i.e., the **“perfecter”** of that faith, He raised faith to the highest possible level. In Christ, **“faith had its full expression, its**

ultimate consummation" (Lightfoot, p. 229). He carried out the purpose of GOD right to the end — the cruel and humiliating death on the cross. Thus, He is the ultimate example of faith; for there had been no one like Him before (author), and there would be no one like Him again (finisher). He is the Alpha and the Omega (The Revelation 1:8).

"Who for the joy that was set before Him" What joy? The reversal of the tragic defeat which had occurred in the Garden of Eden. The purpose that Satan thought he had achieved in the garden to destroy man and defeat GOD was shown to be false when Jesus paid the ransom price for man. Having finished His unpleasant task of suffering and dying for man, He now sits at His Father's right hand. No wonder as He hung on the cross He said **"It is finished."**

"In view of all the honor which He would have at the right hand of God, and the happiness which He would experience from the consciousness that He had redeemed a world, was willing to bear the sorrows connected with the atonement" (Barnes, p. 295).

This brief phrase shows His ability to endure was based upon the reward held out for perfect obedience. The reward of something excellent has always been held out to man by GOD as an incentive for obedience to His will.

Jesus **"endured the cross, despising the shame."** In the centuries removed from the time of Jesus' crucifixion on the cross, it is hard for one today to understand the shame associated with the cross. Now one tends to think of the cross as a badge of honor, with the glorification of Christ. The cross people wear is often thought of a sign of victory — something of which one should be proud. Instead of the shame it once represented, it now stands as the greatest symbol of love and sacrifice ever known.

The cross *"in the ears of the people of Athens, of Corinth, and of Rome, excited deeper disgust than the gallows does with us — for it was regarded as the appropriate punishment of the most infamous of mankind"* (Barnes, p. 295).

Only the most infamous criminals were condemned to death on the cross. This was a place for repeat offenders to die. Among the Romans only a citizen who was condemned of treason could be executed in this manner.

"set down" This is a term of finality, it indicates a completed or finished work. Have completed the work He came to do, the Lord sat down and **remains** seated. He need never arise to repeat His work on the cross for sinners. **"It is finished"** (John 19:30)!

Just as Jesus looked to the end of the way, just as He kept His eye on the reward, so must Christians today. When the trials of this life surround one, when temptations mount, when it seems there is no possible way to endure any more, he should fix his gaze on the glory and reward Christ offers for the obedient. If one diligently follows the path which the Lord has blazed, then the day will come when he will cease from his labors and sit down with the Lord on His throne.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in

His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (The Revelation 3:21-22).

Heb. 12:3 “For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

“For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.” (ASV)

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.” (NKJV)

“So that you not be weary and faint in your souls, consider Him who endured such opposition against Himself by sinful people.” (ESV)

“consider” — analogizomai — “to estimate, i.e., (figuratively) contemplate: consider” (Strong); “to think over, ponder, consider” (Thayer); “to consider accurately and distinctly or again and again” (Zodhiates); “to reckon up, to compare, to weigh” (Robertson, p. 584); “to reckon up, to consider by way of comparison” (Wuest, p. 216).

The apostle urges them not to simply remember the example of the Lord, but rather to ponder and think about His example over and over. They were to look to Jesus as their ray of hope and shining example. After all, Jesus endured the same things they were enduring; and in fact He suffered far more than they did and endured more than they ever would. Jesus endured, and so must His disciples.

“Consider Jesus. Compare His experiences with your own. He, too, lived in the flesh and was a companion in tribulation. He was violently opposed, His sayings were twisted, and His claims were ridiculed. Consider His sufferings and the manner in which He met them” (Lightfoot, p. 230).

“He would have them also carefully consider Him as having meekly, patiently, perseveringly, and triumphantly borne ‘such contradiction of sinners against himself’” (Milligan, p. 445).

“The enemies resisted His plans, perverted His sayings, and ridiculed His claims, but none of these caused Him for a moment to deviate from His course” (Reese, p. 218).

“wearied and faint”

“let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

There is a real danger that, in fighting the battles of this life against sin, that one may become bowed down through weariness. It becomes tiresome when constantly fighting against such adversaries as Satan and his many servants. They constantly harass Christians, trying to bring them down to their level. When those times of weariness come, Christians must look to Jesus and the dazzling example He left of One Who overcame and conquered far more than anyone will face today. By looking to Jesus one can see several

means He used to overcome. All are familiar with Matthew chapter four where He used the Scriptures to withstand the attacks of Satan. But few are familiar with Mark 6:31.

“And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”

The text shows obvious weariness on the part of Jesus and His apostles, so He drew them aside for rest. One might also consider First Kings chapter seventeen, where Elijah was in need of rest from the attacks of Ahab and Jezebel. Rest in the midst of trials can be a very useful tool in overcoming Satan.

Coffman ask, **“What are the causes of fainting?”** He then gave the following causes which may be helpful in considering this subject.

- “1. The arrogance of wicked men was a hindrance that brought the Psalmist near to fainting (Psalm 1-3).*
- 2. Hunger and thirst, physically, can cause fainting; and the same is true spiritually (Psalm 107:5). People long separated from Bible study, prayer, and preaching then to faint.*
- 3. Adversity can cause one to faint (Prov. 24:10).*
- 4. Sin causes fainting (Lam. 1:22).*
- 5. Fear sometimes results in fainting (Luke 21:26), especially fear of men and what they may do.*
- 6. The chastening of the Lord can be an occasion of fainting, as the author of Hebrews pointed out a moment later (12:5).*
- 7. In the physical world, some dreadful disease, such as cancer, can cause men to faint; and this has its counterpart spiritually; and, in a world where there are all kinds of pernicious doctrines of men denying every truth taught in God’s word, once such evil teaching enters the heart, it can cause fainting and death” (p. 316).*

Heb. 12:4 “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” (ASV)

“You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.” (NKJV)

“You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” (ESV)

The apostle stated that those to whom he wrote had not resisted sin and necessarily the one who promotes sin (Devil), to the point of shedding blood. His words would no doubt cause them to remember all those who had, especially the example of Christ. All who had **“resisted unto blood”** had done so rather than yield to compromise and sin.

“striving against sin” *“To fight agonizingly against. It speaks of a terrific fight”* (Wuest, p. 217).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Hebrews 10:32-34).

*“How readily we yield to sin! We offer a faint and feeble resistance and then surrender. We think it will be unknown, or that others do it, or that we may repent of it, or that we have no power to resist it, or that it is of little consequence, and our resolution gives way. Not so the Redeemer. Rather than yield in any form to sin, He measured strength with the great adversary...and gloriously triumphed. And so should we always triumph if we had the same settled purpose to resist sin in every form **even unto blood**”* (Barnes, p. 297).

Too often Christians (and all of mankind) excuse their yielding to sin by making comparisons. He compares himself to others and says, *“I am not as bad as the majority.”* He then subsequently gets to thinking that GOD is going to judge him on some kind of curved scale. He is not! One must compare himself to the Christ. If one looks at the extreme suffering of Jesus instead of throwing a pity party for himself, he might quit complaining and get to work in the Lord’s kingdom.

The common belief of the ancients (and many today), was/is that suffering was a sign of Divine disapproval (Example: Job and his “friends.”). That line of thinking is false, as clearly seen by Jesus’ teachings (John 9:1-3).

“Suffering is essential and even valuable, for through it God reveals His care and establishes a meaningful relationship of Father and son” (Lightfoot, p. 231).

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:10-12).

“as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked Him, saying, Master, **who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?** Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of GOD should be made manifest in him” (John 9:1-3, emphasis mine, RK).

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:41-42).

Heb. 12:5-6 “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

“and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” (ASV)

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” (NKJV)

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which was addressed to you as children, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; For whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” (ESV)

“despise not” — *oligoreo* — “to have little regard for, i.e., to disesteem: despise” (Strong); “to care little for, regard lightly, make small account of” (Thayer); “to disesteem or care little for, to consider of small worth, to despise something” (Zodhiates); “think lightly, make light of something” (Bauer, p. 564).

“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11-12).

“chastening” This word entails or involves training and educating through discipline, which may either be verbal or corporal. It does not always involve punishment. Discipline is an idea that is firmly rooted in GOD’s word, even though many wish to deny it and its benefits. Further, Biblical discipline is always practiced because of love for and the benefit it brings one. Because GOD loves His creation, it necessarily follows that He allows His children to be disciplined in various ways. The discipline exercised will hopefully correct one’s behavior and thoughts and make him a better child, more perfectly fitted for obedience in GOD’s family. This discipline is proof of GOD’s love toward His people, His children. It might be added that a child who is not disciplined is **not** loved by his father.

“So the author reasons that by means of trials and difficulties God trains His children in the way He wishes them to go, that rather than these difficulties serving to indicate God’s displeasure, they are really a proof of His love” (Lightfoot, p. 232).

It should also be expressed that the Father wishes to deal gently with His children. He would much rather be able to express His will

to them through words which cause them to obey Him. But that does not always work, and some must learn, as the saying goes, the hard way. Some refuse to learn from the words and examples of others, thus they repeat the mistakes of the ages. Since the father loves his child, when such occurs, he must go beyond words to a more straightforward approach for correction. The chastening is designed, both physical and spiritual, for the purpose of correcting bad behavior, not simply to be able to punish one. (Corporal punishment is to be reserved for those who will not learn through verbal teaching.)

Considering these verses, one should not whine and complain when difficulties come his way. Instead, he ought to look for what he can learn from them so as to improve his attitudes and life in such a way as to please and better serve his Father in Heaven. As these passages are considered, one comes to see that the chastening spoken of can correct his course and build his faith in order that he might gain the eternal reward. That being the case, the admonition is not to give up — no matter what. The saints of old did not give up (v. 1). Christ suffered, yet, stayed the course to finish His work (v. 2). The saints of old suffered and continued to faithfully follow the course laid out for them by GOD; and one today can do the same thing!

“Behold, happy is the man whom GOD correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).

“Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy law; That Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. For the LORD will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake his inheritance” (Psalm 94:12-14).

Heb. 12:7 “If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

“It is for chastening that ye endure; GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?” (ASV)

“If you endure chastening, GOD deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (NKJV)

“What you are enduring is training you. GOD deals with you as children, for what so is there whom the Father does not train?” (ESV)

“endure” — hupomeno — *“to stay under (behind), i.e., remain; figuratively to undergo, i.e., bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere”* (Strong); *“to remain, i.e., abide, not recede or flee...to endure, bear bravely and calmly”* (Thayer); *“to remain under, i.e., to persevere, endure, sustain, bear up under, suffer, as a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions or provocations with faith”* (Zodhiates); *“remain or stay (behind), while others go away...remain instead of fleeing”* (Bauer, p. 845).

“If ye endure chastening” **What chastening were they enduring at the present time?** They were being persecuted in various ways only because they were Christians. GOD was allowing them to suffer at

the hands of unbelievers, because this chastisement would help their faith grow stronger. But, in order for their faith to grow stronger they had to accept the chastisement.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”
(Matthew 5:10-12).

Instead, they could choose to flee the chastisement by returning to Judaism. By remaining faithful to Christ in the midst of these persecutions, they proved themselves loyal and steadfast. Not only did they have to endure the chastisement of the worldly, they also had to endure the words of the apostle. Notice carefully the definitions of the word **“endure”** in this text. It contains the idea of not fleeing from, but instead, accepting and putting one's self in subjection to GOD's word. They could have gotten out from under these persecutions by renouncing Christianity and Christ. Instead, they chose to remain under His authority.

A father who loves his children does not let them do whatever they please without correction. A loving father recognizes that his children may not have developed the proper amount of reason, logic, or experience to deal with certain situations. Thus, he understands that they might not understand the consequences for their actions. What they do can either bring them blessings or harm. Therefore, a loving father will teach his children and bring them to a state where they experience correction when his will is violated. On the other hand, a loving father will also reward them when they have obeyed him. Therefore, chastening is a sign of a father's love for his children.

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (*“promptly”* NKJV)” (Proverbs 13:24, emphasis mine, RK).

GOD could have allowed these Christians to turn their backs on His Son without any chastisement, without correction from His word. But GOD knew that would be more harmful to them than the discipline He exercised through the writings of the apostles.

“Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy GOD chasteneth thee”
(Deuteronomy 8:5).

Close observations of the Proverbs reveals that physical (corporal) chastening has parallels in the spiritual realm.

“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Proverbs 19:18).

Notice that parents are told to chasten their children while there is hope. In the physical world, there are too many parents who allow their children to grow up doing basically whatever they please, and defending them when they do something wrong. Such children will reach a stage where their parents cannot go back and undo the damage they have created. While the child is still pliable, while he can still be molded, such training must be exercised.

The spiritual application is the same. If as a Christian one is allowed to do whatever he pleases, without any instructive chastening, a point will be reached by that individual (or congregation) where the truth will fall on deaf ears. Once this happens the only thing for which to wait are the consequence for disobedient lives. These consequences can be both physical and eternal.

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:15-16).

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Even though the chastisement causes the child of GOD pain, embarrassment, et cetera; true love will cause it to be administered regardless of the protests. **Why?** Because the loving Father is looking ahead to the future and the reward that awaits the properly trained child.

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15).

A child’s actions will many times display a lack of good judgment and his immaturity. This will be seen in the foolish, unwise, careless, thoughtless things that he says or does. If that is allowed to remain in the child without the discipline which helps him to grow up (mature), then that foolishness will become ingrained, and (in a sense) the child will never grow up. America is seeing more and more adults who act like spoiled children, and society is crumbling because of it. If they do not get what they want or what they think is due them they throw a hissy-fit.

Paul used the physical to illustrate the spiritual application of this with regard to the cessation of miracles (a principle which applies in other areas as well).

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Chastisement must be used in order to develop the maturity one needs to be a faithful and effective servant of GOD.

“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:13-14).

The use of proper corporal punishment will not kill the child, though at the time the child might think so. Instead, such chastisement will save him from much pain, social embarrassment, and harm in the future.

The chastisement, the teachings GOD administers, will not permanently hurt the child of GOD, but will deliver him from an eternal Hell. It will give eternal happiness.

“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”
(1 Corinthians 5:5).

“Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die” (Proverbs 15:10).

Heb. 12:8 **“But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”**

“But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” (ASV)

“But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.” (NKJV)

“But if you are without discipline, in which all share, then you are illegitimate and not children of GOD,” (ESV)

The lack of chastisement is the sign of an illegitimate child (one might also add an “unloved” child). If he were not suffering chastisement, either in the form of persecution or corrective instruction, that would show that he was not GOD’s child. Unlike physical man, it is impossible for GOD to have illegitimate children. All those who place themselves under him through obedience suffer these persecutions **because** they are His children. Another consideration to be made is that one through obedience becomes a child of GOD but then if he removes himself from that position he becomes a disowned child of GOD.

“The author takes for granted the ancient practice of assigning the illegitimate son no portion of the inheritance, and regards as obvious also that a lack of concern of the father to give correction is a sign of illegitimacy” (Lightfoot, p. 232).

Paul is telling them, in essence, that instead of being discouraged because of what they were going through, they ought to be encouraged because it proved that they were GOD’s children. Jesus taught the same basic message in Matthew 5:11-12.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

“If you never meet with anything that is adapted to correct your faults, to subdue your temper, to chide your wanderings, it would prove that you were in the condition of illegitimate children — cast off and disregarded by the father” (Barnes, p. 299).

If they were not GOD’s children, but rather of the world, the world would not persecute them.

Heb. 12:9 “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”

“Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (ASV)

“Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?” (NKJV)

“Also we have earthly fathers who disciplined, and we respected them; and shall we not much more be submissive to the Father of spirits and live?” (ESV)

“corrected” — paideutes — “a trainer, i.e., teacher or (by implication) discipliner: which corrected, instructor” (Strong); “An instructor, preceptor, teacher: a chastiser” (Thayer); “an instructor; a corrector, a chastiser” (Zodhiates); “instructor, teacher...corrector, one who disciplines” (Bauer, p. 603).

The comparison is between earthly fathers who chastise and the relationship to them after the chastisement, compared to the heavenly Father’s chastisement and how one should react to Him after the chastisement He offers.

“God, he argues, is infinitely perfect; and His chastisements are all like Himself in this respect, that they are wise, and just, and good. But our earthly parents are like ourselves, frail, weak, and sinful; often erring in their attempts to educate us as well as in everything else. We, however, bore their imperfect chastisements with patience and reverence; much more than should we now bear with grateful resignation the wise and gracious chastisements of Him who never errs, but who always corrects us for our own good, with the view of making us partakers of his holiness” (Milligan, p. 452).

Everything that GOD has done by way of chastisement has been done in order to guide one to eternal life with Himself. A faithful Christian is destined for another world, in which he will live eternally with GOD in total happiness and joy — but only if he accepts all that He demands of him in this life, **including His chastisements**. Submission to GOD must take place at all times for the eternal home to be realized.

“He corrects us that He may promote our final happiness, and His inflictions are the means of saving us from eternal death” (Barnes, p. 301).

Earthly fathers do not lose the respect their children have for them because they corrected them, even when that punishment demands corporal punishment. Yet, the correction physical parents impart is not always perfect. That being the case, reverence for GOD (who is perfect), should not be diminished when one is corrected by Him. It is illogical not to reverence GOD for corrections He gives and yet give reverence to parents for corrections they give.

Heb. 12:10 “For they verily for a few days chastened us after their

own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.”

“For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.” (ASV)

“For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.” (NKJV)

“Indeed they disciplines us for a few days, as it pleased them, but He does it for our benefit, that we may share in His holiness.” (ESV)

“own pleasure” — dokeo — “to be of opinion, think, suppose” (Thayer); “to think, imagine, consider, appear. Express the subjective mental estimate or opinion formed by man concerning a matter” (Zodhiates); “think, believe, consider of subjective opinion” (Bauer, p. 201); “is used of a subjective judgment which may or may not confirm the fact” (Wuest, p. 220).

“profit” — sumphero — “to bear together (contribute), i.e., (literally) to collect or (figuratively) to conduce; especially advantage: be better for bring together, be expedient (for), be good, profit” (Strong); “to bear together or at the same time; to carry with others; to collect or contribute in order to help, hence to help, be profitable, be expedient...advantage, profit” (Thayer); “to bring together in one place; used in an absolute sense or with a dat. following, to be profitable, advantageous, to contribute or bring together for the benefit of another” (Zodhiates); “bring together something...help, confer benefit, be advantageous or profitable or useful” (Bauer, p. 780).

Another contrast is offered between the imperfect discipline of human parents and the perfect discipline of GOD. “After their own pleasure” implies that earthly fathers discipline according to their best judgment, fallible though it is. Note two things which show the imperfection of parental discipline:

“Namely, it is during the brief period of youth, and it must cease when manhood is reached, whether or not it has accomplished its end; and then again, the human parents are shortsighted, fallible...the thing that seems good to them was not always best for us” (Wuest, p. 219).

On the other hand, GOD’s discipline is constantly with a person throughout all his life, and it comes from an infallible source Who always knows exactly what one needs. He always corrects one for his own good, his eternal well-being. Everything GOD does toward human beings is designed to make him a partaker of the divine nature.

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

“The punishment imposed by earthly parents is, at best, subject to error and its admixture with caprice, anger, and other elements of parental shortcoming: but the chastening of God is never unreasonable, never more than the child of God can bear (1 Cor. 10:13), and is never imposed from any unworthy motive on the part of God. It is solely for the profit and ultimate holiness of the recipient” (Coffman, p. 321).

Milligan listed three reasons why one should give heed to the chastisements of GOD.

- “1. They all proceed from the love and benevolence of God.*
- 2. They come from one who is Himself infinitely perfect.*
- 3. They are all intended for our highest good”* (p. 454).

Heb. 12:11 *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

“All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness.” (ASV)

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (NKJV)

“Indeed all discipline seems to be not joyous but unpleasant at the time; but afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it.” (NASV)

“grievous” — lupe — *“sadness: grief, grievous + grudgingly heaviness, sorrow”* (Strong); *“sorrow, pain, grief”* (Thayer); *“grief, sorrow”* (Zodhiates); *“grief, sorrow, pain of mind or spirit, affliction”* (Bauer, p. 482).

“yieldeth” — apodidomi — *“to give away, i.e., up, over, back”* (Strong); *“to pay off, discharge, what is due, (because a debt, like a burden, is thrown off, by being paid)”* (Thayer); *“to give or to do something necessary in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation”* (Zodhiates); *“give away, give up, give out...give back, return...render, reward, recompense”* (Bauer, p. 90).

“exercised” — gumnazo — *“to practice naked (in the games), i.e., train (figuratively): exercise”* (Strong); *“to exercise naked (in a palaestra or school of athletics)...to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind”* (Thayer); *“to train naked, as the Greek athletes. Generally to exercise, train. Thus gymnasium, is a place of exercising. Metaphorically, to train in godliness”* (Zodhiates).

“no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous”

Pain, whether physical or mental, is not something any sane person enjoys. It is unpleasant no matter which of these avenues is considered. The object of chastisement, or discipline, is to bring pain for the purpose of causing one to change his behavior. While enduring the chastisement of GOD, there is no enjoyment, peace or

satisfaction at the time. But later its exercise will bring the reward of the righteous, a satisfaction that GOD is pleased with our efforts to obey Him.

“nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness” If one accepts and learns from the administered chastisement, the benefit will become evident in a changed life and way of thinking. How many remember incidents from their childhood when their parents disciplined them, either with deserved corporal punishment or verbal chastisement? At the time there was no enjoyment from that discipline, but looking back one can see how it benefitted them later in life. Now gratitude is expressed to those parents who loved him enough to correct him before his bad habits became ingrained. Because the lesson was learned from that chastisement, a more serious suffering did not have to take place later.

Just so with GOD’s chastisement of His children. The chastisement of being corrected is not a thing human beings desire because of pride. Human beings like to think they know what is best for them, what will bring them happiness, peace and contentment. But if one would gain the eternal reward he must submit and make the changes in thought and action which will gain the gift of GOD’s grace.

“unto them which are exercised thereby” The word “exercised” might be better translated by one of the definitions above — “trained.” gumnazo is a word which gives us gymnasium, a place where exercise trains one to be the best at some sport he can be. The word is used to signify vigorous exercise of either the mind or body. In the sense of this text it speaks about godly exercise which trains the soul for a heavenly abode. Thus, man will become right in the sight of GOD and will have peace in his soul.

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me Thy statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart. Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in Thy law. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes” (Psalm 119:67-71).

“I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me” (Psalm 119:75).

“we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3-5).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (1 Corinthians 4:17-18).

Heb. 12:12 “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;”

“Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees;” (ASV)

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,” (NKJV)

“Therefore strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble;” (ESV)

“lift up” — anorthoo — *“to straighten up: left up, make straight”* (Strong); *“to set up, make erect...drooping hands and relaxed knees (to raise them up by restoring their strength)”* (Thayer); *“To make straight or upright again”* (Zodhiates); *“rebuild, restore, literally of a fallen structure”* (Bauer, p. 72); *“to restore to straightness or erectness, reinvigorate. It was used of medical writers of the act of setting dislocated parts of the body”* (Wuest, p. 221).

“hang down” — pariemi — *“to let by, i.e., relax: hang down”* (Strong); *“to relax, loosen, let go, relax, unstrung, weakened, exhausted”* (Thayer); *“to neglect, leave unattended, figuratively to loosen, relax”* (Zodhiates); *“leave undone, neglect...let fall at the side, slacken, weaken”* (Bauer, p. 627).

“feeble” — paraluo — *“to loosen beside, i.e., relax (perfect passive participle paralyzed or enfeebled): feeble, sick of the (taken away) palsy”* (Strong); *“to loose on one side or from the side; to loose or part things placed by the side; to loosen dissolve, hence, to weaken, enfeeble”* (Thayer); *“to loosen at or from the side, disjoin, relax. In the NT, to dissolve, meaning to enfeeble, only in the perfect passive participle, relaxed, enfeebled”* (Zodhiates); *“undo, weaken, disable”* (Bauer, p. 620); *“to loose on one side, to loose or part things placed side by side, to loosen dissolve, to weaken, enfeeble, suffering from the relaxing of nerves, weak of limb. Our word ‘paralytic’ is the transliteration of this word”* (Wuest, p. 221).

“Wherefore” Because of the arguments previously made, the following should be their course of action, i.e., verse twelve through seventeen.

Hands hanging down and feeble knees indicates a state of despair. Paul was telling them to leave their despair behind, because what they had suffered was a sign (as already stated) of GOD’s love and care for them. Instead of being downhearted and discouraged, they were told to perk up. They needed to renew their efforts to bear these circumstances and not give up the pursuit of the eternal goal.

“The hope of victory will do much to strengthen one almost exhausted in battle; the desire to reach home invigorates the frame of the weary traveler” (Barnes, p. 302).

“The hands hanging down and the feeble knees represent spiritual faintheartedness, weariness in well doing (Gal. 6:9).

The picture is of one ceasing to exert himself because he thinks the load is too heavy and he cannot go on (Stringer, p. 60).

They were urged to strengthen themselves with the knowledge given and return to their rightful place of honor and safety.

The question arises as to whose hands and knees need to be strengthened. Is it one's own self to which this admonition is addressed; or is it directed toward Christians to strengthen their fellow Christians when they are growing weak? The answer is BOTH.

"The Greek active, not the middle, requires the sense, Lift up not only your own hands and knees, but also those of your brethren" (JFB, p. 574).

This admonition regarding brethren is commonly found throughout the Scriptures. One is responsible not only for himself but all others. One is even responsible for those who are not a part of the brotherhood of Christ (responsible to lead them to Christ).

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees" (Isaiah 35:3).

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1).

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

When reading this passage, this writer is often reminded of the Olympic games several years ago. A young man whose life goal had been to run in the Olympics finally realized his dream after years of grueling sacrifice and hard work. The race began, but as he approached the finish line, it became apparent that he was in great distress. Finally, his weariness and exhaustion took its toll, and he collapsed in the middle of the track. From out of the stands his father rushed to his side, put his arm under his shoulders, and struggled to help his son cross the finish line. The difference in what happened there and our eternal well-being is this. In the physical race, as soon as the young man received outside help, he was disqualified from the race. In the Christian race for eternity, both the helper and the one needing the help are victorious as they cross the finish line of death.

Heb. 12:13 "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

"and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed." (ASV)

"and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed." (NKJV)

"And make straight paths for your feet, so that the weak will not be turned aside, but rather be restored." (ESV)

"straight" — orthos — *"level or direct: straight, upright"* (Strong); *"straight, not crooked"* (Thayer); *"to stand, to stand straight up from a prostrate position (Acts 14:10). In a moral*

sense, straight as opposed to crooked, meaning upright, true, right, good” (Zodhiates); “straight up, upright...straight, in a straight line...figuratively, correct, true” (Bauer, p. 580).

“paths” — *trochia* — “a track (as a wheel rut), i.e., a course of conduct: path” (Strong); “a track of a wheel, a rut; a track, a path” (Thayer); “a wheel track, rut. In the NT, in a wider sense, a way, path” (Zodhiates); “make straight paths upon which one can advance quickly and in the right direction; symbolically of the moral life” (Bauer, p. 828); “straight wheel tracks” (Robertson, p. 585).

Wuest gives the following rendering of this verse. “And making smooth paths for your feet, in order that which is limping may not be wrenched out of joint, but rather that it be healed” (p. 222).

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:25-27).

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain” (Isaiah 40:3-4).

The idea is that everything should be removed from one’s path which might cause him to stumble and fall. By continuing to use the strait path, like a wagon rut, the pathway becomes an ingrained habit which leads one safely towards his eternal destination. This is especially true of those who are injured and thus in a weakened state, those who have been struggling under the burdens and have become discouraged. There is a clear obligation to help the weak in this endeavor by those who are stronger. Keep them from falling!

“The meaning is that they should be careful to walk in the path that has been prepared for them. They should do this not only for their own sake, but for others who may be influenced by their example” (Zerr, p. 237).

Christians must set a good example of continued dedication, for just as an example of cowardice encourages others to grow fainthearted and cowardly; so also does exhibited courage bolster the courage of the faint and helps them to grow stronger and be healed.

Instead of doing those things which will aggravate an injury or weakness, give it a chance to heal, to become stronger. Thus, he admonishes them to strengthen that which is weak, allowing it to heal instead of growing worse and possibly leading to destruction. There is inherent in this, the idea of exercising the weak spiritual muscle in order to strengthen it for the journey ahead.

Why does one do these things? In order to be healed. What then should be the response of one toward the chastisement of the Father so that he may be healed?

“That response includes: (1) seeing it as ‘training’ (discipline); (2) see it as God the Father helping His children; (3) be

submissive to the Father, and live; (4) know that God doesn't make mistakes; (5) cooperate with God's effort to produce only righteousness; and (6) help the Christian brothers when they are being disciplined" (Reese, p. 223).

Heb. 12:14 "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"

"Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:" (ASV)

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:" (NKJV)

"Seek peace with all people, and holiness without which no one shall see the Lord." (ESV)

"follow" — dioko — *"to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire"* (Thayer); *"to pursue, prosecute, persecute, but also to pursue in a good sense...to follow or press hard after, to pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, to go after with the desire of obtaining"* (Zodhiates); *"hasten, run, press on"* (Bauer, p. 201); *"the Greek word that actually means 'follow' is akoloutheo. But we have here a much stronger term, dioko, which means 'pursue.'* It is used in classical Greek for an animal pursuing its prey, as a hound dog on the trail of a fox — *pursuing all day"* (Earle, p. 429); *"to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after, to press on"* (Wuest, p. 222).

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

Christians are to give every effort in their power to obtain two goals: (1) to have peace with all (Christian and non-Christian) and (2) to have holiness in their lives. James 3:17 requires the peace one seeks to be in harmony with the pure wisdom which comes from above. Peace or harmony should always be something for which Christians are striving. Jesus pronounced His blessings on the "peacemaker" (Matthew 5:9), thus showing the desirability of having peace and being peaceable. But GOD also states that this may not always be possible (Romans 12:18, see above). In order for peace (harmony) to exist between two individuals, they must **both** desire peace. Christians are not to seek peace at any price. Compromise is not an option in order to have peace. Failure to take a Biblical stand is not an option in order to have peace. When compromise or failure to stand takes place, one may gain peace with his fellow man, but he loses the only peace worth having — peace with GOD. If the choice is between having peace with GOD or man, but not both, one must choose peace with GOD.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not

to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34).

“We are to make war with sin, but not with men; with bad passions and corrupt desires, but not with our fellow-worms” (Barnes, p. 303).

Christians must earnestly seek “holiness” in their lives. That is, the sanctification of heart and life which is owed to one’s Redeemer. Thus, one’s life must exhibit purity and virtue. **“without which no man shall see the Lord”**

Holiness *“is the drawing near to God with a cleansed conscience of the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus (10:14, 22). As under the old covenant an unclean person could not enter a sacred enclosure to worship, so without holiness the ultimate vision of God is impossible (cf. Matt. 5:8)”* (Lightfoot, p. 235).

“For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

“as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Holiness is not an optional matter. It is a demand by a holy GOD in order for one to see the Lord, i.e., to obtain that home with Him in eternity.

Heb. 12:15 **“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of GOD; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”**

“looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of GOD; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled;” (ASV)

“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of GOD; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (NKJV)

“See to it that no one falls behind from the grace of GOD; lest a root of bitterness grow up and cause trouble, and through it corrupt many;” (ESV)

“Looking diligently” — episkopeo — *“to oversee; by implication to beware: look diligently, take the oversight”* (Strong); *“to look upon, inspect, oversee, look after, care for...to look carefully, beware”* (Thayer); *“to look upon, observe, examine the state of affairs of something. Look after, oversee”* (Zodhiates); *“look at, take care, see to it...oversee, care for”* (Bauer, p. 299).

“fail” — hustereo — *“to be later, i.e., (by implication) to be inferior; genitively to fall short (be deficient): come behind (short), be destitute, fall, lack, suffer need (be in) want, be the worse”* (Strong); *“to be left behind in the race and so to fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end...fail to become a partaker”* (Thayer); *“to be last, behind, posterior in place of*

time” (Zodhiates); *“come too late”* (Bauer, p. 849); *“to come late or too tardily. In Heb. 4:1 it means ‘to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end’”* (Wuest, p. 223).

“springing” — *phuo* — *“originally to ‘puff’ or blow, i.e., to swell up; but only used in the implied sense to germinate or grow (sprout, produce) literally or figuratively: spring (up)”* (Strong); *“To shoot forth, spring up”* (Thayer); *“to generate, produce, bring forth, let grow, of plants, fruit, or persons”* (Zodhiates); *“grow (up), come up”* (Bauer, p. 870); *“literally to sprout. It is pictured here as a quick process”* (Robertson, p. 585).

“Looking diligently” The admonition is that one carefully examine his life to make sure that he does those things which please GOD and thus remain faithful and not fall “behind.” The idea is that of a runner who falls so far behind that he cannot reach the goal, or of coming too late to the desired goal. Further, the context shows that one must look beyond his own faithfulness and be concerned with the spiritual welfare of other saints. The endeavor must be made to help others strengthen their faith so that they did not fail to receive the grace of GOD which leads to eternal life. It has become fashionable for the Lord’s people to feel that the eternal well-being of their fellow Christian is in the hands of the eldership (*“Let the elders take care of them,”* etc.). The truth is that each Christian has the responsibility to help all other Christians attain the eternal reward as well.

“We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).

“lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you” Why should one look diligently at not only his own life, but also the lives of his brethren? To prevent a *“root of bitterness”* from springing up among brethren.

“The allusion, in both cases, is to a bitter plant springing up among those that were cultivated for ornament or use, or to be a tree bearing bitter and poisonous fruit among those that produced good fruit. The reference of the apostle is to some person who might produce a similar effect in the church – to one who should inculcate false doctrines... They were to be at special pains that no such person should start up from among themselves or be tolerated by them” (Barnes, p. 305).

“Undoubtedly what is referred to hear, as in Deuteronomy, (29:16-21, RK) is a person who might spring up among them and infect with malignant growth the vigor of the whole group. The results would be tragic, for indifference begets indifference and apostasy begets apostasy” (Lightfoot, 235).

It is the responsibility of each one to look diligently at himself so as not to allow a root of bitterness to grow in himself, as well as his brethren. The church does not need an Achan in it, who troubles and defiles the whole congregation (Joshua 7). Such a person must be reclaimed through his repentance, or he must have fellowship withdrawn from him (the former is preferable). *Why?* Because such

a troubling root can cause many others to be defiled with his false ways or doctrine.

“One wicked man, and especially one hypocrite in the church, may be the means of destroying many others” (Barnes, p. 305).

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

It should be noted that these are constant warnings for the Hebrew brethren not to give up Christianity for the religion given on Mount Sinai to Moses and the children of Israel. To do such would result in a crop of evil fruit. Why? Because that old religion was now a false religion — it was no longer a valid religion. To return back to the law delivered by Moses was to be guilty of idolatry.

Heb. 12:16 *“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”*

“lest there be any fornication, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright.” (ASV)

“lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.” (NKJV)

“That there be no sexually immoral person, or an unholy person like Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright.” (ESV)

“profane” — bebelos — “accessible (as by crossing the door way), i.e., (by implications of Jewish notions) heathenish, wicked: profane” (Strong); *“profane...(unhallowed, common)”* (Thayer); *“unhallowed, the opposite of sacred...profane, void of religion or piety”* (Zodhiates); *“accessible to everyone, profane, unhallowed...of persons, godless, irreligious”* (Bauer, p. 138); *“it speaks of the secular, to non-religious, as contrasted to that which is associated with the worship of deity”* (Wuest, p.225).

The account of Esau selling his birthright is found in Genesis 25:29-34.

A fornicator is one who is given over to sensual desires and pleasures. Usually the word is used in a sexual context, but it is sometimes used in a figurative sense to denote unfaithfulness. Looking at the account of Esau, it is indeed seen that he lived a life that was devoted to physical desires and pleasures. He lived for the moment; if it felt good do it. He sold his birthright simply to fill his stomach one time. He also married heathen women which greatly disappointed his parents (Genesis 26:34-35). It is always a grief of heart to GODLY parents when their children take marriage partners who are not of the faith (1 John 2:16). **Why?** Because they know such children will have a strong probability of being pulled away from their faith by such mates.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but

he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever” (1 John 2:16-17).

A profane person is one who treats holy things as if they were simply common things — every day items. This is why Esau sold the birthright for a simple bowl of pottage. The birthright was not important to him — his belly was what he deemed important.

“A profane person is one who makes a temporal use of a sacred thing. That is what Esau did when he sold his birthright (a sacred possession) for a mess of food (a temporal article)” (Zerr, p. 237).

Christians become profane when they sell the birthright of their soul for some earthly pleasure, whatever that perceived pleasure may be. It is what they do when the eternal well-being of the soul is sold for something physical, i.e., the lust of the flesh or eyes or the pride of life.

A profane person is unfit to participate in the affairs of religion and ought not to be allowed to thus profane religious activities through his participation. Thus, Esau was eliminated from participation as priest of his family, as the firstborn usually became under the Patriarchal system. He was not fit to serve as a religious leader. It is interesting to note that a sexually immoral person is ranked with one who treats holy things as unholy things.

What did the birthright entail?

“The birthright seems to have implied the first place or rank in the family, the privilege of offering sacrifice and conducting worship in the absence or death of the father, a double share of the inheritance, and, in this instance, the honor of being in the line of the patriarchs and transmitting the promises made to Abraham and Isaac” (Barnes, p. 306).

Coffman gives the following list of those things which the birthright entailed.

- “1. The right of primogeniture, that is, the right of the firstborn to receive a double portion of his father’s possessions.*
- 2. The right to convey the blessing to his own posterity.*
- 3. The right of the priesthood.*
- 4. The right of custodianship of the sacred promises regarding the Messiah and the promised ‘seed’ of Abraham”* (Coffman, p. 327).

Any regard for the sacred would not allow one to sell it for some sensual pleasure. Truly, Esau represents all who would sell their eternal home for a moment’s pleasure. He represents all who care more about the physical things of life than the eternal well being of their soul. Such a person shows how little he allows his mind to dwell on spiritual matters and how little he desires spiritual blessings. Such a person lives only for today, only for the moment, with no real view of eternity.

Heb. 12:17 *“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”*

“For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he

was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.” (ASV)

“For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.” (NKJV)

“For you know that afterwards when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears.” (ESV)

“repentance” — metanoia — “a change of mind: as it appears in one who repents of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done” (Thayer); “a change of mind, repentance” (Zodhiates); “a change of mind” (Bauer, p. 512); “A change of mind and purpose” (Robertson, p. 585); “change of mind” (Earle, p. 430); “a change of mind consisting of a reversal of moral purpose” (Wuest, p. 225).

As seen above, repentance is a change of mind. There came a time when Esau considered what he had done and wished that he had not sold the birthright with all of its blessings. He came to want those blessings he had so carelessly given up to his brother. But when the blessing had been pronounced, it could not be reversed. He could not change his father’s mind regarding the blessing though he sought such with anguish and tears. It is to be emphasized that this text is not speaking of repentance on Esau’s part, rather it deals with the fact that he could not convince his father to change his mind regarding who received the blessings.

The warning is clear: if one today, like Esau of old, treats holy things in an unholy or common way, then he will be rejected as was Esau. One can reject the blessings Christ offers and become so profane that he cannot turn back; the consequences being irreversible.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward GOD, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if GOD permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:1-6).

One can lose the inheritance reserved for the faithful.

It has been extremely interesting to read the comments of writers on the above passage who believe in a “once saved, always saved” doctrine. The efforts they make to avoid the obvious meaning of passages like this would be comical if it were not so serious. Further, they often contradict themselves in the same paragraph, often saying, one can be lost and then turn around and say he cannot be lost.

Heb. 12:18-19 “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:”

“For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them;” (ASV)

“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.” (NKJV)

“For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched, and that burned with fire, and to darkness, gloom and tempest; And the sound of a trumpet, and a voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that no further word be given them;” (ESV)

Verse eighteen begins another section of contrast between the Old and New Laws. Under the old, they came to a physical mountain to obtain their law (See Exodus 19 and surrounding context). There GOD spoke directly to them as a people, whereas before He had spoken through Moses or one of the other prophets. It should be noticed that when He spoke to them, He gave them the law, including the ten commandments. At Mount Sinai, everything was done to show the majesty of GOD and instill a deep sense of reverence for Him and, yes, even fear. They needed to understand the awesomeness of coming into the presence of GOD, even if they could not see Him, but only heard His voice.

“Everything accompanying the giving of the law, the setting of bounds around the mountain which they might not pass, and the darkness and tempest on the mountain itself, was adapted to overcome the soul” (Barnes, p. 307).

The people were so overcome with fear, that when GOD had spoken, they begged that He no longer speak to them directly. Rather, they wanted Moses to be their go-between (mediator) and promised that they would give attention to GOD’s words when Moses relayed them to them.

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

“for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned;” (ASV)

“(For they could not endure what was commanded: And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” (NKJV)

“For they could not bear the command: If even a beast touch the mount, it shall be stoned.” (ESV)

“The meaning is not that the commandments themselves were intolerable, but that the manner in which they were communicated inspired a terror which they could not bear” (Barnes, p. 308).

Why was any human being or animal which touched the mountain to be killed?

“The significance of this is that the mountain was held so sacred that any beast touching it thereby became holy itself (as when Korah’s censers were offered, Num. 16:28), so holy that Israel could not even touch the beast that had touched the mountain; hence, they were not to kill the beast by touching it in any way, but by stoning or casting through with a dart” (Coffman, p. 329).

The last part of this verse is an interpolation inserted apparently after apostolic times (*“or thrust through with a dart”*). This phrase is not found in any of the oldest available texts. Saying that, it should be pointed out that it is just as truthful as if it were found in the oldest texts available, because Exodus 19:13 states, **“There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through.”**

Heb. 12:21 **“And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:”**

“and so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:” (ASV)

“And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.” (NKJV)

“And the sight was so terrifying that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and tremble.” (ESV)

“exceedingly fear” — ekphobos — *“frightened out of one’s wits: sore afraid, exceedingly fearful”* (Strong); *“stricken with fear or terror, exceedingly frightened, terrified”* (Thayer); *“frightened outright or out of one’s senses, greatly terrified”* (Zodhiates); *“terrified”* (Bauer, p. 247); *“the word ‘fear’ is intensified as to its meaning by the prefixed preposition. It is ekphobos, literally, I am ‘frightened out or away’”* (Wuest, p. 228).

Since this statement of Moses’ fear is not found in the books of the law regarding this event, some have asked, **How did it get here?** The answer is simple when one notices the promises of Jesus to His apostles.

“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD” (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Spirit put this information here!

To emphasize the terror of the events surrounding the giving of the law, one is told not only the feelings of the people, but for the first time, reveals the fear of their leader. When all that Moses had seen

and had been part of is considered with regard to GOD's awesome power, this account simply shows how far beyond all previous manifestations of the power of GOD was at that time. It is little wonder that the people and their leader experienced great fear.

“Moses was accustomed to commune with God. He had met him at the burning ‘bush,’ and had been addressed by him face to face, and yet so awful were the scenes of Horeb, that even he could not bear it with composure” (Barnes, p. 309).

Heb. 12:22 “But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,”

“but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels,” (ASV)

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,” (NKJV)

“But you have come to Mount Zion, even to the city of the living GOD; the heavenly Jerusalem, and to vast multitudes of angels, to a general assembly” (ESV)

The contrast is drawn between the mount to which the Israelites had been drawn (vv. 18-21) and that to which Christians are drawn, and they were being urged not to return to Mount Sinai. They were not being told to never go to physical Mount Sinai. They were being told not to return to the old religion which was represented by the term “Mount Sinai.” That mount represented the Law of Moses because that is where it had been delivered to the Israelites. It should be remembered that Mount Sinai was unapproachable at the time the law was given, but Zion is highly approachable. Mount Zion (Zion) represents the place where the New Covenant (New Testament) was given which governs Christians today. It represents the “heavenly city of Jerusalem” (a spiritual city).

“Zion represents the city from which the law under which we are to live came. Christians do not actually go to the city of Jerusalem, but they come to the institution that was set up in that city” (Zerr, p. 238).

“in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the GOD of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2).

“He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of GOD come with power” (Mark 9:1).

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:46-49).

“John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:5-8).

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

Many will look at this passage (Hebrews 12:22) and consider Mount Zion to be the literal dwelling place of GOD, which is found “in Heaven. This author, when considering the passages above and this text, questions that thinking. The words “come unto” are in the “*perfect indicative active*” tense. The perfect tense “*describes an action, or more correctly a process, that took place in the past, the results of which have continued to the present*” (Zodhiates, NT Grammatical Notations). This would indicate in this text the establishment of something. **What spiritual thing was established at Mount Zion?** It was the kingdom/church to which they had come and of which they were presently a part.

It is this writer’s belief that the phrases in this passage (“**city of the living GOD**,” “**the heavenly Jerusalem**,” and “**mount Zion**”) all refer to the church. The Israelites of old came to Mount Sinai, where the Old Law was put into force. Mount Zion represents the place where the church and its laws came into force.

“what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people” (2 Corinthians 6:16).

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17).

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

Heb. 12:23 “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”

“to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,” (ASV)

“to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in Heaven, to GOD the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,” (NKJV)

“And church of the firstborn people who are enrolled in the heavens, and to GOD, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous people made perfect,” (ESV)

“To the general assembly” is a broad term signifying all those who will be in Heaven.

“church of the Firstborn” Paul had already mentioned the multitude of angels which are in Heaven, so *Who was he speaking about here?* The word “church” is the word is *ekklesia*, meaning the “called out ones” or “assembly.” So it is the “assembly of the firstborn.”

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).

This then refers to the church on earth upon whom certain honors had been bestowed (including the promise of eternity for faithfulness here on earth).

“The members of the church are called firstborn in a figurative sense. In old times the firstborn child was heir to the possessions of his father” (Zerr, p. 238).

Calling Christians the assembly of the firstborn is equivalent to saying that they are heirs of the blessings of the firstborn, i.e., the blessings of GOD.

“which are written in Heaven” The word “written” is the Greek word which denotes *“that one was enrolled as a citizen, or entitled to the privileges of citizenship”* (Barnes, p. 311). Here it refers to those people who are enrolled or are recorded in “the Lamb’s book of life” as the inhabitants of Heaven, i.e., those who will enjoy eternity with GOD.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (The Revelation 21:27).

A study of the various references to the “book of life” reveal some interesting facts.

“(1) Christians names are written in it (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3); (2) the ancient faithful, such as Moses, are therein (Ex. 32:32; Dan. 12:1); (3) those whose names are not inscribed in it shall not be saved (Rev. 13:8; 20:15; 21:27); (4) even though inscribed there, a name can be blotted out, and for sufficient cause will be blotted out (Rev. 3:5)” (Coffman, p. 332).

Since this passage speaks of names being written in Heaven, the logical question arises, **When are they written in Heaven or blotted out of "the lamb's book of life?"** Note what Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven."

In Matthew 16:16, one finds Peter confessing Jesus as the Christ, and immediately in verse seventeen one finds Christ confessing Peter with these words, **"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona."** It seems then that when one confesses Christ and does all else that Christ demands for one to enter the kingdom, then his name is enrolled (written) in Heaven.

"to GOD the Judge of all"

"God Himself in His own proper person judges no one (John 5:22); but He judges all by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; and hence he if properly called 'the Judge of all'" (Milligan, p. 468).

"God is the God of all, of angels and men, of living and dead; and that as God He is the Judge to whom all men must give account (4:13). The implication is that He is a God who is not to be regarded lightly. He is not a happy-go-lucky sort of God" (Lightfoot, p. 239).

There is an assurance in this passage that there is going to be a judgment, with the implication that those who turn back to the law which was delivered at Sinai, are going to have to face **the Judge** and answer for their abandonment of Christianity to do so. Just so, those who turn back to their former ways of the world, or religion, will have to face this same **Judge**.

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:21-22).

"spirits of just men made perfect" This seems to refer to all men who through faith have approached the throne of GOD, no matter which dispensation in which they lived, and are declared just by GOD.

"Thus the heavenly city is comprised of select inhabitants. When a person becomes a Christian, he becomes at the same time a citizen of the heavenly city which is composed of innumerable angels, of members of the church on earth, and of the departed saints. He gains direct access to the God of all" (Lightfoot, p. 239).

"just men made perfect" First Thessalonians 4, states that there will be a resurrection in which all will be resurrected and those who have lived and died as they are instructed by GOD will meet Jesus in the clouds.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,

at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

The day is coming when those who have lived faithful lives will face the GOD of Heaven. When such happens, He will declare (judge) him to be perfect (complete). Being declared perfect, he can then enter the place of absolute perfection — Heaven.

Heb. 12:24 “And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

“and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.” (ASV)

“to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (NKJV)

“And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkling of blood that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (ESV)

“**Jesus the Mediator**” A mediator is a go-between. Jesus is the One Who stands between man and His Father, the One Who intercedes on behalf of Christians. He is the only One capable of being the Mediator of the New Covenant. That New Covenant was designed to bring man back into a position of fellowship with his GOD. Sin caused man to lose fellowship with GOD, but the Son’s blood gave man an opportunity to restore that fellowship.

“For there is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

“the blood of sprinkling” The covenants were sealed with blood. The first covenant was sealed with the blood of bulls and goats, and yet, their blood was only typical of the great-covenants-sealing blood of Christ.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of GOD the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Peter 1:2).

Hebrews 10:22 clearly speaks of baptism. Further, Romans 6:1-7 shows that it is through baptism that one comes into contact with the saving blood of Jesus.

Some believe that Abel is presented here as a contrast, in that “his blood” supposedly is crying out for vengeance, whereas the blood of Christ calls for mercy, love, et cetera. But, when one turns back to Hebrews 11:4, the emphasis was on the sacrifice which Abel made. It was superior to Cain’s because it met the standards GOD had set for sacrifice, and Cain’s did not. GOD testified that Abel was righteous, not because his own blood was shed by Cain, but because he had offered the sacrifice that was commanded by and acceptable to GOD. The comparison then is this: if the sacrifice Abel offered caused GOD to look upon him with favor, how much greater and more effective was the sacrifice Christ made which gained GOD’s approval.

If Abel's sacrifice meant something for him, how much more the sacrifice for one's sins must mean to Christians. One cannot even begin to look at that sacrifice lightly, but must hold it in the greatest of all possible light.

Heb. 12:25 "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven:"

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from Him that warneth from Heaven:" (ASV)

"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven," (NKJV)

"See to it that you do not reject him who is speaking, for if those did not escape on earth who rejected him who was warning them, how much less can we escape if we reject Him who is from Heaven?" (ESV)

"refuse" — paraiteomai — *"to beg off, i.e., deprecate, decline, shun"* (Strong); *"to shun, avoid: to refuse, reject"* (Thayer); *"to decline, refuse, avoid"* (Zodhiates); *"decline with acc. of the person rejected, refuse someone or refuse to do something to someone"* (Bauer, p. 616); *"a verb found only nine times, with the underlying sense of 'have nothing to do with'"* (Renn, p. 797); *"to deprecate, to prevent the consequences of an act by protesting against and disavowing it, to decline, refuse, avoid"* (Wuest, p. 229).

"turn away" — apostrepho — *"to turn away or back"* (Strong); *"To turn one's self away from, with acc. of the object to reject, refuse"* (Thayer); *"to turn away from...to forsake, desert"* (Zodhiates); *"turn away from someone or something, reject or repudiate someone"* (Bauer, p. 100); *"turn away...in other contexts, the translation 'turn away' indicates the act of 'rebelling against,' 'rejecting,' or 'refusing'"* (Renn, p. 995).

"see" — *"The verb is in the present imperative which speaks of continuous action. The idea is 'ever keep a watchful eye open,' thus, 'ever be seeing to it that you refuse not him that speaketh'"* (Wuest, p. 229).

The obligation is a constant searching on one's part of the word GOD has given. Constantly learning all that he can from it because he will be held accountable as to how he listened to it and applied it to his life.

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

"Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Thus, the admonition is to make sure that one does not refuse the

One who speaks to him. **Who was/is speaking?** Under the Old Law, GOD was the One who did the speaking through His chosen mediator — Moses. Under the New Law, GOD is still the One speaking through His mediator — the Word. It does not matter in which dispensation one may speak of, it was/is GOD who instructs with regard to man's obligations to Him.

The contrast seems not to be the One who originally spoke (for that was GOD in both cases), but rather the mediators of the two dispensations — Moses and Christ.

“Moses was a mere man, and spake as such, though in the name of God. The Son of God was from above, and spake as an inhabitant of heaven” (Barnes, p. 313).

The point to emphasize is that even Moses was a mere man, yet he spoke the words of GOD to the people as they were given to him. And the words he spoke were binding upon the people; every violation of such would be punished.

“He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Hebrews 10:28).

“if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward” (Hebrews 2:2).

Since this was true of Moses as the mediator of that covenant, **What about Christ, the Son of GOD as mediator of the New Covenant?** Jesus was not simply a mortal man, He was **“Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD with us”** (Matthew 1:23). He was GOD and man, the GODman.

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29)?

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Hebrews 2:3).

“from Him that speaketh from Heaven” **Did not Jesus speak to man, giving him instructions while He walked on earth as to how to live in His kingdom?** The answer is obviously, Yes! But here the passage speaks of Him as giving the instructions from Heaven. As Jesus walked upon this earth, He knew that He would soon leave His disciples, so He told them He was going to send **“another Comforter”** to them (Holy Spirit, John 14:26; 16:7). This other Comforter's work is outlined in John 14:26.

“the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

The Holy Spirit, being send in Jesus' name (by His authority), would be speaking for Christ. Thus, Christ gave the commands of His covenant (which He had received from His Father), from Heaven, where He went after leaving this earth (Acts 1:9-11).

The only covenant one can turn to today which will give him life is that given to him by Christ, **not that which was mediated by Moses**. Escape from punishment cannot be gained if one does not keep the law which Christ gave.

“Constantly be seeing to it that ye do not disavow Him who is speaking. For if, as is the case, those did not escape who disavowed Him that warned (them) upon earth, much rather shall not we escape who are turning away from the One who is speaking from heaven” (Wuest’s translation of this verse, p. 230).

Heb. 12:26 “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”

“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven.” (ASV)

“Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” (NKJV)

“His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, Yet once for all I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.” (ESV)

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land” (Haggai 2:6).

“Whose voice then show the earth” This voice was GOD’s voice as the earth shook when He spoke at Sinai.

“mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18).

“O GOD, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of GOD: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of GOD, the GOD of Israel” (Psalm 68:7-8).

Some believe the latter part of this verse refers to the events surrounding the birth Christ, His death, and ascension. But this passage was spoken after all these things had taken place and speak of a time yet future. Thus, they point to the end of time, when indeed all physical things shall be shaken.

“I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (The Revelation 20:11).

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But

the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:9-13).

Heb. 12:27 “And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

“And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.” (ASV)

“Now this, Yet once more, indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (NKJV)

“But the Yet once for all signifies the removal of things that can be shaken, as having been made; that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.” (ESV)

“signifieth” — deloo — “to make plain (by words): declare, shew, signify” (Strong); “to give one understanding, to indicate, signify” (Thayer); “to make manifest, known” (Zodhiates); “reveal, make clear, show something” (Bauer, p. 178).

“may remain” — meno — “a primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry” (Strong); “to continue to be, i.e., not to perish, to last, to endure...not to perish, to last, stand” (Thayer); “to remain, abide, dwell, live” (Zodhiates); “remain, stay” (Bauer, p. 503).

The repetition of the phrase “yet once more” is a double emphasis, stating that this is going to be the final destruction. This reminds one of the way this epistle began.

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:10-12).

At the beginning and end of this epistle, one sees the apostle warning the Hebrew Christians (and us), that this world is, at best, temporary. Therefore all that is in the world is worthless when viewed from the vantage point of the eternal realm, because it is all going to vanish away. In this way, he was telling them again that the persecutions

they were suffering were temporary and that the loss of life, liberty, material things, et cetera, were not to be one's chief concerns in life. It is indeed **"a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD"** (Hebrews 10:31), when has been concerned about the affairs of this life than he has about preparation and faithfulness for his eternal life.

This world and all that is in it will be completely destroyed; **nothing** will remain that is physical. That makes the physical relatively worthless — not worth pursuing.

"Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (Psalm 102:25-27).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:10-14).

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (The Revelation 21:1).

Heb. 12:28 **"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve GOD acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"**

"Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to GOD with reverence and awe:" (ASV)

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve GOD acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (NKJV)

"Let us therefore be thankful for receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, through which let us serve GOD in a pleasing manner; with reverence and fear;" (ESV)

"godly fear" — eulabeia — **"properly caution, i.e., (religiously) reverence (piety); by implication dread"** (Strong); **"reverence, veneration...simply reverence toward God, godly fear, piety"** (Thayer); **"The words 'godly fear' are the translation of deos, the fundamental idea of which is 'timid apprehension of**

danger,' as over against phobos which speaks of the terror which seizes one when danger appears...Here deos speaks, not of a slavish, cringing apprehension, but of a wholesome regard for a holy God and His standards and requirements, which if a person violates, he must suffer the consequences” (Wuest, p. 231); “the internal attitude of reverence toward a person, thing or event” (Zodhiates); “only of reverent awe of God, fear of God” (Bauer, p. 321).

The apostle encouraged his readers to be thankful to GOD because He had given them something to which they could firmly hold onto — something eternal.

“Since it is true that we Christians have received a kingdom which cannot, like the Jewish Theocracy and false systems of religion and philosophy, be shaken and removed, let us hold fast our confession: let us by patiently and perseveringly submitting to the will of God in all things, obtain from Him such measures of grace as will enable us to serve Him with ‘godly fear and dread’” (Author Unknown).

The word “receiving” is in the present tense for good reason. Christians have received the kingdom in a limited sense; i.e., they have received what they are capable of receiving as human beings — the eternal part is yet to come. Christians live in a present kingdom which is not going to be replaced, as was the Patriarchal or Mosaic; there will not be another dispensation on earth (no millennial kingdom). Christians also live in expectation of an eternal kingdom which, even though all which is physical will be terminated, can never be destroyed, i.e., brought to an end. Christians should then rejoice in the present kingdom and look forward with hopeful anticipation of the eternal one to come.

Because of the kingdom Christians presently have, and the eternal phase yet to come, they should faithfully serve GOD in reverence and “godly fear.” Gratitude should be shown to GOD because of His guarantee to the faithful.

One should **not** fear GOD in such a way as to cringe in a corner doing nothing for fear of being punished. But one should have a fear or respect that GOD means what He says, and thus one acts accordingly. When this kind of awe is exhibited toward GOD, one will not have any trouble serving GOD in an acceptable manner. Such a one will truly show his love for GOD by rendering acceptable obedience to Him. One should keep in mind that it is possible for one to obey GOD, yet, not do so in an acceptable manner. When one **only** obeys out of fear of being punished, that one does not obey out of love; therefore, his actions will not be acceptable to GOD.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments...He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:15, 21).

Heb. 12:29 “For our GOD is a consuming fire.”
“for our GOD is a consuming fire.” (ASV)

“For our GOD is a consuming fire.” (NKJV)

“For our GOD is a consuming fire.” (ESV)

Remember that the context deals with those Jews who had renounced Judaism (Mosaic law), and accepted Christianity. Now these same people were in danger of giving up Christianity and returning to Judaism because of the persecutions they were enduring. Today, Christians who have given up the world and the false religions found in it by accepting the grace offered by the Christ, should be careful not to give Him up to return to that which cannot save them.

“For our GOD is a consuming fire.”

“The God we serve ‘is indeed a gracious God,’ but He is also a ‘devouring fire, a jealous God’ (Deut. 5:24). He is indeed a God of love, but too often this description of Him is distorted and makes Him something He is not and has never been. ‘True love does not confuse good and evil, it does not fail to distinguish between truth and falsehood, it does not say, ‘Peace, Peace!’ where there is no peace...if man insists on sin, if he deliberately chooses evil rather than good, if of set purpose he turns his back on the proffered salvation, then God Himself is helpless to save him” (Lightfoot, p. 242).

“God is merciful to all those who will accept His mercy, but He is a revenging God upon those who will not respect His law (Chapter 10:28-29: verse 25)” (Zerr, p. 239).

The present verse seems to be a quote from Deuteronomy 4:24. That being the case, the warning is clear. GOD has always been and always will be One Who should be feared by the disobedient. He should never be trifled with by such an infinitesimal creature as man.

Hebrews — Chapter Thirteen

Heb. 13:1 “Let brotherly love continue.”

“Let love of the brethren continue.” (ASV)

“Let brotherly love continue.” (NKJV)

“Let brotherly love continue.” (ESV)

The main intent of the apostle’s letter has been completed. He used twelve chapters to tell these Hebrew Christians the differences between the Old and New Law and to show the superiority of the New Law because a better lawgiver had given it. In the last chapter he dealt with a list of social and moral issues in rapid succession.

Wuest states that the word “brother” means “*from the same womb*” (p. 232). Thus, it speaks of the love which brethren should have for each other as members of the same family, the family of GOD.

“He does not say to his readers ‘Have brotherly love,’ or ‘let it exist among you; but rather ‘let it continue.’ They had shown this love in the past by serving the saints and by having compassion on their brothers in affliction (6:10; 10:33-34). Now the exhortation is that they continue in love, lest their feelings for one another grow cold” (Lightfoot, p. 246).

“All kinds of strange things can cause brotherly love to fail. Difference of opinion, selfishness, conflicts of interest, lack of personal association with brethren, an awareness of sins in others more than consciousness of our own sins, spiritual pride, vainglory, love of ease or luxury, and just about every other state or inclination of the natural man; but it is the glory of the Christian faith that love of the brethren will surmount every barrier” (Coffman, p. 343).

This admonition is quite fitting in that, if these brethren continue to love each other and help each other in the midst of these persecutions, it will go a long way in helping them maintain their faith, become stronger, and persevere until the end.

The heart of Christianity is love! Love of GOD, love of brethren, love of non-Christians, and even love for their enemies.

Heb. 13:2 “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

“Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (ASV)

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.” (NKJV)

“You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.” (NASV)

The text does not state who these “strangers” are, whether Christian or non-Christian. Often in the Bible the word “stranger” was used to designate the difference between the Jew and Gentile, i.e., believers and non-believers. It is this author’s opinion that the present text is speaking about non-believers. The admonition could apply to both.

“let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the

household of faith" (Galatians 6:9-10).

Yet, considering the first twelve chapters of this book, the emphasis here may be upon Christians. The primary emphasis may be upon those who were strangers because they were forced to travel as a result of the persecutions they suffered.

One of the charges against Diotrephes was that he did not receive faithful brethren.

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9-10).

The last portion of this verse is an interesting way to say that those who show hospitality often gain some unexpected benefit from their guests. By entertaining strangers, some have entertained angels or messengers. These messengers are to be understood as messengers from GOD. An example of such would be Abraham and Lot, who entertained strangers which turned out to be heavenly messengers (Genesis 18-19). These messengers gave both Abraham and Lot great blessings. They were not the only ones who entertained heavenly messengers and received blessings from such — Gideon (Judges 6), Manoah (Judges 13), and Moses (Exodus 3).

One should also notice the words of Jesus concerning hospitality in Matthew 25:34-40, and the blessings which come from such.

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

The entertaining (supplying of needs) of strangers could bring tremendous blessings of a spiritual nature. One should consider the privilege from the above passage of supplying the needs of the Lord through his aid to another.

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter. 4:9).

"Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

Note that hospitality is not an optional matter; it is a command which is done without **"grudging"** [*goggusmos* — **"grumbling"** (Strong)].

Do **"angels"** in this passage represent heavenly beings or human

beings who serve the Lord? It is the opinion of this writer that this text is talking about heavenly messengers. While saying that, what about this principle with regard to those human beings who teach the Gospel. Many is the time that this writer and his family have been blessed by having Gospel preachers (and other Christians as well) in his home. The conversations enjoyed often gave him insight into some passage of Scripture which has blessed his life and hopefully those whom he has attempted to teach. Saying that, this writer would encourage his readers to contemplate the following writers thoughts on this subject.

“The inference given here is that such visits may be occurring in the Christian age as well. That thought is supported in Heb. 1:14 by the writer’s reference to angels. He says, ‘Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve for the sake of those who will inherit salvation’” (Littrell, p. 385).

“Entertained strangers unawares. This refers to one like Abraham and Lot (Gen. 18:2-20; 19:1-3). Could it happen today? All I know is they are ministering spirits and that they somehow serve us (Heb. 1:14)” (Moffitt, p. 471).

With regard to the extension of hospitality, notice that it is to be done with discretion. Jesus taught a principle that would apply to hospitality, as well as other areas of Christian service in Matthew 7:6.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

Note also the following passages regarding hospitality and consider their relationship to whether or not hospitality is shown.

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him GOD speed: For he that biddeth him GOD speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11).

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

It is a sin for Christians who work hard for their money in order to help others throw their funds at those who will not attempt to provide for their own needs and the needs of their families. The Lord never expects His people to be gullible victims of the con-artist who often try to prey on their good will.

Heb. 13:3 “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body.” (ASV)

“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also.” (NKJV)

“Remember those in prison with them, and those who are afflicted as being

also yourselves in the body.” (ESV)

The admonition is to remember those who were imprisoned and suffering. These Hebrews had already been doing this, according to Hebrews 10:34. They had thought about the apostle and obviously had a part in caring for him while he was imprisoned. Now he admonished them to continue this policy toward others (probably their brethren in particular who would be suffering because of their faithfulness).

The words “suffer adversity” mean, “to treat ill, oppress, plague... maltreated, tormented.” In particular, the apostles seems to have more on his mind than those who were simply sitting in a prison cell. Those who were being treated in an ill manner were probably Christians who were suffering physically — whether in or out of prison.

“as being yourselves also in the body” There are several lines of thought with regard to this phrase. (1) Some believe this incorporates the idea of empathy (“*identification with and understanding of another’s feelings, situation, and motives*” – Webster). (2) The idea that one may end up in the same situation (bound, suffering) some day ought therefore to cause him to remember those presently suffering. (3) Some think this refers to “the body” of Christ, the church. Because one belongs to the same body of believers, there should be a feeling of brotherly sympathy. This writer believes all of these reasons should be considered on this matter.

“there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15).

Heb. 13:4 “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge.”

“Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers GOD will judge.” (ASV)

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers GOD will judge.” (NKJV)

“Marriage must be kept honorable with everyone, and the marriage relationship undefiled; for GOD will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous people.” (ESV)

“honourable” — *timios* — “valuable, i.e., (objectively) costly or (subjectively) honored, esteemed or (figuratively) beloved: dear, honorable, precious, had in reputation” (Strong); “held in honor, esteemed, especially dear” (Thayer); “Held in esteem, respected, honored” (Zodhiates); “valuable, precious...held in honor, respected” (Bauer, p. 818); “held as of great price,

esteemed, especially dear" (Wuest, p. 233).

"undefiled" — *amiantos* — *"unsoiled, i.e., (figuratively) pure: undefiled"* (Strong); *"not defiled, unsoiled; free from that which the nature of the thing is deformed and debased, or its force and vigor impaired: pure, free from adultery"* (Thayer); *"that which has nothing in it that defiles, unpolluted, unstained, unsoiled, undefiled by sin"* (Zodhiates); *"free from any impurity or flaw"* (Renn, p. 999).

"honorable" — That which is *"held as of a great price, esteemed, especially dear"* (Wuest, p. 233). To hold something as honorable is to keep clean and pure. Here the thing to be held in honor is one's marriage. Marriage in general is to be held in honor because instituted it for the well being of His creation.

"And the LORD GOD said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

Marriage partners have each other to lean upon and help each other through life in order to reach that eternal home. They may share the greatest of human relationships with one another and only with each other. Through this union the human family is perpetuated.

"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2).

"the bed" *"is a euphemism for the physical intimacy of married life"* (Lightfoot, p. 247).

The word **"whoremonger"** means *"a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute, univ. a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator"* (Thayer). An adulterer is, of course, one who is married and practices fornication. Most understand that adultery occurs when a married person has sexual intercourse with another person other than his/her mate. Jesus said the only reason allowed for divorce is **"fornication"** (Matthew 19:9). Strictly defined by society, sexual intercourse between a married person and one who is not his mate is described by the word **"adultery."** Many have defined fornication as sexual intercourse between two people who are not married. The word **"fornication"** does not hold that limited definition. Fornication is a broad term which refers to any sexual activity which is outside the boundaries set by GOD, i.e., the marriage relationship. Adultery is a sub-group of the term fornication. Thus, adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery. Thus, in Matthew 19:9, the Lord was saying that any sexual act outside of the marriage relationship is grounds for divorce, but if divorce occurs for any other reason than sexual unfaithfulness to one's mate, and then that one marries another, that second marriage becomes an adulterous marriage. It might be pointed out that some will say that their second marriage (though not for adultery) was made all right because they repented of their former sin or became a Christian afterward makes their second marriage all right. This is false reasoning, for if it were true, then this would be the only sin one can commit and keep on doing what GOD says is sin.

“GOD will judge” The word **“judge”** is specifically used in the sense of condemning and decreeing a penalty for some action. On His part, GOD has already decreed the penalty for those who practice such things.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD” (Galatians 5:19-21).

It is GOD who has declared that all who do such things, and are unrepentant, will suffer eternal punishment.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Heb. 13:5 **“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**

“Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.” (ASV)

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (NKJV)

“Do not be avaricious; be satisfied with what you have; for He Himself said, I will never leave you or forsake you.” (ESV)

“conversation” — tropos — **“a turn, i.e., (by implication) mode or style; figuratively deportment or character”** (Strong); **“a manner, way, fashion...manner of life, character”** (Thayer); **“a turning, turn in direction, hence, a general manner, way, mode”** (Zodhiates); **“manner, way, kind, guise...way of life, turn of mind, conduct, character”** (Bauer, p. 827); **“manner of life”** (JFB, p. 578).

“content” — arkeo — **“be content, be enough, suffice, be sufficient”** (Strong); **“to be possessed of unfailling strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough (as against any danger; hence to defraud, ward off)...to be satisfied, contented”** (Thayer); **“to suffice, be sufficient, satisfy, and by implication to be strong and able to resist someone”** (Zodhiates); **“be enough, sufficient, adequate...be satisfied or content with something”** (Bauer, p. 107); **“to be possessed of unfailling strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough”** (Wuest., p. 233).

“forsake” — *egkataleipo* — “to leave behind in some place, i.e., (in a good sense) let remain over or (in a bad sense) to desert: forsake, leave” (Strong); “to abandon, desert, i.e., to leave in straits, leave helpless” (Thayer); “to leave behind in any place or state...by implication, to leave in the lurch, forsake, desert, abandon” (Zodhiates); “leave behind...forsake, abandon, desert” (Bauer, p. 215); “abandon” (Renn, p. 588); “to send back, to relax, to loosen, not to uphold, to let sink” (Wuest, p. 234).

Let your manner of life be such that the love of money (material possessions) is not the basis upon which you live. These two verses (4 and 5,) discuss two of the greatest weaknesses among the human race, both of which have their seeds in selfishness. It is selfishness which causes one to seek gratification of sensual pleasure in an unlawful manner. It is selfishness which propels one to love material possessions.

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10, emphasis mine, RK).

Notice one of many passages which deal with covetousness.

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of GOD cometh on the children of disobedience” (Colossians 3:5-6).

Why does GOD call covetousness idolatry? Covetousness is a desire for more and more of this world's goods. It is the result of fear, a fear of being without, a fear of being destitute. Covetousness is a distrust in GOD and His promise to take care of His creation and instead to rely upon oneself for his needs.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of GOD” (Ephesians 5:5).

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of GOD; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:2-5).

As mentioned above, covetousness is the fear that GOD will not take care of one, despite His assurances that He will provide for His servants' needs.

“seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:33-34).

Christian, do not allow the things of this world to take precedence in

your life so that you fail to properly trust GOD. The richest man in the world is the one who may not have money in the bank but is right in the sight of GOD.

“be content with such things as ye have” These passages do not condemn someone for trying to improve his lot in life. In fact, a Christian should strive for excellence, i.e., to be the best that he can be. Notice some passages which teach one to do the best he can in financial matters.

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”
(Romans 12:11).

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

One’s trust and confidence in GOD should cause him to do the best that he can and be satisfied with doing the best that he can. Leave the rest up to GOD! That is Biblical contentment.

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy 6:7-8).

Note that the above passage was stated just before the warning was given concerning those who desired to be rich and thus fell into many foolish and hurtful desires.

How can one be content with what he has without becoming covetous? It is because of GOD’s promise to always be there. **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”** This is another of those marvelous passages which promise that if one will simply put his trust in GOD, every area of life, GOD will not abandon him in his hour of need. Look at the apostle Paul as an illustration of this. He had little of this world’s goods, having to often rely on others to provide for him (prison) — yet, he had everything of real value.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of GOD by faith” (Philippians 3:7-9).

Heb. 13:6 **“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”**

“So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?” (ASV)

“So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (NKJV)

“Therefore we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.” (ESV)

“boldly” — thartheo — **“to exercise courage: be bold, boldly**

have confidence, be confident (Strong); *“to be of good courage, to be hopeful, confident”* (Thayer); *“to be of good cheer, have courage, be full of hope and confidence”* (Zodhiates).

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me” (Psalm 118:6)?

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In GOD I will praise His word, in GOD I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me” (Psalm 56:3-4).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“If GOD be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31)?

With confidence one’s trust must be put in the Lord so that he has a hopeful courage to withstand the aggression and assaults of an evil world. Instead of relying on physical things to get one through this life, he must realize that having GOD is enough.

“It remains yet to be shown that they who exercise simple trust in God for the supply of their wants are ever forsaken” (Barnes, p. 318).

The apostle stated that he had **“learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”** (Philippians 4:11). One cannot learn total contentment without total trust in GOD.

Heb. 13:7 **“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of GOD: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”**

“Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of GOD; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.” (ASV)

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of GOD to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” (NKJV)

“Remember those who led you, and who spoke the word of the Lord to you. Considering the outcome of their way of life; imitate the faith of such.” (ESV)

“have the rule” — hegeomai — *“to lead, i.e., Command (with official authority)”* (Strong); *“to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over...leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel...so of the overseers or leaders of the*

Christian churches” (Thayer); *“to lead or go before, go first, lead the way”* (Zodhiates).

“follow” — *mimēomai* — *“to imitate: follow”* (Strong); *“to imitate”* (Thayer); *“to mimic, but in a good sense, to imitate, follow as an example”* (Zodhiates); *“imitate, emulate, follow, use as a model”* (Bauer, p. 521)

“considering” — *anatheoreo* — *“to look again (that is attentively): behold, consider”* (Strong); *“to look at attentively, to observe accurately, consider well”* (Thayer); *“to view or behold attentively. To consider attentively, contemplate”* (Zodhiates); *“look at again and again = examine, observe carefully”* (Bauer, p. 54); *“Consider’ in the sense of ‘reflect on’”* (Renn, p. 208).

Wuest offers the following translation of this verse.

“Be constantly remembering those ruling over you, especially as they are those who spoke to you the Word of God, whose faith imitate as you closely observe the outcome of their manner of life” (p. 235).

Milligan offered the following translation of this verse.

“Remember your leaders who spoke to you the word of God: carefully consider the issue of their manner of life; imitate their faith” (p. 486).

To what **“leaders”** does this passage refer? There are two lines of thought among scholars as to whom this might apply. (1) Those leaders of the past who had proclaimed GOD’s word to them, which would include anyone involved in this teaching. (2) The elders who were among them. The passage is in the past tense, which seems to indicate those who were no longer with them due to death. Further, the term “end” is a term used to signify an event; something happened, probably the end of their lives. Verses seventeen and twenty-four are in the present tense, indicating that those verses were speaking about those who were presently ruling over them, i.e., the elders

Those being written to were to consider, i.e., attentively observe with accuracy, the lives of those leaders who had lived faithful lives and had passed from this life to the next. Not only were they urged to carefully observe their lives, but they were also told to imitate the faith exhibited in their lives. These leaders had been faithful to the end, and the argument is that those to whom this letter was written could be faithful as well. Considering all of this, it is this writer’s conclusion that this may have those who were listed in chapter eleven.

Heb. 13:8 **“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”**

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.” (ASV)

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (NKJV)

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever” (ESV)

“For I Am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

Why is Christ changeless? The perfection of deity is on display in this passage. **How could a perfect being change?** Since He is perfect, the only option for change would be downward to imperfection. To signify that Christ does not change speaks of more than His personality. The Purpose of GOD from the beginning never changed in providing for man’s needs. This would also reflect on the Law which Christ brought to man. It is not going to change. Further, since He does not change, He is reliable and therefore may be trusted to the extreme. That includes His promises — faithfulness will always result in His care and ultimately in a home with Him in eternity.

“Christ’s rules for the church, its government, doctrine, purpose, and hope — all, like Christ who gave them, are changeless. His wise and benevolent purpose for humanity, his great love, his assurance of the resurrection and life eternal — all are the same” (Coffman, p. 348).

Think of the assurance this passage gives. **What if Christ (Deity) were always changing? What if they were always changing the conditions one must meet to gain salvation? Could mankind have any assurance that what he did today would please GOD tomorrow? How could one know how to live and worship each day if the laws of GOD frequently changed, even from moment to moment?** The fact that the Savior is unchanging is one of the greatest assurances that man has. It is a stabilizing assurance which provides hope.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (The Revelation 1:8).

Some over the years have argued that this verse means that Christ has always been and therefore, has always done the same things. This argument is generally made in order for people to delude themselves (and others) into believing that miracles are still being performed today.

“There are some things he no longer does, not because he has changed, but because of changing circumstances” (Stringer, p. 69).

From the beginning, GOD planned the stages of preparation and completion of His plans for man’s salvation. Thus, when the time was right for the implementation of each stage of His plans, He put them into place, canceling the stage before it. The requirements of the patriarchal law were canceled to make way for the next stage of development — the Mosaic law. GOD did not do this because He had changed, but because the circumstances had changed in that it was time (according to His timetable), to institute the next step in His plans. The same was true when it came time to replace the Mosaic dispensation with the Christian dispensation. During the time of the infancy of the church, miracles were needed in order to prove that the message being brought to mankind was from GOD (Mark 16:20), until

that which was perfect (GOD's word) was delivered to mankind (1 Corinthians 13:10-13; James 1:25). These changes all took place, not because GOD changed, not because He forgot something and needed to add it, but because the circumstances had changed which allowed Him to implement His long term plans in the next step of completion. Finally, all was completed, and there will be no more changes.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3, emphasis mine, RK).

Notice an argument put forth by Stringer, which also gets rid of the notion that Christ has always been doing, and will always do, what He has done in the past.

“It is absurd to argue, on the basis of this verse, that since Christ worked miracles in the past, he must still be working miracles. On the basis of that reasoning, we could say that he still creates worlds with earths like this one, come to earth as a man, and offers himself on the cross” (p. 69).

There is an old axiom which basically says once an argument has been logically extended to absurdity, then that argument is proven to be false.

Heb. 13:9 *“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”*

“Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited.” (ASV)

“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.” (NKJV)

“Do not be carried away by varied and strange doctrines; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened in grace, not in eating, which did not profit those thus occupied.” (ESV)

The word **“carry”** means *“to lead aside from the right course or path, to carry away”* (Thayer). Being in the present tense, it shows that this was a present and active danger to those to whom he spoke. The idea is that they were to **stop being carried away**. They were to stop being passive in allowing this to happen.

“divers and strange doctrines” **“divers”** — different doctrines, or those different from that which was given by divine inspiration. **“strange”** — *“new, unheard of”* (Thayer). These were doctrines that were not heard from the mouth of GOD (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It would include those who were GOD's spokesmen — the apostles and those given the miraculous ability to proclaim His truths. These two words seem to be a double emphasis upon the command not to accept anything as doctrine which did not come from an inspired source.

These “strange” and “divers” can come from any source, but it seems the emphasis here is probably on the teachings which came from the Jews. In particular, this context seems to deal with doctrines relating to the food laws given in the Old Testament, but the principle would with any teaching which did not come from Heaven. The exact nature of these doctrines is not revealed, only that some very strange things were being taught which could not be found in the inspired teachings of Christ.

The phrase “established with grace,” refers to the great love and favor bestowed upon man, when man did not deserve it. Christ came into this world revealing the will of His Father to mankind and offering the perfect sacrifice for him. Man had done nothing, nor could he do anything, to deserve this grace. It is according to the grace (doctrine given) shown by GOD that man is to live his life and not according to some doctrine given by a mere man.

“How far better it would be if men could be established by grace, that is, concerned with the knowledge and love of God, instead of being caught up in the observance of some diet, especially where religious considerations are involved. Long ago, the Master that it is not what men eat, but rather what they think that causes most of the real troubles besetting the race of men” (Coffman, p. 8:8).

“meat commendeth us not to GOD: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse” (1 Corinthians 8:8).

“the kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17).

The dietary laws under which the Jews had lived have no bearing on a Christian’s life either physically or spiritually.

Heb. 13:10 “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.” (ASV)

“We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.” (NKJV)

“We have an altar of which those who serve in the Tabernacle have no right to eat.” (ESV)

What is an altar? It is a place of sacrifice, whether to the true GOD of Heaven or to the false gods created by man. Here are some of the theories as to what the altar of this text is, as listed by Milligan.

- “1. That the word **altar** in this connection represents no definite object whatever; but that the apostle uses it merely for the sake of imagery, so as to give consistency to the figurative expressions which he here employs (Michaelis, Tholuck);*
- 2. That it means Christ Himself (Suicer, Wolf);*
- 3. That it means the Lord’s table (Bohme, Ebrard);*

4. *That it denotes the heavenly place on which Christ now offers the virtue of His own blood to the Father for us (Bretschneider);*
5. *That it means the cross on which Christ was crucified (Delitzsch, Alford);*
6. *That it signifies the Divine nature of Christ on which his human nature is supposed to have been offered, and by means of which it was sanctified and made available” (Milligan)” (p. 489).*

Under the Mosaic system (Levitical system). There was a literal altar where animals were offered in sacrifice. It may be that some of these Hebrew Christians were looking back with longing to that physical altar as a visible symbol. If so, they were failing to recognize the spiritual aspect of their sacrifice, which did not need a physical altar. Under the Old Covenant, one had to go to that physical altar to make his sacrifice. The altar for a Christian is so much greater, because the sacrifice of worship to GOD can be accomplished anywhere, at any time.

Even though Christians do not have a literal altar, it is evident that a spiritual altar exists from the fact that a perfect sacrifice was made by Christ. Further, there is a sacrifice which man must make.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

“No right to eat” Under the Levitical system, certain portions of the meat of the sacrifices were eaten by the priests as part of their maintenance (with one exception – Leviticus 16). These who serve the Law of Moses, who thus partook of the sacrifices offered under that Law, do not have the right to partake from the Christian altar while they served under the old system. The point being made is that one cannot be a Christian and a worshiper of another system at the same time (Even if that former system had been approved by GOD.). Anyone serving another religious system cannot partake at the altar of Christianity!

Those who serve the tabernacle (Levitical system) **cannot** participate in the blessings of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. The term *“tabernacle”* is used here to designate the entire Levitical system. This includes the Tabernacle itself and all of the ceremonies attendant to it. Further, it includes any and all of the laws of that system. One cannot depend on fleshly externals for salvation.

“There is a touch of irony here. They serve the tent instead of the true God, who no longer is in the tent” (Lightfoot, p. 251).

Heb. 13:11 *“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”*

“For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the High Priest as an offering for sin, are burned without the camp.” (ASV)

“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.” (NKJV)

“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the Holy Place for sin by the High Priest are burned outside the camp.” (ESV)

“And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the Tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire” (Leviticus 6:30).

“And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung” (Leviticus 16:27).

The priests who attended at the altar were normally allowed to partake of the meat offered in sacrifice, but not the meat of the sin offering. It is believed by some that this particular passage points to the offering made on the day of atonement, while others hold that it referred to the annual sin offering. This author believes the day of atonement for Christ is the great atoning sacrifice, yet the lesson being taught here remains the same no matter which of these positions is under consideration.

“Whose blood is brought into the sanctuary”

“But into the second went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people...Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:7, 12).

The “camp” is spoken of here with regard to the time when the Israelites lived in the wilderness. But what was true about the camp was also true of the city when they entered the promised land.

“Whatever, says Grotius, was not lawful to be done in the camp, afterward was not lawful to be done in the city” (Barnes, p. 321).

That this is true can be seen from the remark in verse twelve that Jesus “suffered without the gate” (gate of Jerusalem). The reference then seems to be that those who remained in the camp (Judaism) could not partake of Christ’s sacrifice, because it was made outside the camp. One must go to Jesus, not stay in the camp of the unbeliever.

Heb. 13:12 “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.”

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate.” (ASV)

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” (NKJV)

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” (NASV)

Just as the sin offerings of the Old Law were burned outside the camp, so also Jesus was offered outside the camp (gate). This suffering, this shame that He endured was necessary so that man could be sanctified (purified, made clean and free from guilt). Everything about His death was considered a disgrace by the Jews, including the fact that He died outside the walls of Jerusalem.

“Jesus, then, was condemned and thrust out of the city. The Jews refused Him and literally made Him an outcast. From this it follows that Christians are to have no part with the people or system that refused Him” (Lightfoot, p. 251).

McKnight states that *“criminals, being regarded as unclean, were always put to death without the gates of their cities”* (p. 576). From this thought it seems obvious that the followers of an “outcast” are always considered to be the disciples of an outcast, and thus, become outcasts themselves. When one observes Christianity over the centuries, true Christianity has always been considered in a low light by the majority. Especially by those who claim to be Christian but do not follow GOD’s word.

Heb. 13:13 *“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”*

“Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”
(ASV)

“Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”
(NKJV)

“Then let us go to Him outside the camp, enduring His reproach;” (ESV)

In the Old Testament **“the camp”** represented the religious community of Israel; to go outside the camp meant to make a clean break with Israel and its religion. The exhortation is that the readers should sever all ties with Judaism. Its glory was in the past.

“Those who wanted to share in the sin offering must abandon the old religion” (Lightfoot, p. 252).

Since one must disassociate himself from Judaism in order to associate with Christ, **Is it not interesting how much of the “Christian” religious world wants to be so close to Judaism and its practices today?** In their eyes, there is not much difference between the old law and the new. They often borrow from the old at will and use that system to “justify” their current practices where convenient (where it suits their own purposes).

“The system which has its center in Jerusalem, the Holy City, is no more ours. We are excluded from its religious fellowship by embracing the faith of Him who suffered without the gate”
(Wuest, p. 239).

“bearing His reproach” A Christian must be willing to suffer because he follows Christ. Many people are willing to “follow” Christ, as long as there is no price to be paid. Many are even willing to follow Christ if a certain amount of **nominal** service is all that is required of them. Yet, these people would abandon him quickly if anything which amounts to a real sacrifice is asked of them (even the smallest of

sacrifices). How many would actually be willing to suffer with Him on the cross? How many are really willing to be ostracized from their community, from former friends, possibly even from family to receive the blessings which Christ offers? Sometimes friendship and blood are thicker than truth.

“True followers of Him therefore will not be ashamed to ‘stand by’ Him in His humiliation and will take joy in sharing in the reproach” (Zerr, p. 240).

“Just as Jesus bore the reproach of the cross, every man who seeks to become a part of his body will have to muster the courage to share in whatever reproach may come their way as a result of uniting with him” (Stancliff, p. 241).

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4).

Something of interest in Exodus needs to be noticed regarding the present message in this text. In Exodus chapter thirty-two, while Moses was on the mount receiving the law from GOD, the people got Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. Upon coming down from the mountain, Moses broke the stones on which the law was written in anger because of their gross sins. Because their sins had defiled the camp, the Tabernacle was moved outside of the camp (Exodus 33). Let it be remembered that the camp represented GOD’s people, the religious community of the world which belonged to Him. Anyone who then sought the Lord had to leave that polluted camp and go to the Tabernacle. It should also be pointed out that Moses did not move the Tabernacle just outside the camp, he **“pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp”** (emphasis mine, RK). The Hebrew people, by New Testament times, had removed themselves so far from GOD as to no longer be considered by Him, in any way, to be the religious community which represented Him. For one to be pleasing to GOD today, he must remove himself far from those places (false religions) that GOD does not consider worthy of His presence and go to the Christ. If that means leaving friends or family behind because they refuse to leave the camps of sin, then one must be willing to suffer that loss to follow Christ.

Heb. 13:14 **“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”**

“For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come.” (ASV)

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.” (NKJV)

“For we have no enduring city here, but we are seeking the one that is to come.” (ESV)

“The link of thought is that if they as Christians, like Christ, must be cast out, what does it matter? Nothing earthly is dear

to Christians. They are outcasts, homeless; but like Abraham they look 'forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (11:10)" (Lightfoot, p. 252).

It is easy for man to fall into the trap of looking at the physical things which surround him as if that is all that is important. It is easy for Christians to be snared by Satan in this way. What one must remember is that everything seen around him, all of these physical things, will cease to exist at some future point.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-14).

Even a quick observation of nature confirms that the physical will cease to exist. The physical body grows old, weak, dies, and decays; great cities of bygone days lay in ruins but at one time were populated by people who probably never thought of such a thing being possible. Instead of caring about the things of this world and the possible loss of them, what one needs to be concerned about is not losing the eternal city (11:10). Instead of worrying about treasures on earth, the concern should be whether one has laid up any treasure in Heaven.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

For those Jews who would leave Jerusalem to go *"without the camp"* because of their Christianity, they would not really lose anything. It might even be better for those Christians to leave physical Jerusalem for the good of their souls. Like Lot's family, many times being close to sin and error will have a destructive effect upon one.

"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction" (Micah 2:10).

Those who looked to Jerusalem (and the system it represented) for salvation were looking at a dead system which could not give them hope, nor life of any kind. They were to leave that system behind and seek Christ.

"Does this verse imply that part of the struggle the readers faced was the attractiveness of the Jewish temple, and its ancestral traditions, and elaborate rituals – as compared with the simple services found in Christianity" (Reese, p. 242)?

Heb. 13:15 “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

“Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name.” (ASV)

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (NKJV)

“Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, speaking as He speaks, in His name.” (ESV)

“The Rabbins had a saying, ‘in the future time all sacrifices shall cease; but praises shall not cease’...Philo says, ‘They offer the best sacrifice who glorify with hymns the Savior and benefactor, God’” (Wuest, p. 239).

Under the old system, they had a physical altar and a physical sacrificial system, both by way of atonement and thanksgiving. Christians have a spiritual altar, therefore the sacrifices they offer are to be spiritual in nature. Christians approach GOD with sacrifices of praise through their High Priest, i.e., Christ — not some fallible Levitical representative, as under the Mosaic system. In Christianity, each Christian is the priest who offers his own sacrifices to GOD.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

It is interesting that the words “praise” and “fruit” both carry the idea of that which is done by way of thanksgiving to GOD.

“The phrase ‘fruit of the lips,’ is a Hebraism, meaning what the lips produce: that is, words” (Barnes, p. 323).

Christians need to be a constantly thankful people, often expressing their thankfulness to GOD for His many blessings — especially those blessings of a spiritual nature, but also not forgetting the material blessings he receives. Spiritual first, material second.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

“Every hour of every day the child of God should seek occasions to speak humbly and lovingly of the wonderful blessings in Christian service, of the love and mercy of God, of God’s goodness, and of the peace and joy in believing” (Coffman, p. 352).

A wonderful example of the praise and honor which should constantly flow from a Christian’s heart to GOD is seen in the Psalms. Reading

them regularly can help one know how to express this gratitude to GOD on a continual basis.

Heb. 13:16 “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased.”

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased.” (ASV)

“But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased.” (NKJV)

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for GOD is well-pleased with such sacrifices.” (ESV)

Coupled with verse fifteen, this passage shows that the giving of the “fruit of our lips” is not enough. It is not enough to give GOD lip service.

“This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me” (Matthew 15:8).

The practical side of Christianity is also necessary to please GOD, to honor Him. A certain kind of life **must** be lived, a life which acts in accordance with the will of GOD — a life of self sacrifice, a life of giving.

“Pure religion and undefiled before GOD and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

The word “communicate” is the idea of giving to others, i.e., sharing the bounty one has with others. A Christian is to **praise** GOD with the **fruit of his lips**; but then he must **do good** and **share** his blessings with others. A person may praise GOD on the Lord’s Day, but Monday through Saturday live quite a different life, and yet be generous in financial matters. Is such a person acceptable to GOD? And combination of these requirements which does not include all of them leaves one in rebellion to GOD. Today’s society greatly reflects the idea that one can praise GOD and believe that he is pleasing to GOD; or that he can be charitable and that makes him all right in GOD’s eyes. GOD demands both qualities in His servants lives.

When considering the entire context, one reminds himself that many Christians were suffering persecution at that time. Some lost all of their physical possessions, such having been either confiscated by the government or taken by mob mentality. Others were in prison, needing someone to bring them the bare necessities of life. How important it would be to those suffering saints to receive help from their brethren in those circumstances. This would not only provide for their physical needs, but would also be an encouragement for them to continue their faithfulness to GOD. It should also be remembered that the admonition here, though directed at Christians for Christians, is in principle also true of Christians toward non-Christians when such is possible.

“let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us

do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9-10).

Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you.” (ASV)

“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” (NKJV)

“Be attentive to your leaders and be submissive to them, for they watch in behalf of your souls, as those who must give an account. Be submissive that they may do it with joy and not grief, for this is unprofitable to you.” (ESV)

“submit yourselves” — *hupeiko* — “to surrender: submit self” (Strong); “to resist no longer, but to give way, yield...to yield authority and admonition, to submit” (Thayer); “to submit, surrender, yield, cease to fight” (Zodhiates); “give way, submit to someone’s authority” (Bauer, p. 838).

“watch” — *agrupneo* — “to be sleepless, i.e., keep awake: watch” (Strong); “to be sleepless, keep awake, watch, to be circumspect, attentive, ready...to exercise constant vigilance over something (an image drawn from shepherds)” (Thayer); “to abstain totally from sleep, to watch, wake, be awake. Spiritually, to be watchful and attentive to spiritual things” (Zodhiates); “literally keep oneself awake, be awake...keep watch over something = guard, care for it” (Bauer, p. 14); “keep watch, be vigilant, alert” (Renn, p. 1030).

It should be remembered that the apostle had earlier told them to remember those rulers who had gone before (v. 7). They had been told to remember their lives and follow the example they left behind. Now the admonition regards those who were presently their rulers in the faith (elders) and whose faith and actions mirrored those former leaders mentioned in verse seven.

He began with “Obey,” i.e., “to be persuaded, to suffer one’s self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe” (Thayer). They were to obey those who had the rule over them, those who were their spiritual leaders, those who “**have authority over**” them. He was not speaking of secular rulers (He dealt with due to them in Romans 13), for he talked of these rulers as those who “**watch for your souls.**” These rulers would be the elders of the church (Acts 10:28-31; 1 Timothy 5:17). He further added, “**submit yourselves,**” which indicates a yielding to, rather than resistance. In this passages it speaks of “*yielding to authority and admonition*” (See Thayer above).

Why should they yield to these rulers? Because they “**watch for**

your souls, as they that must give account.”

“Since the souls of men cannot be seen it follows that the elders must watch the actions of their bodies” (Zerr, p. 240).

When would the elders have to give an accounting for the souls they watch over? This will be the judgment day. The word “give” means *“to pay off, discharge what is due...to render account”* (See Thayer above). Those who live in rebellion to the elders will be “paid off” for their rebellion in that final day, just as those who rebel against the “chief shepherd” will stand in judgment, receiving recompense for their rebellion. The elders themselves will give an account as to their efforts, or lack thereof, in caring for the souls of the flock. If they have consciously done their work to the best of their ability, then all will be well with their souls. If not, they will pay the price for their neglect of the souls entrusted to them.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezekiel 3:18-21).

Regarding the account that these leaders must give with regard to those who follow — let them be able to give their account of one’s soul with joy and gladness. Do not make it where their report must be done through grief and sadness. Any right thinking elder wants to give an account with regard to any member that is good, and when they can do this it will bring joy to their hearts. Obedience with regard to the Bible’s teachings always brings joy to the hearts of GOD’s faithful teachers. Notice the reaction of the apostles to faithful brethren.

“I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 3-4).

“I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father” (2 John 4).

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

The apostle stated that if the elder cannot give a good report on behalf of a Christian, **“that is unprofitable for you.”** The elder will feel grief because of one’s disobedience, because he knows the lost condition of that soul. Yet, if the elder has done his job, he has been profitable in the Lord’s work and will receive his just reward. But for the who would not submit to the elder’s just directions, there will be nothing but grief in a Devil’s Hell.

“Keep constantly obeying your rulers, and constantly submitting to them; for they are constantly watching for your souls, knowing that they are to give account, that they may do this with joy, not with lamentation, for this would be profitless to you” (Wuest’s translation of this passage, p. 240).

Heb. 13:18-19 **“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”**

“Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things. And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.” (ASV)

“Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.” (NKJV)

“Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to conduct ourselves suitably. But I urgently beg you to do this that I may be restored to you sooner.” (ESV)

“Pray for us” The request for prayer is common in the epistles of Paul (Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:18-19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). Not only did the apostle often request prayer for himself, but as one reads through the epistles, he should observe how often he prayed for his brethren, often by name. Paul understood that there is power in prayer and sought the benefits of his brethren’s prayers for him. **If the apostle felt the need for his brethren’s prayers for himself, how much more should one today feel that need?**

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“we trust we have a good conscience” The apostle’s request is not based upon selfishness (v. 19), nor is it a request based upon sin in his life. Here he laid down the reason why he believed he had the right to request their prayers on his behalf. He had lived an upright life, which allowed him to appeal for their fellowship (aid) in this matter.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

He was conscious that all his efforts had been aimed at doing good; he had constantly sought the welfare of his brethren — the church. That is why he taught them what they needed, when they needed it,

no matter what the circumstances were.

“I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

Paul stated that his conscience was clear.

“It is only when we aim to do right, and to maintain a good conscience, that we can with propriety ask the prayers of others, or claim their sympathy. And if we are willing in all things to live honestly; we may expect the sympathy, and the affections of good men” (Barnes, p. 324).

“The prayers of others will not avail our neglect of duty. They help, when we have done our utmost, to supply what we have failed to do, and to correct what we have done amiss” (Westcott as quoted by Coffman, p. 356).

*“In order for a man to have a **good conscience** in the sight of God, it is necessary that his life be right as measured by the will of God”* (Zerr, p. 240).

“I beseech you” The author proceeded to *“beseech”* or plead that they pray for him, that he might soon be delivered to them. There are several implications to this thought: (1) The word *“restored”* means *“to restore to its former state; to be in its former state...of a man at a distance from his friends and to be restored to them”* (Thayer). The implication is that he was well-known to these brethren and had worked among them previously. (2) This passage implies that there was something beyond his control which did not allow him to go to them at this time. (3) It implies that he was confident that their prayers would be beneficial and that he needed them. *Is it not the case that each Christian needs the frequent prayers of his brethren?*

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15).

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him” (Matthew 7:7-11)?

Heb. 13:20 *“Now the GOD of peace, that brought again from the dead*

our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,”

“Now the GOD of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus,” (ASV)

“Now may the GOD of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,” (NKJV)

“May the GOD of peace, Who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, in the blood of the eternal covenant,” (ESV)

“**GOD of peace**” GOD, the Father, is called the GOD of peace “*because He is the source of all genuine peace that is in harmony with divine wisdom*” (Zerr, p. 240). Peace is a term which is used in a number of settings. One may refer to peace instead of physical war with no connection to GOD at all. But in spiritual matters, man must realize that the only peace available to him, the only peace that has true value, is that which comes as a result of his obedience to the Divine will.

There is a great deal of pseudo-peace in the world today. Like the false prophets of old, there are many crying, “**Peace, Peace,**” when there is no peace.

“**They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace**” (Jeremiah 6:14).

“**Mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar. Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall**” (Ezekiel 13:9-11).

One can only have that tranquil state of the soul known as peace when he lives according to the dictates of GOD.

“**brought again from the dead**” This is the only place in this epistle where the resurrection of Christ is specifically mentioned. Yet, underlying the entire epistle is the fact of the cross at Calvary and the resurrection of the Son of GOD. Let it be emphasized that it is only through the resurrection of Christ that one has the opportunity of peace with the Father. Note also that it is the Father who is specifically said to have raise Him from the dead.

“**great Shepherd of the Sheep**” Christ is called the “**Chief Shepherd**” in First Peter 5:4. The word “**great**” is a word “*predicated of rank, as belonging to persons, eminent for ability, virtue, authority, power*” (Thayer).

“By the resurrection of Jesus from the dead God showed that He accepted the death of Jesus on the cross. And on the

basis of Jesus' shed blood and resurrection, God established an eternal covenant. Jesus is the great Shepherd. He loves His followers, cares for them and gave His life for them" (Sheerer, p. 1027).

It is obvious that elders are shepherds (Acts 20:17, 28), and this passage points out very clearly that there is One Who is over them. Every Christian is to constantly keep in mind that fact that he has One, Who like a shepherd, wants only what is best for him and who has the ability to provide for his needs.

"blood of the everlasting covenant" Christians have an High Priest, the Great Shepherd, because of the blood He shed. As has already been amply pointed out, Christians have a covenant because of the blood shed by Christ (Hebrews 9:14-23), and that blood sealed the everlasting covenant.

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven" (Colossians 1:19-20).

The meaning of **"everlasting covenant"** or **"eternal covenant"** is the New Covenant (Testament) which is contrasted with the Old Covenant, which had fulfilled its purpose as a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24-25) and is now laid aside. It is an everlasting covenant because it will never be replaced by any other, as was the Mosaic covenant.

Heb. 13:21 "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

"make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." (ASV)

"make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (NKJV)

"Make you complete in every good work to do His will; working with us that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (ESV)

"perfect" — *katartizo* — *"to complete thoroughly, i.e., repair or adjust"* (Strong); *"Ethically, to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be"* (Thayer); *"The fundamental meaning is to put a thing in its appropriate condition, to establish, set up, equip, arrange, prepare, mend...to refit, repair, mend that which is broken such as the nets. Metaphorically, of a person in error, to restore, set right. By implication and in the proper force of kata, meaning to make a perfect fit, suitable, such as one should be, deficient in no part"* (Zodhiates); *"Put in order, restore. Restore to its former condition, put to rights...put into proper condition, complete, make complete"* (Bauer, p. 417); *"Furnish completely or equip"*

(Earle, p. 431); *“to equip one for service”* (Wuest, p. 242).

“perfect in every good work” The apostle prayed that they would have everything necessary to equip them to do GOD’s will.

“The apostle does not here affirm that they were then perfect, or that they would be in this life. The word used here – katartizo – means to make fully ready: to put in full order; to make complete. The meaning here is, that Paul prayed that God would fully endow them with whatever grace was necessary to do His will, and to keep His commandments” (Barnes, p. 325).

How does GOD do this? It is not some miraculous way, nor does he speak on an individual level to man today. What man needs to become **“perfect”** is the written word of GOD, which he then applies to his life in such a way that he grows in good works (the works assigned by GOD) and is thus pleasing to GOD.

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of GOD” (Ephesians 3:16-19).

“the GOD of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10).

“working in you” Notice the interesting comment by Barnes on this phrase.

“The idea is, that God does not directly and by His own immediate agency convert and sanctify the heart, but it is through the Gospel of Christ, and all good influences on the soul must be expected through the Savior” (p. 326).

“to Whom be glory forever and ever” Who is to receive glory forever and ever? Doctrinally, it may apply to either Christ or the Father, so **why do men argue one way or the other over this matter?** As Coffman so well states it, *“It could not possibly make any difference, seeing the two are one; thus, glory ascribed to Christ is also glory ascribed to God”* (p. 357).

Heb.13:22 **“And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.”**

“But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written unto you in few words.” (ASV)

“And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words.” (NKJV)

“But I urge you, brethren, listen to this word of admonition, for I have written to you in few words.” (ESV)

“suffer” — anechomai — **“to hold one’s self up against, i.e.,**

(figuratively) put up with: bear with, endure, forbear suffer” (Strong); *“Owing to the context, to bear with, i.e., to listen: with gen. of the person, of the thing”* (Thayer); *“to hold oneself upright, to bear up, hold out, endure...Spoken of things, to endure, bear patiently...Spoken of persons, to bear with, have patience with in regard to the errors or weaknesses of anyone...By implication, to admit, receive, i.e., to listen to”* (Zodhiates); *“endure, bear with, put up with...endure, in the sense of hear or listen to willingly, put up with”* (Bauer, p. 66); *“To bear with or endure”* (Wuest, p. 242).

The apostle called this epistle **“the word of exhortation,”** for he had indeed admonished and encouraged them to remain faithful to Christ (Christianity) and not to return to the dead law of the Old Covenant.

“Exhortation means to insist on doing one’s own duty, and Paul has clearly made known to them their duty to serve under Christ and not Moses” (Zerr, p. 22).

Further, he pleaded with them to **“suffer the word of exhortation.”** He was pleading with them to bear with or listen to all that he had communicated to them — this letter deserved a fair and thoughtful consideration.

“a letter...in few words” A few words in comparison to what? If indeed Paul was the author of this epistle, then he authored fourteen of the epistles in the New Testament. Of those fourteen, only two are longer than this one, and the rest are quite a bit shorter. Some believe that he meant it was short compared to what he could have written on this subject. This is the probable explanation, for no doubt more could have been written on each individual subject found therein. Also, look at all which could have been said about each of the characters found in chapter eleven.

Heb. 13:23 “Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.”

“Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.” (ASV)

“Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.” (NKJV)

“Know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he come soon, I will see you.” (ESV)

There is an area of ambiguity involving the phrase **“set at liberty.”** *“Set at liberty’ could mean either that Timothy had been released from prison, or that he had been freed of an assignment, or completed task”* (Coffman, p. 358).

Most commentators believe that this passage says that Timothy had indeed been a prisoner who was set free by the authorities. Historically there is no evidence of his ever having been a prisoner, but that does not mean it was not so. This writer believes it is highly likely that he had been a prisoner of Rome, especially since he had been Paul’s companion through the years.

The author believed that Timothy was going to visit them shortly.

Would the apostle visit with him in person or through the agency of Timothy?

Heb. 13:24-25 “Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.”

“Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.” (ASV)

“Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all. Amen.” (NKJV)

“Greet all your leaders, and all the saints. Those of Italy greet you. Grace be with you all. Amen.” (ESV)

The term “salute” is the idea of giving a friendly greeting to another. Apparently, this letter was not written to the elders, but to a group in the congregation, that was then to give its greeting to the elders. This is interesting from the standpoint of an argument used by some with regard to the eldership and discipline. There is no doubt that Paul has been disciplining these Hebrews through this letter. Some have argued that church discipline cannot be exercised toward anyone unless there is an eldership in the congregation. They argue that there must have been an eldership in Corinth in order for fellowship to be withdrawn, thus ignoring the fact that the letter was addressed to “the church of GOD which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (1 Corinthians 1:2). Every Christian is sanctified in Christ Jesus, every Christian is a saint. Elders do not hold these positions to themselves, i.e., sanctification or sainthood. Those who make this claim also ignore the fact that an eldership is never mentioned in that letter — and it might be added that, if there ever was a case for an eldership to be mentioned if such were necessary to enact church discipline, it was certainly there. Yet, here one finds a major epistle written to Christians in which they are told to obey their “rulers” (elders), and greetings were to be relayed to them by those who received the letter.

Another interesting point to be noticed here is the word “saints.” One of the major apostate religions began the idea that saints were those “super Christians” who have died. (Would it not be the height of foolishness to write a letter to the dead and expect them to obey it?) The writer of this letter gave instruction to those who received the letter to give greetings to “all the saints.” How do you give greetings to dead folks? Greetings are for those with whom one comes in contact on a daily basis. The word “saints” is used throughout the New Testament to designate those who are Christians, servants of the Most High GOD.

It is also argued that Paul wrote this letter from Rome in verse twenty-four, or possibly some other area in Italy. Others believe that Paul wrote it from some location outside of Italy, but was surrounded by those from Rome. This writer believes he wrote it from Rome, possibly during or shortly after his first imprisonment there.

In closing this writer’s commentary on Hebrews, he would like to echo the closing comments of Albert Barnes in his commentary on

this marvelous epistle.

“If we have right feelings, we shall have sincere gratitude to God that he caused the Christian religion to be prefigured by a system in itself so magnificent and grand as that of the Jewish, and higher gratitude for that sublime system of religion of which the Jewish, with all its splendor, was only the shadow. There was much that was beautiful, cheering, and sublime in the Jewish system. There was much that was grand and awful in the giving of the law, and much that was imposing in its ceremonies. In its palmy and pure days, it was incomparably the purest and noblest system of religion then on earth. It taught the knowledge of the one true God; inculcated a pure system of morals; preserved the record of the truth on the earth, and held up constantly before the hope of a better system still in days to come. But it was expensive, burdensome, precise in its prescriptions, and weariness in its ceremonies, Acts 15:10. It was adapted to one people — a people who occupied a small territory, and who could conveniently assemble at the central place of their worship three times in a year. It was not a system fitted to the whole world, nor was it designed for the whole world. When the Saviour came, therefore, to introduce whom was the design of the Jewish economy, it ceased as a matter of course. The Jewish altars were soon thrown down; the temple was razed to the ground, and the city of their solemnities was destroyed. The religion of the Hebrews passed away to be revived no more in its splendor and power, and it has never lived since, except as an empty form.

This epistle teaches us why it passed away, and why it can never be restored, It is the true key with which to unlock the Old Testament; and with these views, we may remark, in conclusion, that he who would understand the Bible thoroughly should make himself familiar with this epistle; that the canon of Scripture would be incomplete without it; and that, to one who wishes to understand the revelation which God has given, there is no portion of the volume whose loss would be more irreparable calamity than that of the Epistle to the Hebrews” (Barnes p. 328).

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