

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS
HEBREWS



Building Foundations Hebrews

Study Guide

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Progression Toward Maturity

Phase 1: *Relationship with God* (Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 1:9)

- The Call of God Is First to Himself.
- Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

Phase 2: *Position with Christ* (1 Corinthians 1:30a)

- We Become a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Foundation for Salvation (“Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained”)

Phase 3: *Dependence upon the Spirit* (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13-14)
- Church Is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Acts/Building Foundations

Phase 4: *Practical Sanctification–Identification with Christ, Co-crucified with Christ, Conformed to Image of Christ* (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29)

- Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations
- Principles of Spiritual Growth
- God’s Masterpiece–The Cross
- Looking unto Jesus Lessons

Conclusion: *Recommended Order of Study*

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1: Foundation for Salvation (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore, our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following:

- The attributes of God – His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation.
- The Gospel

Phase 2: Foundation for Sanctification (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is and all that Christ has become ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in Phase 2 teaching include the following:

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3: Dependence upon the Spirit and Introduction of the Church (“Acts/Building Foundations”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation is immediate and complete. The daily “living out” of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in Phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following:

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role

Phase 4: Practical Sanctification—Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ (“Romans to Revelation/Building Foundations”), “Principles of Spiritual Growth,” God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In Phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following:

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (crucified with Him and raised to newness of life)

- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new
- Manifesting the life of Christ/fruit of the Spirit

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study

Because there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contains the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth onto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

- ***God's Eternal Plan***
- ***Building Foundations Order of Study:***

Acts	2 Corinthians
Romans	Philippians
Ephesians	Philemon
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy
1 Timothy	1 and 2 Peter
Titus	1, 2 and 3 John
1 and 2 Thessalonians	Hebrews
Revelation	James
Galatians	Jude
Colossians	
- ***Knowing God*** before the ***Digging Deeper*** studies
- ***Digging Deeper*** studies in any order

HEBREWS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- During the time when the New Testament was being written, the writer typically put his name at the beginning of his letter. Most of the letters we have studied thus far in the New Testament were written in this way. The Lord did not guide the writer of the book of Hebrews to give his name, either at the beginning or anywhere in his letter.
- Traditionally, Paul has been accepted as the writer of the book of Hebrews. There are at least two reasons for this: (1) In Peter's second epistle, which he wrote to Jews, he referred to a letter of Paul's, which was also written to Hebrew believers (**2 Peter 3:1, 15-16**). If Peter was not referring to the book of Hebrews, then it is unclear what letter Peter was referring to. (2) The salutation which Paul wrote at the end of all his letters also appears at the close of Hebrews, which may be another indication that he was the writer of Hebrews (**2 Thessalonians 3:17-18; Hebrews 13:25**).
- The Hebrew Christians were prejudiced and had disputes beyond question (**Acts 11, 15, 21**). The doctrine that was being taught in this letter was extremely hard to accept for those who had been devout Jews for many years. Therefore, the writer approached them with utmost delicacy and tact, as his burning love for the brethren would dictate. His name may have been left out so that the focus would be totally on Christ. Thus it made what was written to rest solely on the authority of God and not on any man.
- The book of Hebrews was written to one or perhaps a number of Jewish churches. These Jews had heard what Jesus had done for sinners through His death, burial, and resurrection. They agreed that Jesus was

indeed the Redeemer whom God had promised throughout the Old Testament and they had left the temple and its sacrifices.

- It will become clear as we study the book of Hebrews that the writer was addressing three groups of people. He was confident some to whom he addressed his letter had truly put their faith in the Lord Jesus alone for their salvation. However, he was very concerned that others had merely professed to be Christians and now were contemplating turning back to the temple, its priesthood, and its animal sacrifices. This appears to be God's warning to some other Jews who were hanging on to the old Jewish legal system, not for salvation, but as a way to live the Christian life.
- These people were in danger of doing what many of Jesus' disciples had done when He was on earth—following Him for a time, but when persecution or difficulties came, they turned away from the life of faith.
- Why would these people consider turning back to the temple, its priesthood, and sacrifices? It was because of the terrible persecution they were experiencing.
- The writer of Hebrews did not want any of these fellow Jews to look back to the old Jewish legal system. He was determined to convince them once and for all that the new agreement which was based on the finished work of Christ was superior to the old agreement of the law that God made with Israel. He begins by showing that the Lord Jesus is superior to all the Old Testament prophets.

B. The Son Was God Speaking On Earth

Read Hebrews 1:1-2.

- As we look back to the Old Testament, we see that God began communicating with Adam and Eve from

the very first day He created them (**Genesis 1:27-28**). Even after Adam and Eve disobeyed, God continued to communicate with them and their descendants. He spoke to Abel, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and later, to Israel through the prophets.

- God spoke to the prophets “*at various times*” times throughout Israel’s history. He revealed through prophets, whom he had chosen, exactly what He wanted the people to know at that particular time.
- Verse one also makes clear that God gave His message to the prophets in “*various ways*.”
- One of the ways God spoke to the forefathers of the Jews was through the many different things He did throughout history. The first eleven chapters of Genesis tell how God created all things, how man sinned, the way in which God dealt with Adam and Eve, and what happened in the world before the time of Abraham. From Genesis 12 onward, the story of Abraham and his descendants (the Jews) is recorded. God had the prophets record each of these events so the Jews in future generations would know their God and what He is like (**Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11**).
- Many times, God revealed His will to Israel through events that depicted or pointed forward to the coming Savior. For example, God killed animals and clothed Adam and Even with the skins; He rejected Cain’s offering of fruit, but accepted Abel’s sacrificial lamb; He told Noah to build the ark with only one door; He commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, but provided a ram in his place; He told Moses what to do so the angel of death would pass over the homes of the Israelites and not kill their firstborn children; He gave Moses detailed directions concerning the tabernacle so that each part of it, as well as the sacrifices to be offered there, would point forward to

the Lord Jesus and the sacrifice He would make on the cross; God provided water and manna in the wilderness and saved the disobedient Israelites from death when He instructed Moses to put a brazen serpent on a pole in the wilderness. Each of these events pointed forward to the Lord Jesus. God also spoke through the songs and poems written by the prophets. In addition, He spoke through visions and dreams.

- In Christ only is the perfection of all that Israel gloried in. All the people, offices, and objects that men honored were all for the purpose of preparing the way for Christ. He is the one comprehensive aim of the Holy Spirit.
- The Son was not just another messenger come to speak on behalf of God; He was God Himself come down to earth to speak directly to man (**Matthew 1:18-23**). Notice here in **Hebrews 1:1-2** that the writer makes no mention of our salvation and blessings but only of the person and place of God's Son.
- God spoke during the Old Testament times through the prophets. But "*in these last days*," that is, when the Old Testament days under the law ended, God Himself has come and spoken to us by His Son.
- The writer to the Hebrews is not speaking of what Christ said and taught but rather that Jesus Christ Himself is God's message—not Christ as teacher, but as God's personal voice and eternal gift.
- In verse 2, the writer points out another way in which the Son is greater than the prophets. He has been "*appointed heir of all things*."
- Before creation, the Son shared the divine glory, but He emptied Himself (**Philippians 2:7**) when He came into the world. Throughout God's Word, we see the Father and Son equal in deity, yet the Son willingly

doing the will of the Father and the Father continually exalting the Son.

- If he was “*appointed heir of all things*,” didn’t all things already belong to Him? Yes, for He is the Son of God and the Creator of all things. However, this verse is not referring to Jesus as God but rather to Jesus as man.
- We must remember that although Jesus was God, He became a man. He was just as much a man as we are. As man, He did not automatically inherit the world and everything in it; He was appointed heir by God, His Father.
- When God created Adam, the first man, He put him in a position of authority over the earth (**Genesis 1:28**). However, through sin, Adam lost his right to rule over the earth. Because of his sin, we, too, lost our position as rulers over the earth. But when Jesus became man and faced Satan, sin, and death, He was able to win back the position God had originally given to man as ruler over the earth. Because Jesus overcame all our enemies and rose from the dead, God appointed Him “*heir of all things*.”
- Adam was the first man; Christ is the Second Man and the Last Adam (**1 Corinthians 15:45-47**). That is why, when the Lord Jesus returns to earth, He will reign as God’s appointed Man over the earth (**Matthew 28:18**).
- Unbelieving men in the world heap up gold and riches, only to die, leave it all behind, and end up as spiritual paupers for all eternity. But we are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, who was appointed “*heir of all things*” (**Romans 8:16-17**).
- This is another way the Son is shown to be superior to the prophets. God appointed Him to be “*heir of all things*” and to reign over the earth.

- The last few words in verse two give yet another reason why the Lord Jesus is greater than the Old Testament prophets. It was through Him that God “*made the worlds.*”
- Because God the Father and God the Son are one, the Word of God says that God created all things (**Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16**).
- It might be good to keep in mind why the writer of Hebrews was revealing that the Son is superior to the prophets so that his readers would realize how foolish it would be for them to turn again to the old Jewish legal system that was made known to them through the Old Testament prophets.

Read Hebrews 1:3.

- The Lord Jesus was “*the brightness of His (God’s) glory, and the express (exact) image of His (God’s) person.*” Jesus wasn’t just a man trying to be like God. He was and is the Son of God Himself who came to earth to show us what God is like (**John 1:14, 18; 14:8-11**).
- When Jesus said in **John 14:9**, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father,*” He didn’t mean that every person who saw Him during His lifetime would recognize that in and through Him God the Father was revealing Himself. The only people who actually saw God in the Lord Jesus were those who watched Him closely, listened to Him intently, and learned from Him. His nature, character, wonderful words, and pure and righteous actions fully displayed the nature and character of God, His Father. Jesus was God, living as a man on earth. This could never be said of any Old Testament prophet. Even though they were men who loved God and desired to obey Him, none of them was exactly like God. Only the Son is all that God is, for He is God. All who saw Christ truly saw

God, though most didn't realize who they were seeing.

- Verse 3 also tells us that the Son is “***upholding all things by the word of His power.***” Having created all things, the Son now continues to hold everything together. He holds the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars in the position where He placed them on the day He created them. All creation is under His control. The sun rises every morning and sets every evening. The moon has continued to appear at the same time every month of every year from the beginning of the earth. Surely, this would persuade the readers of Hebrews that the Son is far greater than any of the prophets (**Psalm 119:90-91**).
- By His death, burial, and resurrection, the Lord Jesus “***purged our sins,***” which means He did absolutely everything that was necessary for our salvation. Through Him, our sins were forgiven, we are delivered from sin's power, and one day we will be changed into sinless human beings and be like Him. Having completed this work, He ascended to Heaven. As man and yet also God, He now shares the position of Supreme Ruler with His Father. None but a divine person could ever sit upon the throne of the universe with God, sharing in the rule of God over all creation.
- In **Isaiah 42:8** God said, “***I am the Lord: that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another...***” Why, then, does God share His glory with Jesus? Because the Lord Jesus is God's Son and equal to God in every way. Just before the Lord Jesus died, He called out, “***It is finished.***” His work being complete, He “***sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.***”
- It is interesting to note that when God created the world, it took only His word. To sustain the universe, it's only taken His will; but to purge our sins, it took

His becoming a man and death on the cross. A simple command would not do it (**John 17:4-5**).

- Because the offerings which the priests made in the tabernacle could never pay for sin and make the offerors forever acceptable to God, they had to continue making sacrifices day after day, year after year. But after the Lord Jesus had made only one sacrifice for sin, God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in Heaven. The work of the Lord Jesus was done to God's complete satisfaction and will never need to be repeated. The Son of God is thus shown to be superior to all the prophets, for none of them could ever share God's throne with Him.

HEBREWS

LESSON 2

A. The Superiority of God's Son Over Angels

- In the first three verses of Chapter one, the writer of Hebrews proved the superiority of God's Son over the Old Testament prophets. Then, beginning in verse four, he showed his readers that the Lord Jesus is also superior to the angels.
- The ministry of angels was very important to the Jewish people. Beginning with the life of Abraham and continuing throughout the history of Israel, angels had been sent to people with messages from God. In addition, God gave the Law to Moses through angels (**Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2**)
- It was important for the Jewish people to be persuaded that the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, was superior to angels through whom the Law was given. If they were convinced that the Lord Jesus was greater than angels, they would be unlikely to depend on the temple and the animal sacrifices that were commanded by God when He made the First Covenant.

Read Hebrews 1:1-5.

- The Son has “*become so much better than the angels.*” Why did the Son need to be “made” better than the angels? Wasn't He the creator of angels and therefore far greater than they? Yes, as God He was. However, the writer was not speaking of Him as God, but rather as man. When Jesus became a man in order to die for our sin, He, like all other people, was placed in a position inferior to angels.
- After Jesus died and rose again, God gave Him a position that is far superior to everyone, including

angels (**Philippians 2:8-10; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:18-21**).

- Some of the words in **Hebrews 1:5** are quoted from the Old Testament. “*You are My Son, today I have begotten You*” is quoted from **Psalms 2:7**. “*I will be to him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son*” is quoted from **2 Samuel 7:14**. Although these words in Samuel were originally spoken about Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel, they were really pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. This position as the Son of God was rightfully given by the Father to Jesus because, even before He became a man, He was the Son of God. That’s why the writer said in verse four that “*He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name*” than the angels. This position as the Son of God rightfully belongs to the Lord Jesus alone.
- Angels were very important to the Jewish mind. Throughout history, angels were often seen on special occasions by their fathers. Jews may have been superstitious about angels even going beyond what God’s Word said.
- Someone may ask the following question: aren’t we also sons of God? Yes, we are because we have been born again by God’s Spirit into God’s family. However, we are not sons in the same sense that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. Only Jesus can be referred to as THE Son of God, the eternal Son, equal in every way to the Father. No one else can share this position—neither men nor angels.

B. The Son Is to Be Worshiped By the Angels

Read Hebrews 1:6.

- “*When He again brings the firstborn into the world*” is not referring to Jesus being the first-born of Mary. Rather, it is speaking of His second coming to earth.
- The Lord Jesus is called “the firstborn,” which refers to the fact that He, the eternal Son of God, preceded everything that was created. In Old Testament times, the firstborn son had a superior position and place of authority in the family, next only to his father. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus is described as the firstborn, it means He is superior to and has authority over all created beings, including the angels. The words “*let all the angels of God worship Him*” are from **Psalm 97:7**.
- It is very clear from the Scriptures that only God is to be worshiped. So, why did God command the angels to worship the Lord Jesus? Because the Lord Jesus is God and because He will come as the mighty King to rule over all creation.
- Angels are created beings, and they were created to serve God (**Psalm 103:20**). One day their serving will be over and they will worship Christ (**Revelation 5:7-12**).
- In **1 Peter 1:11-12**, the angels appear to be learning by what they see. One day in heaven, God’s redemptive plan will have been completed and they will worship because of what they’ve learned of God’s love and grace.

C. The Son Is Ruler over the Angels

Read Hebrews 1:7.

- In proving to his readers that the Son of God, the mediator of the New Agreement, is superior to angels through whom God gave the Old Agreement, the writer quoted again from the Old Testament—this time

from **Psalm 104:4**. “*Who makes His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire*” (NASB).

- In verse six we saw the angels are commanded by God to worship the Son when He returns to earth. In contrast, verse seven informs us that God (and this includes God, the Son) created the angels to be His messengers. This was His purpose for making them and He does not intend for them to occupy any other place than that of servants.
- We are not told why the angels are referred to as “wind” and “fire.” “Wind” may illustrate the swiftness of God’s angels to obey His commands, and “fire” may show how effectively the angels carry out what God sends them to do.
- We know how quickly strong wind can uproot even the strongest of trees. Think also of the power of a fire being driven by a fierce wind. Nothing can stand before such a force. Considering the swiftness of wind and the power of fire, we can see why God likened His angels to wind and fire. He created them with the ability to quickly and effectively do His will. However, regardless of their great power, none of the angels can compare with the Son of God, their Creator.

D. The Son’s Throne is Eternal

Read Hebrews 1:8.

- When a king sits on his throne, it is a sign to everyone that he is the highest authority in his country. However, a human king cannot rule forever, for he will eventually die and another will take his place. But because the Lord Jesus is God, His throne “*is forever and ever.*” His rule will never come to an end.
- We are also told that a “*scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your [the Son’s] kingdom.*” A scepter

is a rod, usually made of gold, which a king holds as a sign that he is the supreme ruler in his land.

- The Lord Jesus' scepter is symbol of His reign of righteousness. Some human kings are wicked, and they use their position of power to rob others and to enrich themselves. This could never be said of the Lord Jesus. He is righteous and will always rule over His children in righteousness. Therefore, all the decisions He makes and all He does as King are just and right.

E. The Son Has Been Anointed To Be King Over All

Read Hebrews 1:8-9.

- In verse eight, God addressed His Son as God. In verse nine, quoted from **Psalms 45:7**, God spoke to His Son as man; Jesus is both God and man. When the Lord Jesus was on earth as man, He lived as the obedient Son of God. Although Satan tempted Him in every way, the Lord Jesus always lived in perfect dependence on His Father; Jesus “*loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.*” Thus, God gave Jesus more glory than all others.
- When a man was made king in Old Testament times, oil was poured on his head as an indication that the Holy Spirit was upon him (**1 Samuel 10:1, 9-10; 16:13**).
- God has raised Jesus to the position of eternal King, and one day He will return to this earth to take His rightful place as King over all kings and Lord over all other rulers (**Revelation 19:11-16**).
- God did not give this position to an angel, but to the Lord Jesus. Therefore, He is greater than all the angels. They, too, will worship Him as King.

F. The Son Is Creator

Read Hebrews 1:10.

- This verse is a quote from **Psalms 102:25**. The writer is emphasizing that Jesus is the Creator. The angels were created and were not creators; therefore, Jesus is greater.

G. The Son Is Immutable

Read Hebrews 1:10-12.

- In these verses we are told that although the Lord Jesus will continue unchanged forever, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars will not. What He will do with them is likened to what a person in Bible days did with his “vesture,” his cloak, when it wore out. He rolled it up and replaced it with a new garment. This is a picture of what the Lord will do with the heavens and earth when He decides it is time to make new heavens and a new earth (**Revelation 21:1-5**).
- Today, most people live as if this world will abide forever. Although He will change all these things, He, the Almighty King, will never change (**2 Peter 3:4**).

H. The Son Is Equal With God

Read Hebrews 1:13.

- Now the writer quotes from **Psalms 110**. God has never offered an angel the place of equality with Himself at His right hand in Heaven and He never will. This position was given to the Son because it rightfully belongs to Him. When the Son became man, He willingly left His place of equality with the Father. When He ascended back to Heaven, however,

the Father returned the Son to His former position of equality with Himself.

- This will take place on earth at Christ's second coming (**Revelation 19:11-21**).
- Who are Christ's enemies? (**Luke 19:14-27; Romans 8:7**).
- What position has He given to angels? The answer is in the next verse.

Read Hebrews 1:14.

- Angels have been appointed by God to serve "*those who will inherit salvation*." We are not told how they do this, but in some way, angels minister to those who are God's children while we are here on earth (**Psalms 103:20**).
- Notice the difference between these angels and Lucifer. Lucifer wanted a position that wasn't given to him (**Isaiah 14:12-14**). Today, in the flesh, we have that same "Lucifer mindset"; we want to be our own god and not be under anyone's authority.
- All believers are "heirs of salvation" (KJV). A person who is an heir has not yet received what has been promised to him. Why then are we called "heirs of salvation"? Haven't we already been saved? Yes, we have already been delivered from the punishment we deserved for our sin and as we depend on the Holy Spirit, we are being delivered from sin's control in our lives. But our bodies have yet to be delivered from sin, sickness, and death. This will take place when the Lord Jesus returns and changes our bodies to be like His sinless, everlasting body (**Philippians 3:20-21**).

I. Conclusion

- To help review what we have studied in this lesson, we will list all the ways in which the writer of

Hebrews said that the Son of God is superior to angels:

- He has a better name than the angels.
- He is to be worshiped by angels.
- He is master over angels.
- He has been raised to the position of eternal King and so is greater than angels and all other created beings.
- He is the creator of the universe.
- He will never change.
- He has been given the position of equality with God.

HEBREWS

LESSON 3

A. A Solemn Warning

- Keep in mind the book of Hebrews was written to Jews who had heard the gospel and had left the temple and its sacrifices. However, the author appears to be concerned that some had professed to faith in Christ and had come into the church but had not truly put their faith in Christ alone for salvation. Although they had an intellectual knowledge of the gospel and claimed to be Christians, they now were in danger of drifting away from the truth and returning to dependence on the animal sacrifices offered in the temple. It was to this particular group of people the writer now gives the first of his solemn warnings.

Read Hebrews 2:1.

- The word “therefore” points to the fact that the message we are receiving now is through the Son, and not just from the prophets or angels or anyone else. He is so much greater than angels. ***“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed.”*** If the Old Testament prophets should be heard, then how much more the Lord of Glory? These Hebrew people had read the Old Testament and they also had learned the gospel.
- Moving away from truth takes place slowly—a drifting. In the flesh, this could happen to any of us. The writer is warning his readers that drifting away takes place by not taking “earnest heed” to what they had heard. In the flesh we only take heed to what we want to hear.
- This speaks of the dangerous position of those who knew what Christ had done for their salvation, but

were looking back to the temple system which could never be of any help to them. Remember when Lot's wife looked back? She was judged by God. Likewise, these people would face terrible judgment for rejecting God's wonderful offer of salvation.

Read Hebrews 2:2-3.

- Through the writings of the Old Testament, all Jews knew how severe God's punishment had been on their forefathers when they had forsaken Him and disregarded His law which He had given through angels. But the writer to the Hebrews points out how much more dreadful would be God's judgment on all who disregarded the "*so great salvation*" from sin and death that God provided through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- If the law, ordained through angels who were created beings, brought just judgment, how much more then when the Lord Himself speaks and men reject Him and His Word?
- Even though the angels were created beings who were created to be His servants, still God backed up His Word.
- "*So great a salvation*" could be applied to either believers or unbelievers. As believers in Christ, we have all that we need for life and godliness. To reject it is to suffer loss and lose out on living the Christ life. No unbeliever will escape eternity in hell if he or she neglects or rejects Christ's free gift of salvation.

Read Hebrews 2:4.

- This "*so great a salvation*" was originally "*spoken by the Lord*" when He was on earth. After the Lord Jesus went back to Heaven, the message was preached by "*those [the apostles] that heard him.*" The teachings

of the apostles were proven to be from God by signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.

- Remember what happened when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost? He gave the apostles special power and abilities to perform miracles and do other miraculous things such as speaking in foreign languages that had never been learned. These were signs to the nation of Israel that the apostles' message was truly from God and not something they had concocted (**John 14:12**).

B. The Son Will Rule Over the Earth

- The writer of Hebrews gave a solemn warning and he then continued to show that the Son, through whom God gave the New Testament, is superior to the angels, through whom He gave the First Agreement.

Read Hebrews 2:5-9.

- Some Bible teachers believe these verses do not refer to human beings but to Christ. Although Christ ultimately rules over all things (**Hebrews 1:13**), the author of Hebrews probably had mankind rather than Christ in mind at this point.
- However, we ought not completely discount Jesus' role in this verse 5. The quote from **Psalms 8** originally referred to humanity's role in creation, but the Psalm was regarded as Messianic. The author of Hebrews may have been thinking about the double meaning included in the words "Son of man," showing that Jesus fulfilled the role and destiny originally given to people. What humans could not do, Jesus will do.
- In verse 9 we read, "*but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels.*" Jesus is God and

became man. Angels are not subject to death and can't be tempted.

- Jesus was made lower than the angels but only as a man. As God, He was never made lower.
- Adam's unbelief and disobedience forfeited the place God had given him as head over the earth, and so God appointed another man, the Lord Jesus, to take this position. Adam was the first man; the Lord Jesus is the second man, the last Adam. When Jesus was born into this world, He was made a little lower than the angels like the rest of mankind. The reason for this was so He could experience death for every man. Because of this, God has crowned Him with glory and honor (**Philippians 2:9-11**). No longer is He in an inferior position to the angels. God has raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand, far above all angels and powers. It is obvious then that the Son is greater than angels, for God appointed Him to rule over the earth.

C. The Son Did Not Come to Save Angels

Read Hebrews 2:10.

- Because He created all things for Himself (**Revelation 4:11**) and because He is a righteous and loving Creator, God was determined to bring “*many sons to glory*.” He willingly gave His Son to suffer and die so we could be returned to our former position and share eternal glory with His Son.
- God didn't just do what He willed to do, but He did what was becoming or fitting for Himself.

- The Lord Jesus is called the “captain” of our salvation because He went ahead of us, suffered and died to overcome all our enemies, and ascended on our behalf to God’s right hand as Lord over all. When He returns to the earth, we will then share with Him who reigns as King.
- The Hebrews stumbled at the thought of a lowly suffering Savior. Jesus had to go where they were, have their guilt charged to Him, and bear the wrath due them. In doing so, He became their/our Captain, the One who leads us into salvation.
- The word “perfect” in verse 10 means *complete*. This is not referring to the character of the Lord Jesus. As God, He was already perfect and He was born a sinless human being and lived a perfect life. However, in order for the Lord Jesus to become our “perfect” or complete Savior, He had to go through “sufferings.” He had to suffer as our substitute so He could save us from the punishment of our sins. Because He suffered for us, He’s completely qualified to be our all-sufficient Savior and can deliver us from our daily struggle against the trials of life and temptations to sin.

Read Hebrews 2:11-13.

- Through His death, the Lord Jesus has sanctified believers; set us apart for His possession and use. Now, the Lord Jesus and believers are one. Both He and we have the same Father and belong to the same family. Therefore, the Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brethren.
- Verse 12 is a quote from **Psalms 22:22**. Verse 13 is quoted from **Isaiah 8:17-18**.

Read Hebrews 2:14-15.

- The Lord Jesus became a man so that He could die for our sins. His death destroyed or broke the power of him that had the power of death—that is, the devil. Sin entered the world through Satan; and because of sin, all people were separated from God and condemned to die physically. Satan, who was given control of this evil world, leads people to murder one another, to commit suicide, and to live sinful lives that often ruin their health and bring about premature death. But through Christ’s death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus has delivered us from Satan and the “fear of death.” Believers should not live in fear of death because when we die, we will immediately be ushered into the presence of the Lord (**2 Corinthians 5:6-8**).
- When the Lord Jesus returns for His church, the earthly bodies of believers who have died will be raised and changed into the perfect body of the Lord Jesus. Those who are still living when the Lord returns will also be changed; they will never die. Then we will live forever with the Lord (**1 Corinthians 15:51-54**).

Read Hebrews 2:16.

- The Son of God did not come to rescue the angels who had sinned. He was born as a descendant of Abraham so He could save sinful mankind. Undoubtedly, the reason for the writer emphasizing that the Lord Jesus came as “*the seed of Abraham*” is because this letter was written to Jews. But let us not forget that all who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus are also called the “children of Abraham” (**Galatians 3:7**).

Read Hebrews 2:17-18.

- The Lord Jesus was born of a Jewish mother and grew up as an ordinary Jewish child. He experienced the

same difficulties and temptations as anyone living in that era. However, there was one great difference between Him and all other people—He never yielded to Satan. He was always dependent on and obedient to God His Father.

- The reason He was “*made like His brethren*” was so He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. He had to offer a satisfactory payment for our sins (death), and He had to go through the same trials and temptations that every person on earth experiences. Those experiences qualified him to “*aid those who are tempted.*” Having experienced the same temptations as we, He knows how we think, what we desire and how we feel and is therefore able to give us the full help and support we need when we are going through difficulties and temptations.

HEBREWS

LESSON 4

A. The Builder of Israel

Read Hebrews 3:1.

- The writer was speaking to “*holy brethren.*” These are people who, by faith in the Lord Jesus, have been born again.
- It’s interesting they are referred to as “*holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.*” The writer is encouraging them to look above the earthly things that they focused on under the law and to understand that the call of God is first to Himself (**1 Corinthians 1:9**).
- The moment a person puts his faith in Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit sets him apart for God’s possession and use. Therefore, all children of God are “holy brethren” and are partakers of the “heavenly calling” (**Ephesians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 5:24**).
- As we read God’s Word, we should keep in mind that God’s plan for His church and His plan for Israel are different. God’s promises to Israel as a nation relate primarily to the land that God promised them and to material blessings on earth. His promises to the church are concerning spiritual blessings and our future home with the Lord Jesus in Heaven (**Ephesians 1:3; John 14:1-3; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-4**).
- We who belong to the church should not claim the promise of material prosperity which God gave to Israel in the Old Testament.
- Does this mean God is not interested in our lives here on earth? No. He does care about such things. We can confidently look for Him to provide the necessities of life. On the other hand, He often allows His children to go without in order to perfect their

faith. Whatever He allows in our lives is to cause us to become more like Christ (**Romans 8:28-29**).

- Even Paul, who faithfully served the Lord, went hungry, and at times was without many of the comforts we normally expect in life (**Philippians 4:10-13, 18, 19**).
- It might be good to keep in mind that God is working to bring us into a deeper relationship with Himself. He doesn't exist for the purpose of giving us an easy life (**2 Corinthians 11:23-12:10**).
- In the first two chapters of Hebrews, the writer proved conclusively that the Lord Jesus is superior to angels. In chapter three, the writer shows that Christ is also greater than Moses.

Read Hebrews 3:2.

- It was important that these Jews understood that Jesus was superior to Moses, for only then would they rest in Christ and not turn back to the covenant of Law that God had made with Israel through Moses.
- Next to Abraham, the Jews probably honored Moses more than any other man. God appointed Moses to lead the Jewish nation out of bondage in Egypt. God gave the Law and all the instructions regarding the tabernacle and the sacrifices through Moses. In addition, Moses was also the author of the first five books in the Old Testament.
- They were told to “*consider* [fix their attention on] *the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus*.” The writer wanted them to think carefully about the superiority of the Lord Jesus compared to Moses and Aaron. He wanted them to become so fixed on Christ that they lost sight of the old things under the law.
- When God gave the Old Agreement, Moses was His apostle and Aaron was his appointed high priest.

Under the New Agreement, Jesus is God's appointed representative and spokesman as well as the Great High Priest.

- Later we will study some portions of Hebrews in which the writer went to great lengths to prove that Jesus' position as High Priest was superior to that of Aaron's.
- Except for one instance when Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, he faithfully followed the Lord's commands throughout the forty years in which he led Israel.
- Although both Moses and Jesus were faithful to the tasks God gave them, the Lord Jesus is far superior.

Read Hebrews 3:3-4.

- The Lord Jesus was God and was therefore the builder/creator of Israel. Moses was a mere man and an Israelite. God had called Abraham and promised to give him a son whose descendants would become the nation of Israel. God had determined what Israel would be, how they should act, and even where they would live. How foolish then for any of the readers of Hebrews to contemplate turning away from Christ, who was God and the builder of Israel, to trust once again in the Old Agreement given to Israel through Moses.
- The Son is Lord over His house; Moses was merely a servant.

Read Hebrews 3:5-6.

- This portion of Scripture further explains why the Son is superior to Moses. God sent Moses to be His servant to the nation of Israel. In contrast, Christ, the Son of God, is now Lord over His church (**Ephesians 1:22-23**).

- Many Jews only saw Jesus as a lowly servant, but the writer to the Hebrews is revealing who Christ really is.
- All that Moses said and did in His service to God was meant to point people forward to the coming Christ in whom they should put their trust. Remember some of the important events in the life of Moses that were Old Testament physical pictures pointing forward to Christ: the killing of the Passover Lamb and the placing of its blood on the Israelite homes, the striking of the rock, the giving of the manna, the placing of the serpent on a pole (**John 3:14-15; 5:46; Luke 24:27**).

B. A Warning Not to Harden Hearts

- The writer here is showing that Christ is worthy of far more glory than Moses. Moses was faithful in the building of the tabernacle, the physical household of God in the Old Testament, and this brought and revealed the glory of God. Now as the church, the believers are the household of God and Christ is the builder of His house, which purpose is to show and manifest the glory of God, just like the tabernacle in the Old Testament. So, as believers are walking by faith in the Spirit holding fast to their confidence and their boast of their hope firm until the end, the glory and manifestation of God is being revealed through believers. But when a believer is walking in the flesh, not holding fast to his confidence and hope firm until the end, the glory and manifestation of God will not be shown. Not only is God's glory not manifested, but the believer is not enjoying the benefits that come along with being in God's household.
- In no way does this verse communicate that a believer can be saved in God's household and then unsaved out of God's household—or lose salvation. This is referring to a believer who is in God's household, who

cannot be taken out but could be walking in the flesh. The result will be that God's glory will not manifest and they will not be enjoying the intimate fellowship of the relationship with Christ and other benefits that come along with being in God's household.

Read Hebrews 3:7-16.

- The writer warned them not to follow the example of their forefathers who, through unbelief, rejected Moses and the message which the Holy Spirit had spoken through him. These Hebrews must not disbelieve God as their forefathers had when entering the Promised Land.
- Verses 7-11 are quoted from **Psalm 95:7-11**.
- The “provocation” refers to the time when the Israelites refused to believe God and, as a result, were not allowed to enter the Promised Land (**Numbers 13:1-3, 25-33; 14:1-4, 26-30**).
- Because they refused to believe God could overcome their enemies and give them the land He had promised to Abraham, God vowed they would be unable to enter His “rest.” God would not allow them to enter the land of Canaan, the place where they would have been at peace, secure from all their enemies and at “rest.”

Read Hebrews 3:17-19.

- Moses, God's representative and spokesman, told the Israelites God was going to overcome all nations living in the land of Canaan and give the land to Israel as their home forever. But the news that Canaan was to be their new home was of no benefit because they refused to believe God.

Read Hebrews 4:1-3.

- Those to whom this letter was written had heard the good news that Christ had prepared for them a “rest,” deliverance from sin and punishment, through the suffering of the Lord Jesus on the cross. When this work was completed, He cried, “***It is finished,***” and then He died. Following His resurrection, He ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. He sat down because He had finished all that must be done for sinners to be saved. As a result, those of us who put our faith in Him have entered into “rest.” No longer are we working for our salvation, but rather we are depending wholly on what Christ has done on our behalf.
- This also means rest from our own responsibilities under the law.
- However, like the Jewish people’s unbelieving forefathers, some of these people were in danger of missing out on this great salvation—the everlasting rest that has been provided for all who believe the gospel.
- This principle of rest can be applied to both salvation and sanctification (**Colossians 2:6**). We were saved by faith in the finished work of Christ, and we walk by faith in our identification with the finished work of Christ.
- Just because people listen to the message of the gospel and profess to believe does not necessarily mean that they are saved. Remember the parable of the sower which the Lord Jesus spoke while he was on earth to illustrate this point (**Mark 4:3-8**).
- Later, when Jesus was alone with His disciples, He explained to them the meaning of the parable (**Mark 4:14-20**).
- When we preach the gospel, we must remember that some of those who claim to believe may eventually reveal, by their denial of Christ, that they were never born again. This does not mean that they were saved and then lost their salvation. Rather, those who turn

away from the Savior are like the people in the parable of the sower—the stony ground and the thorny ground. Although they may hear the message of the gospel and say that they believe, they never truly trusted in Christ.

Read Hebrews 4:4-8.

- The writer to the Hebrews is continuing his comparison and revealing that there remains a rest for the people of God through faith. Not only do we have the opportunity to enter rest through faith, but we are also warned that we are unable to enter rest because of unbelief.
- We are reminded of the prophecy God gave through David that there would be another day of rest. In verse 8, we read that this rest is not the rest that came through Joshua's leading of the Israelites into Canaan, but rather it is the rest that comes through faith in the Deliverer.

Read Hebrews 4:9-11.

- Today, a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God and it is a fact that all who enter this rest of God have by default rested from their own works.
- Again, this can be applied to both justification and sanctification. To receive salvation, we must realize our need and our hopelessness to save ourselves and rest in the substitutionary death of Christ. Once we've rested from trying to earn our own salvation, we can enter into the true rest of God's saving grace.
- Likewise, when we realize we can no more live the Christian life in our own effort any more than we can save ourselves, we'll cease trying and simply rest in our identification with the finished work of Christ (**Galatians 2:20; Romans 6**). "Labor to rest" is an

interesting phrase. Often when new truth is presented, the initial response is that could not be true...could it? The Spirit gives us the power and desire to search the scripture for the purpose of settling us into this new truth. By God's grace we dig and search through the scriptures and eventually rest in that truth. We have entered the rest of God and have ceased from our labor.

Read Hebrews 4:12-13.

- Verse 12 declares that God's Word is living and active and we can rest in His truth.
- In **John 6:63**, Jesus declares that the words He spoke are spirit and life.
- **Psalm 119:89**: *"Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven."* God's Word is the utterance of infinite wisdom, the Word of the Living God and not of mere men. Therefore, it should be believed and counted on.
- Verse 12 also states that God's Word is "active" (NASB). God's Word is always doing something to those who hear it. It convicts, comforts, encourages, or condemns, but it never returns void (**Isaiah 55:11**). This is another reason for ceasing from our own efforts and by faith entering into God's rest. His Word truly is alive and active and will accomplish His will in our lives.
- God's Word is also *"sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit."* The sharper the knife, the easier it is to butcher an animal. You can do some cutting with a dull knife, but if you really need to make a clean cut (separation), the sharper the knife, the easier the job will be.
- Likewise, God's Word is so specific, appropriate, and true that it is compared to a double-edged sword. It is

able to divide the soul and spirit. The soul is the mind, will, and emotions, and the spirit is that part of man that communicates with God. The Word of God is used by God to reveal to man whether his thoughts, desires, and feelings are coming from the flesh or the Spirit. No one is capable of hiding anything from our all-knowing God (**1 Chronicles 28:9**).

HEBREWS

LESSON 5

A. The Son Ascended into the Holy of Holies

- In Chapters one and two, the writer of Hebrews showed that the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the New Agreement, is superior to the Old Testament prophets and to angels. In Chapter three, he showed that God's Son is superior to Moses. In the portion we will study in this lesson, the writer set out to establish that the Lord Jesus, our High Priest, is superior to Aaron, the first high priest in the tabernacle.
- In the Old Testament, when God told Moses to build the tabernacle, He also instructed him to appoint Aaron and his sons as priests (**Exodus 28:1**).
- As high priest, Aaron entered the most holy place in the tabernacle; this most holy place was set apart by God, but it was still part of an earthly dwelling. The priests who were continuing to offer sacrifices when this letter was written, entered the temple in Jerusalem, but it, too, was just an earthly building. In contrast, the Lord Jesus entered the holy of holies in Heaven.

Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

- Even though God's Word is living, active, convicting the inner-most part of man, and every man will be held accountable to it, we have Jesus Christ our High Priest who has entered heaven on our behalf.
- Because there is no escaping the conviction of God's Word in our lives, one could possibly feel overwhelmed. However, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our High Priest. Even though He is the perfect and holy Son of God, still He became a man and was tempted as we are. Therefore, He is an understanding

and sympathetic High Priest, who understands our failures and knows that we need His mediation and intervention.

- Even though we often are found to be sinful, because of our sympathetic and sinless High Priest, we can still enter boldly to the Throne of Grace.
- The writer was showing that the Lord Jesus is the Great High Priest, far superior to Aaron or any earthly priest. Aaron could enter only the inner room of a building on this earth, but the Lord Jesus entered right into God's presence in Heaven.
- The offerings of the Levitical priests never made it possible for the sinner to enter into the holy of holies. But through Christ, we can now enter boldly to the Throne of Grace, i.e., the very presence of God.

Read Hebrews 4:14.

- The Bible uses the word "heaven" when referring to three different areas. The first heaven is the atmosphere, where the clouds are. Above this is the second heaven, the universe with the sun, moon, and stars. Finally, the third heaven is where God and the angels live, as well as the spirits of believers who have died. This is the place we refer to when speaking of Heaven.
- When the Lord Jesus left this world, He passed through the first and second heavens, and entered, as our Great High Priest, into the third Heaven where God is seated on His throne.

B. Our High Priest Understands

Read Hebrews 4:15.

- We must never forget that although the Lord Jesus is now in Heaven, He fully understands exactly how we

feel because while He was on this earth, He went through the same trials and temptations that all humans experience. Because He experienced everything that we do, He is “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*” (KJV).

- Sometimes we find life is hard because we are tired and hungry. Does Jesus understand? He certainly does. When He was on earth, there were times when He, too, was tired and hungry.
- When we're sad because people misunderstand or reject us, does the Lord Jesus know how we feel? Yes, He, too, faced rejection. His own people, the Jews, rejected Him. Then His disciples all left Him when He needed them most, and Peter denied that he even knew Him.
- Do we find it difficult to live in obedience to God's Word in this sinful world where Satan is in control and where people love sin and hate God? Yes, we all do. But how encouraging it is to know that the Lord Jesus is fully aware of how we feel because He went through every temptation we will ever experience. The one great difference, of course, between Jesus and us is that Jesus never sinned. In spite of all Satan's temptations, Jesus was without sin. He was not only born perfect, but He also lived an absolutely pure and righteous life (**2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5**).

Read Hebrews 4:16.

- Only the high priest was permitted to enter the most holy place in the tabernacle, and he did this on one particular day each year. On that special day, the high priest would sprinkle the blood of animals on the mercy seat, which was the lid of the ark of the covenant, the gold covered box in which the Ten Commandments were kept. When God saw the blood

of animals sprinkled on the mercy seat, He overlooked the sins of the people of Israel for one more year. The high priest was the only one who could approach the mercy seat in the tabernacle or in the temple. However, today all children of God can “***come boldly to the throne of grace***” in Heaven.

- Since the Son is always there as our Great High Priest, interceding for us before the Father, we can approach God at any time.
- Because of the Lord Jesus and His blood that He offered on our behalf, God’s throne is not a place of judgment but a “throne of grace.” As we come to the Father, He accepts us and gives us His grace and strength to endure whatever trials He allows to come into our lives.
- We all appreciate having trustworthy relatives or friends, those to whom we can go at any time. Nevertheless, we have all experienced times when even these people are either unwilling or unable to help us. The Lord Jesus is always willing. Not only is He always willing to help us, but He is also fully capable of meeting our every need.
- If one of our own people, who was a faithful, loving friend, held the top position in the local government office, what a tremendous help he could be to us. In a similar way, the Lord Jesus is our loyal and loving Savior; He is seated in Heaven as our High Priest, and always willing and able to help us in time of need.
- No matter how far we have drifted from the Lord, we can always enter boldly to the throne of grace because of the finished work of Christ. Through His finished work, our every need has been met (**1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:3**).
- When we sin, God doesn’t give us a new “handout” of grace because the finished work of Christ has already provided all the grace that we will ever need. Therefore, we enter boldly at all times.

C. Aaron and His Descendants Were Sinners

Read Hebrews 5:1-3.

- Because Aaron and all other priests experienced temptations and trials, they were able to be gentle and compassionate toward others. However, because they were sinners, they had to offer sacrifices for themselves first before they could offer sacrifices for others. Unlike them, Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He had no need to offer sacrifices for Himself as did Aaron and all other priests. Therefore, who was the greater, Aaron or Jesus? Jesus, for He never sinned.

D. The Son Was Appointed By God

Read Hebrews 5:4.

- No man could simply decide that he wanted to be a priest; he had to be appointed by God. God had chosen Aaron, his sons, and their descendants to serve as priests in the tabernacle and the temple.

Read Hebrews 5:5.

- Just as Aaron and his sons could not have become priests merely because they chose the position, neither could Jesus. Later in the book, the writer will point out that because Jesus was not a descendant of Aaron, He could not have served in the earthly tabernacle as a priest. He could only become a priest by being chosen by God. And God did just that—He appointed the Lord Jesus to be a priest “***according to the order of Melchizedek.***” Melchizedek had served as God’s priest many years prior to the building of the tabernacle and the appointment of Aaron and his sons.

Read Hebrews 5:6.

- This verse is a quote from **Psalm 110:4**. To understand what the Old Testament says about Melchizedek, we should first know what happened when Abraham's and Lot's flocks and herds became too large to continue grazing in the same place. Remember that Lot and Abraham separated? Lot chose to live in the plains close to the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Later he moved into Sodom. It was during the time he was living in Sodom that four kings from distant countries fought and overcame the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as three other kings from nearby cities. Lot and his family, along with many others, were taken captive (**Genesis 14:11-12**).
- A man escaped to tell Abraham what had happened and Abraham went out to fight against the kings (**Genesis 14:13-16**).
- As Abraham was returning with everything he had recovered, he met Melchizedek (**Genesis 14:18-20**). Melchizedek was king of Salem, which later became the city of Jerusalem. Melchizedek is the first priest of God mentioned in the Old Testament. He was not a Jew, for he was not a descendant of Abraham.
- As we see in Hebrews, God appointed the Lord Jesus to be a high priest, not in line with the priesthood of Aaron but to follow on from Melchizedek. There was no other priest like Melchizedek except Jesus. Aaron's priesthood was temporal because he died. But Christ, who was raised from the dead never to die again, was appointed by God to be a priest forever.

E. The Son Obtained Salvation For All Who Believe

- The next few verses re-emphasize that the Lord Jesus was a real man. He experienced the same struggles and fears as we do in our daily lives. We also see that because He suffered, He was able to be our perfect Savior and accomplish all that was necessary for our salvation.

Read Hebrews 5:7-9.

- Jesus prayed to God who “*was able to save Him from death.*” When the Savior hung on the cross as our substitute, He experienced death. For the first time, He was separated from God as the punishment for our sins. His plea for deliverance and also His thanks to God because He knew He had heard Him and would deliver Him are both found in **Psalm 22:1-21**. His praise to God is found in **Psalm 22:22-25**.
- Even while He was hanging on the cross, the Lord Jesus knew that God had heard Him. He knew God would deliver Him from the terrible separation He was experiencing as the punishment for sins. He also knew God would raise Him from death. Thus, He could confidently say, as the Psalmist wrote, “*In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.*” He would give thanks to God for His great salvation in the assembly of all the redeemed in Heaven. The writer of Hebrews said that the Lord Jesus “*was heard because of His devotion.*” God heard and answered Jesus’ prayer.
- Although He was the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus became man and willingly submitted Himself to His Father. Throughout His life on earth, He experienced all that we do and learned through His own experiences as man, what it is to be a man, as God intended man to be.

- Although Jesus was already perfect in His character, He could only qualify to be our Savior by perfectly obeying God and suffering for our sins. Through His life, He willingly submitted to the Father and finally accepted death on the cross. Therefore, He is “***the author***” or the source of “***eternal salvation to all who obey him,***” that is, those who obey God’s command to believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior. Those who refuse to obey this command will not receive eternal life (**Romans 1:5; 16:26; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**).

HEBREWS

LESSON 6

A. The Spiritual Immaturity of the Hebrew Readers

- From our study in Hebrews thus far, we have seen that Christ is greater than the Old Testament prophets, the angels, and Moses. From our study in Chapter 5, we have already seen that Christ is greater than Aaron because God appointed Christ to be the eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek. The writer knew how slow the Jews were to understand the teachings of the New Testament. He knew it was going to be very difficult to explain to them in simple terms the issues concerning Melchizedek and Christ's eternal position as High Priest.

Read Hebrews 5:10-12.

- It had been a long time since these Jews had left the temple and its sacrifices. Yet, they were still incapable of instructing others in the most basic truths concerning Christ. The writer likened them to little babies in need of “*milk and not solid food.*”
- Mothers feed their babies with milk. Will they always nurse their children? No, as they get older, they will be given solid food to eat. When they are mature, they will eat the same food that the rest of the family eats.
- What if our children were only able to drink milk all their lives? Would that be good? What if their minds never developed so they could understand and think like adults? This is similar to the spiritual condition of the Jews to whom the writer was speaking in these verses. Even though it had been a long time since they had first believed in Christ, they were like newborn babies who could only drink milk as they were not yet

capable of eating regular food. They needed again an explanation of the foundational truths regarding Christ and His work of salvation. They had been unable to grasp the deeper truths which mature believers understand. Had they fully understood that Christ was the great high priest, they would never have contemplated returning once more to the temple and its priests. Christ was far superior to the earthly priests who offered animals sacrifices that could never satisfy God and fully pay for sin.

Read Hebrews 5:13-14.

- The writer discloses that ignorance, inexperience, and unskillfulness result from the lack of use of spiritual senses. The whole thought is of spiritual development or maturity. When we were born physically, our parents were eager to know whether all our physical senses were normal—sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste. In this scripture, the spiritual senses are in view for the purpose of discerning what is good and what is evil. A full grown spiritual man will discern good and evil with spiritual senses. However, many Christians are described in these verses. They cannot discern, they are unskilled in the Word of righteousness and have become dull of hearing. They can only receive spiritual milk.

B. Out With the Old; In With the New

Read Hebrews 6:1-3.

- The writer tells his readers to leave behind “*the elementary principles of Christ*,” or the rudimentary instruction about Christ, no longer trusting in Old Testament foundational doctrines, for these only pointed forward to the Messiah (**Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:9-12**).

- Those things written about Christ in the Old Testament were meant to prepare Israel for their coming Redeemer and the complete revelation that God would bring. Instead of understanding and relying on this greater and final revelation that had come through Christ, some to whom this letter was written, continued focusing their attention on Old Testament teachings and were weak in their dependence on Christ. Thus the writer wrote that they should leave those Old Testament doctrines which pointed forward to Christ, and “*go on to perfection*,” they were to proceed on to a complete understanding of what Christ had accomplished for them and to trust wholeheartedly in Him alone for their salvation as well as for their sanctification. They were to leave behind, or no longer depend on, the elementary truths concerning Christ taught in the Old Testament, but rather understand and rest in the deeper truths concerning Christ that had been revealed to the New Testament apostles by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 13:9-10**).
- The writer listed the main Old Testament doctrines which they were to leave behind:
 - **Repentance from dead works.** The New Testament apostles constantly called on the Jews to repent, to change their minds and agree with God that their best efforts to keep the Old Testament laws were unacceptable and could never win His approval. Whatever sinners do to get to Heaven are “dead works” because they can never make anyone acceptable in God’s sight. He only accepts those who realize they can do nothing to save themselves and accept salvation as a free gift.
 - **Faith toward God.** The Old Testament emphasized “faith toward God.” In the New Testament the great emphasis is not on faith in God, but rather faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before Christ came into the world, believers trusted in God and the promises He had given concerning the coming Redeemer. But once Christ came, the main emphasis has been that all should put their faith in Him as their Savior (**John 3:16, 14:1; Acts 4:12, 16:31, 20:21**).

- **The doctrine of baptisms.** The writer here was referring to Old Testament rituals in which people were washed with water to make them acceptable to worship or serve God in the tabernacle or temple. These ceremonies pointed forward to the time when those who trusted in Christ would be washed clean from all their sin and made fully acceptable to God.
- **The laying on of hands.** This is described in **Leviticus 1:1-5**. The offeror laid his hand on the head of the animal being offered as a sacrifice to indicate that he was transferring his sin to the animal and that the animal was paying the death penalty. The priests sometimes laid their hands on the animal on the behalf of the people. This act pointed forward to the time when the Lord Jesus would take upon Himself our sin and die in the place of sinners. God forgave the sins of the person who in faith laid his hands on the head of an animal because God looked forward to the time when the Lord Jesus was to take the full punishment for our sin.
- **Resurrection of the dead.** In the Old Testament, there was teaching of only one resurrection from the dead (**Isaiah 26:19**) with no distinction between the resurrection of saved and unsaved. However, the New Testament reveals that the resurrection of believers and unbelievers will take place at different times. In addition, the New Testament teaches that the resurrection of believers is in two stages. First, all believers will be raised from the dead at the return of the Lord

Jesus for His church. Later, those who believe during the tribulation will be raised when Christ returns with His church. Finally, the unsaved will be resurrected at the end of the world (**1 Corinthians 15:22-24; Revelation 20:4-6**).

- **Eternal judgment.** The Old Testament taught about eternal judgment, but the New Testament teaches it with much greater clarity. From reading the Old Testament, it could have been thought that all people would stand together to be judged. In the New Testament, however, it is made clear that believers will not stand to be judged together with unbelievers; only unbelievers will stand before God's "great white throne" of judgment (**Revelation 20:11**). Believers will be present at the judgment seat of Christ where we will be rewarded for what Christ has done through us.
- As the writer stated in verse 1, he wanted to help his readers move on to maturity.

C. Christians Who Fall Away Into Carnality

- The writer gives a solemn warning to those who had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit concerning Christ and His work of salvation but were turning back to the old Jewish legal system to obtain God's approval and blessing.

Read Hebrews 6:4-6.

- There has been much discussion and disagreement regarding this scripture. Let's consider that these people, after hearing the gospel and being convinced by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the only Savior, put their faith in Him. However in time, they left their first love (**Revelation 2:4**) and their hearts departed from the Lord. The writer hoped to alert these people

to this terrible danger, as he warned, “*it is impossible [...] if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*”

- When the Holy Spirit came into the world on the Day of Pentecost, He came not only to indwell all believers permanently, but also to work in the hearts of the unsaved so they would repent and believe the gospel (**John 16:7-11**).
- Remember that the minds of unsaved people are in darkness until they are “enlightened” by the Spirit to understand the gospel. These people spoken about in **Hebrews 6** had been taught by the Holy Spirit. They had clearly understood who Christ was and what He had done for them by His death, burial, and resurrection.
- Not only had they been brought to a clear understanding of the gospel through the teaching of the Holy Spirit but they had also “*tasted the heavenly gift*,” they had come to appreciate in their hearts what Jesus had done for them.
- Next, the writer of Hebrews declares that this particular group of people “*have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.*” This event occurred when He worked in their hearts and minds to convince them of their sinfulness and to teach them the truth about the Lord Jesus and the gospel, and they placed their faith in Christ at that moment. The Holy Spirit indwelt their dead human Spirit and brought it to life (**Ephesians 2:1-5**).
- Verse 5 also states they had tasted “*the good Word of God and powers of the age to come.*”
- They had seen Christ work supernaturally in their lives, changing them from an old creation to a new.
- In summary, the writer describes certain people with four phases: (1) once enlightened; (2) tasted the heavenly gift; (3) partakers of the Holy Spirit; (4) tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the

age to come. Then he declares it is impossible for such people if they fall away to renew them again to repentance.

- The term “*fall away*” actually means to deal treacherously with Jehovah, just as an adulterous woman with her husband (**James 4:4**).
- We have many examples of this in scripture.
- Someone who has trusted in Christ as Savior but has drifted away from the Lord and is living in carnality, this person has truly tasted of the Heavenly gift of eternal life and has an indwelling Holy Spirit. But as mentioned before in **Revelation 2:1-4**, he has “*left his first love*” and is living a self-focused existence. As this scripture states, it is impossible for men, but not for God, to restore such a one to that deep intimate abiding relationship with the Lord.
- Chapter 6 verse 6 states that if after being convinced of the truth about the Lord Jesus and what He had done for sinners, one should depart from a close fellowship with Him, we would “*crucify again for [our]selves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*” It would be just as though we were personally crucifying the Savior all over again. By our actions, we would be showing that we were in full agreement with the Jewish leaders who had called Jesus a liar and put him to shame by nailing Him to a cross like a criminal.
- Now the writer illustrates the difference between people who hear the gospel and receive it by faith and those who hear the gospel and are taught of the Holy Spirit but do not believe.

Read Hebrews 6:7-8.

- The rain that waters the ground is like the work of the Holy Spirit who convinces people that the gospel is truth. Those who believe and receive the Word of

God are like the good, fertile soil. They receive “*blessing from God*,” that is, they are given eternal life by Him. In contrast, those who do not believe after they hear the gospel and are taught by the Holy Spirit are likened to land which, although well-watered by the rain, only bears thorny bushes. Such people are “*cursed*” and are rejected by God. Their “*end is to be burned*” in hell (**Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 3:10-12**).

D. Encouragement For Those Who Put Their Faith in Christ

Read Hebrews 6:9.

- Having given solemn warning, the writer now speaks words of encouragement to those in whom he had seen clear evidence of their salvation and walk of faith.

Read Hebrews 6:10.

- The genuineness of their faith had been seen in their love and work for the Lord and His children. True faith will manifest itself in works (**1 Thessalonians 1:3**).
- Though it is clear from the scriptures that we are not saved by faith plus works, it is also seen in scripture that true believers will show by their works and love that they are children of God. If there is no evidence of love for God and His children in the life of a person, others have every reason to question if that person is truly a child of God.

- It is true, though, that a person can be saved and yet so fleshly that their life looks like that of an unbeliever. We must be very careful regarding our judgments (**Galatians 5:19-21; James 2:14-20; 1 John 3:7-10**).

E. An Exhortation

Read Hebrews 6:11-12.

- The writer urged those who were dabbling in carnality to follow the example of those who were walking by faith. In spite of persecution, the true believers were trusting in the Lord and waiting patiently for His return.
- Believers today should be encouraged to look at those who, through faith in their identification with Christ, are walking in the Spirit.

HEBREWS LESSON 7

A. The Aaronic Priesthood Was Unable to Make Anyone Fully Acceptable to God, But the Work of Christ Does

- In this section, the writer gives further proof that the work of the Son of God as High Priest is superior to the work of Aaron and his descendants.

Read Hebrews 7:11.

- The animal sacrifices and the work of Aaron and his descendants in the tabernacle and the temple never made anyone completely and finally acceptable to God. If they could have, there would have been no need for God to replace the old system and appoint Christ as high priest to follow the order of Melchizedek.

Read Hebrews 7:12-14.

- In these verses the writer reasoned with his readers to show them that God Himself had changed the laws governing the appointment of priests. By doing so, He had brought the Aaronic priesthood to an end.
- According to the Law, only a person from the tribe of Levi could become a priest. But God gave this position to Christ who came from the tribe of Judah. It is clear then that when God appointed Christ, He must have also altered the law regulating who could or could not become priests.

Read Hebrews 7:15.

- Further proof that God changed the law governing the priesthood is shown by God appointing Jesus to follow after the order of Melchizedek. If He had intended for the Aaronic priesthood to continue, then He would never have done this.

Read Hebrews 7:16-17.

- Under the law, ordinary men, who would eventually die, were appointed to be priests simply because they were the descendants of Aaron. In contrast, Christ, who will never die, has been appointed by God in the line of Melchizedek.

Read Hebrews 7:18-19.

- God set the Aaronic priesthood aside and made Christ High Priest because the law and all that went with it (the tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings of animals) weren't able to make anyone fully and finally acceptable to God. Therefore, God provided "***a better hope***" by appointing Jesus as our great High Priest. We can fully depend on Him because He offered Himself on our behalf as a satisfactory offering to God and lives forever as our high priest.

B. Aaron and His Descendants Were Not Made Priests By An Oath of God, but Christ Was

Read Hebrews 7:20-21.

- When God chose Aaron and his descendants as priests, He knew the sacrifices they offered could never pay for sin. Because of this, He made no promise that their priesthood would continue forever. However, because Christ's offering of Himself fully satisfied all the requirements of God's law, God

appointed Him to be High Priest and vowed that He would never terminate His position. This clearly demonstrates the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the old order.

Read Hebrews 7:22.

- The Lord Jesus is the guarantee of the New Agreement which is better than the old. The New Agreement is far better because its promised blessings are dependent alone on Christ's work on our behalf. The blessings of God promised in the Old Covenant had been dependent on man's perfect obedience. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, God guarantees He will do all He has promised in His Second Agreement. Our salvation and all God's blessings on us are not dependent on what we do but on what Christ has done on our behalf.

C. Aaron and His Descendents All died, But Christ Continues As High Priest Forever

Read Hebrews 7:23-24.

- From the appointment of Aaron until the time Christ died, there was a constant succession of priests. Because they were the descendants of Adam and just ordinary men, each priest eventually died and had to be replaced by another. How different with the Lord Jesus—He rose from the dead and lives forevermore; therefore, His work as high priest will never end (**Revelation 1:17-18**).

Read Hebrews 7:25.

- Jesus' intercession is based on His finished work, which He forever keeps before the Father's throne in

Heaven. The finished work of Christ is our solution for our EVERY need. Therefore, His presence in Heaven is proof that everything we need for life and godliness has already been provided and satisfies the heart of God (**2 Peter 1:3**). Therefore, His finished work is ever being applied to our lives.

D. Christ is Sinless and Only Had to Make One Offering

Read Hebrews 7:26.

- The Lord Jesus is superior to Aaron, for unlike him and all of his descendants, Christ is sinless.
- He is “*holy*.” The Lord Jesus is completely separate from sin and absolutely righteous before God.
- He is “*harmless*.” The Lord Jesus was blameless in all of His relationship with others.
- He is “*undefiled*.” The Lord Jesus remained absolutely pure even though He lived with sinful people on earth. Sunlight remains clean and uncontaminated even when it shines on filthy objects. Likewise, Christ remained perfectly pure throughout all His associations with sinful men.
- He is “*separate from sinners*.” No longer in this sinful world, the Lord Jesus is now set apart from sinners at God’s right hand.
- He is “*higher than the heavens*.” The Lord Jesus is exalted to a position greater than that of anyone who has lived in the past or will ever live in the future, either in Heaven or on earth (**Philippians 2:9-11**).
- There should have been no doubt left in the minds of these Hebrews about who was the greater of the two—Aaron or Christ. Nor should they have had any further question regarding which high priest was worthy of their full confidence.

Read Hebrews 7:27-28.

- Because all priests appointed under the law were sinners, they had to offer sacrifices continually for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people. But Jesus, being sinless, had no need to offer a sacrifice for Himself. Because His sacrifice fully paid for sin, it never needs to be repeated.

HEBREWS LESSON 8

A. The Son Is Superior to the Earthly Priests

Read Hebrews 8:1.

- The writer now summarizes what he has been endeavoring to prove: Christ, who is seated at God's right hand as the all-sufficient High Priest, has done everything necessary for sinners to be fully accepted by God.

Read Hebrews 8:2.

- The temple in Jerusalem where the priests offered animal sacrifices had been built by man. In contrast, the most holy place in Heaven where Christ entered was the work of God alone. Again, this emphasizes the importance of Christ's ministry.
- God's plan was that the earthly tabernacle and its inner room where Aaron entered once every year with the blood of animals should only be temporary, for it was a mere copy of the holy of holies in Heaven. Since Christ now lives there as the mediator of the New Covenant, He is obviously superior to Aaron, who under the Old Covenant, was high priest in the earthly tabernacle.

Read Hebrews 8:3.

- The high priest on earth presented various types of offerings and animal sacrifices to God on behalf of the people he represented. In the same way, it was necessary for our Great High Priest to offer something to God on our behalf, which was His own blood.

Read Hebrews 8:4.

- If the Lord Jesus had remained on earth, He could not have served as priest because God gave the priesthood to Aaron and his descendants from the tribe of Levi. The Lord Jesus was a member of the tribe of Judah and, as such, did not qualify to be an earthly priest.

Read Hebrews 8:5.

- When God gave His laws to Moses on Mount Sinai, He also revealed to him His plans for the tabernacle. God commanded Moses to make the tabernacle exactly according to the design he had been shown. God insisted on this because the earthly tabernacle and everything the priests did pictured what Christ would one day do in the actual holy of holies in Heaven.

B. The New Covenant Is Superior

Read Hebrews 8:6.

- The Second Covenant is superior to the first because it “*was established on better promises.*”
- When God made the first covenant with Israel, He promised to bless and accept them on one condition—that they obeyed His commandments (**Exodus 19:5**).
- Before Israel was given the law, it was already clear that the people could not be trusted to believe and obey God. They had doubted Him at the Red Sea when the Egyptian armies were behind them. They had complained in the wilderness when they had no food and water. At Sinai, they forgot about all their past failures (**Exodus 19:8**). Without realizing how sinful they were and the impossibility of pleasing God

by their own efforts, they foolishly claimed that they would faithfully obey all of God's commandments.

Read Hebrews 8:7.

- If the First Agreement had worked, there would have been no need for God to make a second.

Read Hebrews 8:8.

- Why did this original covenant with Israel fail? Because the promised blessings of God were dependent upon the perfect obedience of sinners who were incapable of obeying.

Read Hebrews 8:9.

- Because Israel failed to keep their part of the agreement which God made with them at Mount Sinai, He “*disregarded them.*”
- However, when God was ready to fulfill His plan, He sent the Lord Jesus to be the Deliverer. Because the nation of Israel rejected Jesus, God turned away from them. Eventually God would allow the Romans to attack Jerusalem and destroy the temple. Consequently, the Jews were scattered throughout many other lands. This punishment did not take place until a number of years after this book of Hebrews had been written, for the priests were still making offerings in the temple when Hebrews was written.
- Does this mean then that God has forgotten the Second Agreement He said He would make with His people? Has He finished His relationship with the descendants of Abraham as His chosen people? No. God will yet fulfill all He has promised to Israel.
- When the church is finally complete and the Lord Jesus takes us to Heaven, God will begin to work in

the lives of His people Israel, to bring them to repentance. After this, He will return in great power to set up His kingdom on earth and bring Israel into fellowship with Himself under the New Covenant (**Romans 1:1-2a; 25-27; Acts 15:14-18; Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7**).

Read Hebrews 8:10.

- After “*those days*,” that is, after the nation of Israel repents of its disobedience and rejection of the Savior, God will bring them into the blessings of the New Covenant. Notice in this verse how many times God said, “*I will*.” He emphasized what He would do. Unlike the Old Covenant which was dependent on Israel’s obedience, the New Covenant depends only on God and what He will do in the future when He restores Israel to her former position as His chosen people.

C. Israel Under the New Covenant

Read Hebrews 8:11-12.

- In these verses the writer lists the “*better promises*” of the New Agreement to which he had already made reference in verse 6.
- God’s laws will be written in their hearts. The laws given to Israel at Mount Sinai were written on two pieces of stone. When Israel turns to the Lord and lives under the New Agreement, God promised to put His laws “*in their minds*” and write them “*on their hearts*.” Because of Israel’s sinfulness, they were unable to obey the commands of the First Agreement. Therefore, when God makes His New Covenant with them, the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts, giving

them the desire and power to live in obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

D. All Israel Will Know the Lord

Read Hebrews 8:11.

- Under the Old Covenant, the Israelites were dependent upon the priests and prophets to teach them the will of God. When Israel is living under the New Agreement, they will all “*know the Lord*” because the Holy Spirit will teach them. Today, the Spirit indwells each of us. Through Him, we are sealed for all eternity, but He also indwells us for the purpose of leading us into truth. Jesus declared in **John 14:6** that He is the Truth. Therefore, the Spirit’s ministry is to lead us into Christ or to lead us into the appropriation of our position in and identification with Christ. The more we rest in our identification with Christ, the more we walk in the Spirit and the more conformed to the image of Christ we become (**John 16:13; 14:16; Romans 6:4-13; Galatians 5:16**).

E. Their Sins Will Be Completely Forgiven

Read Hebrews 8:12.

- The blood of animals offered under the Old Covenant could not pay for sins. But Christ’s offering of His blood has fully satisfied God. When the Jewish nation is living under the New Covenant, all their sins will be forgiven.
- Today, we can praise God because with the Lord Jesus’ blood, all of our sins have been paid for and fully forgiven (**Ephesians 1:6-7**).

F. The New Covenant Supersedes the Old Covenant

Read Hebrews 8:13.

- When Christ came and died for our sin, God introduced the New Covenant. By doing so, He declared that the Old Covenant had come to an end. How hopeless, then, would be the position of any of the readers of this book if they returned to what God had declared obsolete.

HEBREWS LESSON 9

A. The Earthly Tabernacle of the Old Covenant

- In Chapter 9, the writer contrasts the earthly tabernacle with the heavenly holy place. He also contrasts the yearly animal offerings with the once-for-all offering which Christ made of Himself. He began by reminding his readers of some particulars about the earthly tabernacle.

Read Hebrews 9:1.

- When the First Covenant was made, God told Moses how the priests and the Israelites were to worship Him in the earthly tabernacle which they were to build in the wilderness. The book of Leviticus records these instructions. Leviticus is one of the five books written by Moses.
- You will remember that a fence made of white linen panels supported by bronze posts surrounded the tabernacle. Just inside the curtained door was the brazen altar where the animals were slain and burned. Between the altar and the tabernacle stood a large, dish-like bronze container of water called the laver. Here the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle which was divided into two rooms. Estimations say that the tabernacle itself was about 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high.

Read Hebrews 9:2.

- The first room in the tabernacle was called the holy place. Every day the priests entered through the first curtain into this room. Inside were three pieces of furniture. On one side was the golden lampstand

which had seven branches, each with an oil-burning lamp. On the other side was the table of shew bread on which twelve fresh loaves of bread were placed every Sabbath day. Although not mentioned in Hebrews as being in this room, there was also the golden altar on which the priests burned incense morning and evening. The golden altar of incense stood in front of the beautiful curtain that divided the two rooms (**Leviticus 24:5-9; Exodus 30:1-7**).

Read Hebrews 9:3.

- Inside the second curtain was the inner room. Sometimes it was called the holiest of all, the holy of holies, or the most holy place.

Read Hebrews 9:4-5.

- The golden altar of incense stood in the first room the priests entered. However, in verse 4, the writer seems to be saying that it was in the inner room.
- The writer may have been referring to the censer, the container in which the priest carried burning coals from the altar of incense into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement. When inside the inner room, the high priest sprinkled incense on the burning coals in the censer. Once a year it was just as though the altar of incense had been moved into the holiest of all because the coals, incense, and censer connected with the altar of incense were taken inside the inner room (**Leviticus 16:1-2, 12-13**).

Read Numbers 17:1-11.

- Here in the Holy of Holies was “*the ark of the covenant.*” This was a large wooden chest covered with gold. Inside was “*the golden pot that contained*

manna,” the food which God miraculously provided for Israel during the forty years they wandered in the wilderness.

- ***“The rod of Aaron [...] had sprouted and put forth buds.”*** While Israel was wandering in the wilderness, some questioned whether Aaron and his family alone had been chosen by the Lord to serve as priests. So the Lord told Moses that a test would be made to prove once and for all who had this right. Moses was to collect one rod (or walking stick), from each leader of the twelve tribes of Israel. He was to write the name of each leader on his own particular rod. On the rod representing the tribe of Levi, Moses was to write Aaron’s name. Then he was to place the rods in the tabernacle. The Lord promised that as a sign to Israel, He would make the rod belonging to the man whom He had chosen to be high priest to sprout. The next day they saw that Aaron’s rod, which had been taken from an almond bush, had not only sprouted, but had also budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. The Lord commanded Moses to keep Aaron’s rod in the ark as a continual sign to Israel that Aaron had been chosen to be high priest (**Numbers 17**).
- ***“The tables of the covenant.”*** These were the two slabs of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 25:16; 40:20**).
- The gold lid of the ark was called the “mercy seat.” When the high priest sprinkled blood on and before the mercy seat once a year on the Day of Atonement, the Lord mercifully agreed to overlook Israel’s sins. God overlooked their sins because He was looking forward to the time when Christ would make full payment for all sin (**Romans 3:25**).
- On either side of the mercy seat stood two gold statues of cherubim. They stood facing each other with their wings spreading over the mercy seat. Their heads were bowed as though looking down on the mercy

seat. You will remember God assigned living cherubim to guard the tree of life after Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden. Whenever scripture mentions cherubim, God seems to be reminding man that He (God) is righteous and holy and that sinful man, apart from God's provision, cannot approach Him.

- Over the mercy seat between the cherubim was a bright shining light which showed that God was present in the holiest of all. This is probably the reason why the writer called them "cherubim of glory" (**Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 80:1**).
- The Jews called this bright light the Shekinah glory.

B. Under the First Covenant

Read Hebrews 9:6.

- Every day, the priests entered the first room called the Holy Place to attend to the lamps and to burn incense on the golden altar.

Read Hebrews 9:7.

- The high priest could only enter the second room on one special day of each year to sprinkle the blood of animals on and before the mercy seat. He did this on the Day of Atonement, offering the blood of animals first for himself and his family and then for the sins of the people of Israel (**Leviticus 16:11-16**).

Read Hebrews 9:8.

- The Holy Spirit was showing by this yearly ceremony that as long as "*the first tabernacle was still standing*," the way into the holy of holies (God's

presence) had not yet been opened for sinners to enter. The Lord Jesus opened the way when He gave His blood as the complete payment for sin. At that time, God ripped the curtain hanging in front of the most holy place in the temple from top to bottom. This signified that the perfect offering of the blood of the Lord Jesus had opened the way into His presence forever.

C. Offerings

Read Hebrews 9:9.

- God never intended for the tabernacle or the temple to continue forever. The tabernacle, its furniture, its priesthood, sacrifices, and rituals were only *“symbolic for the present time.”* That is, they were just pictures which pointed forward to Christ and His perfect offering. Animals sacrifices could never *“make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience.”* Although animal sacrifices were made for the Israelites year after year, the people continually felt guilty before God and had to continue offering sacrifices. Why was this so? They knew an animal’s blood was only a temporary covering and it could never pay for their sins.

Read Hebrews 9:10.

- The offerings, the commandments regarding what Israel could and could not eat, and the various Old Testament ceremonies in which people were washed with water to make them acceptable to worship or serve God in the tabernacle or temple were called “carnal ordinances.” That meant they had to do with making the worshipers outwardly acceptable to worship in the tabernacle or temple. Because none of these offerings really paid for sin, they could not make

the person acceptable to God. Therefore, these offerings were only to continue “*until the time of reformation*,” that is, the time when Christ would come and pay the full price for sin and thereby introduce the New Covenant. Jesus referred to this on the night He was betrayed (**Mark 14:22-24**).

D. Christ Offered Himself Once

Read Hebrews 9:11.

- Because of Christ, our great High Priest, we who are the children of God have already received all the “*good things to come*” (**Ephesians 1:3**).
- Our blessings are “in heavenly places in Christ” because He entered “*a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation*.” Christ’s work on our behalf did not take place in the earthly tabernacle or temple but in Heaven itself.

Read Hebrews 9:12.

- Year after year the high priest of Israel entered the most holy place of the tabernacle. Each time, he took the blood of animals, which could never pay for sins. But our High Priest offered blood that was of far greater value; He gave His own blood to God for our sins. Because God was fully satisfied with His offering, Christ was able to enter Heaven as our Great High Priest and sit down at the right hand of God. This signified that His work never needs to be repeated. Through Him, we have “*eternal redemption*.”
- Before the Lord Jesus saved us, we were like slaves bound with chains and condemned to death. But through the payment of His blood, we have been

completely delivered from sin's power and all the punishment we deserve.

Read Hebrews 9:24-28.

- The Lord Jesus has “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*” Since He did everything that was necessary for our complete forgiveness, no further sacrifices need to be made for sin. Christ did what Aaron and all other priests could not do—He provided a perfect sacrifice which fully paid for all sin.
- In verse 27 we read, “*it is appointed for men to die once.*” This refers to the fact that every human being will physically die one time. There are many other religions that believe in reincarnation, but clearly God's Word states that man will only die once.
- In these final verses, we have yet another contrast between the Old and New Covenants. The Old Agreement demanded perfection and condemned to death all who failed to obey the law (**Romans 3:19**). In contrast, we who are now enjoying the blessings of the New Covenant are no longer condemned but fully accepted because of Christ's death on our behalf. Furthermore, since we belong to Christ, He will return to take us to be with Him forever.
- When the Lord Jesus appears the second time, it will be “*apart from sin, for salvation.*” He is not coming to deal with the problem of sin again. He dealt with sin completely when He died on the cross as our perfect sacrifice. When He comes again, He will deliver us from this evil world and change our dying bodies so they will be like His sinless, perfect and everlasting body (**1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; 1 John 3:1-2**).

HEBREWS LESSON 10

A. The Law Was A Shadow of the New Covenant

Read Hebrews 10:1-3.

- Remember, the author of Hebrews was writing to Jewish Christians who heard the truth, were convinced of it, but were struggling with legalistic baggage from the old system under the law. So, the writer continues his comparison of the old and new covenants attempting to reveal the intended purpose of the Old Covenant.
- In verse 1, he writes that the law was simply a shadow of the New Covenant; even though it had its system of sacrifices and offerings, it had no power to make holy those who came to worship.
- Had it been able to make them holy, then there would have been a ceasing of the sacrifices. However, under that system, there was continual need to bring sacrifices for sin, which acted as a constant reminder of the sinfulness of man.

Read Hebrews 10:4-10.

- The reason why man could not be made holy through the old system and its sacrifices was because the blood of animals cannot take away sin.
- When Christ the Deliverer came into the world, He did not come with a system of offerings and sacrifices but with a body to do the will of God and become the sacrifice.
- The law was a system of offerings and sacrifices that could not take away sins, but Jesus came as the one true sacrifice that makes us holy.

Read Hebrews 10:11-12.

- Under the old system, the priests' work of offering sacrifices never ended, for those sacrifices could not take away sin. When Christ came and offered the one sacrifice that takes away sin once and for all, the penalty for all sin was paid. He then sat down at the right hand of God in heaven, for there is no longer a need for sacrifice.

Read Hebrews 10:13.

- Christ is still seated at God's right hand, waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool. A reference to His millennial reign when He will return and reign for a thousand years on earth.

Read Hebrews 10:14.

- All this is true and possible because His one sacrifice has made us holy before God for all eternity.

Read Hebrews 10:15-18.

- The writer states that we know these things are true; therefore, because the Holy Spirit is communicating to our hearts that it is so, the author then further compares the New Covenant with the old.

B. The Promises of the New Covenant

Read Hebrews 10:16.

- This verse is a quote from **Jeremiah 31:33**. This promise made to Israel in the days of Jeremiah has not yet been fulfilled, but it will be when the Lord Jesus returns to rule as King over the earth.

- Because Israel rejected the Lord Jesus and handed Him over to be crucified by the Romans, God has set them aside until the time comes to make this New Covenant with them. This does not mean that individual Jews will not be saved if they place their trust in the Lord Jesus as Savior.
- The first Covenant of Law commanded man to hear and obey God, but it did nothing to change his heart or give Him the power and desire to obey. Not only that, but the animal sacrifices offered under the old agreement could never pay for sin. In contrast, God promised in the new covenant that He would write the law on the hearts and minds of His people so they would be able to live in obedience to His will.
- When a person does something against us, we usually remember for a long time what they have done. But God is not like us. He promised to forget as well as forgive our sins. Since God will never remember our sins, we must rest in His forgiveness.
- God's Word declares that we are a new creation in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). It's only as we, by faith, walk in and appropriate our identification with Christ that it will be possible to forget those things which are behind and press forward toward the mark of the high calling of God (**Romans 8:33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 3:10-15**).
- Since Christ gave an acceptable offering to God, any animal sacrifices made after His death were unacceptable to God and totally unnecessary. This verse is the writer's conclusion to all arguments. Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, is superior to all who came before Him, and the New Agreement has replaced the old.

C. The Writer's Exhortation

Read Hebrews 10:19-22.

- Under the Old Covenant, only the high priest could enter one day of each year into the most holy place on earth. No one else dared come near to God. As Israel's representative, the high priest entered God's presence year after year carrying the blood of animals on behalf of the Israelites. But now every believer may enter by faith directly into God's presence in Heaven because of the blood of the Lord Jesus.
- This is the difference between law and grace. Law is man working to please God, but grace is God working for man—not as if man is in authority over God but that God has done all that was necessary for man to become acceptable to God.
- Christ has opened for us a “new way to God.” Believers no longer approach God in the Old Testament way as the Jews did—through a priest who offered the blood of animals in an earthly tabernacle or temple.
- This new way is also called a “living way.” The old way could never bring eternal life, because the offerings commanded in the Old Testament could never make the offerors acceptable to God. By His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus opened a “living way,” the way of eternal life (**Romans 6:23**).
- Christians come to God “*through the veil, that is, His flesh*.” The body of the Lord Jesus is likened to the veil that divided the two rooms in the tabernacle and in the temple. Just as the curtain that hung between the two rooms in the tabernacle and in the temple hid the bright light signifying God's presence in the most holy place, so Jesus' body here on earth covered the God-part of Him.
- Only once during His life on earth did the glory of God shine out through the veil, His human body (**Mark 9:2-3**).

- When Jesus cried out on the cross, “***It is finished,***” God ripped the veil in the temple from top to bottom. This was His sign to us that, through Jesus’ body which was broken on the cross, a new and living way has been opened for man to enter into God’s presence in Heaven. As wonderful as the sinless life of the Lord Jesus was, it could not gain us access to God. Jesus had to die; His body had to be broken so a way could be opened for sinners to enter into God’s presence.
- When God promised to pass over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt, He told them not only to choose a perfect lamb, but also to kill it. Just as the lamb had to die if the firstborn child was to be saved, so Christ’s body must be broken and He must die if a way back to God was to be opened for sinners. We are encouraged to remember this when we eat bread at the Lord’s Supper. When we break the bread, it pictures the body of the Lord Jesus which was broken for us. Because of His broken body, we who believe are welcomed into God’s presence in Heaven (**1 Corinthians 11:23-24**).
- Still appealing to believers and others who were walking in carnality, the writer said, “***let us draw near***” to God.
- How foolish for anyone to think they can escape God’s judgment if they were to return to dependence on earthly priests. The sacrifices they offered could never open the way for anyone to come near to God.
- We, too, should be encouraged by this verse; our Heavenly Father loves us and has provided this way for believers to approach Him through the Lord Jesus so that we may continually draw near.
- So how can we draw near to God? We draw near to Him through faith in our identification with Christ: we have been crucified, buried, and raised to new life in Christ. Not only that, we are now also positionally

seated with Christ at God's right hand in heaven—positionally at God's right hand while conditionally still in this earthly body. As we by faith rest in and appropriate our position, it will become more our experience in daily life (**Colossians 3:1-3**).

- The finished work of Christ is the reason for which we can come with a sincere heart. Our acceptance is no longer based on our unfaithful effort to keep the law. It is the full assurance of faith that gives a sincere heart—faith in the finished work of Christ.
- This is how we draw near to God through faith. We draw near to God exactly the same way that we first came to Him: by faith. Faith in Christ's death for us and now faith in our death and resurrection with Him (**Colossians 2:6**).
- We are also to draw near to God “*having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*” Though the high priest entered the holiest of all in the tabernacle year after year to sprinkle the blood of animals on and before the mercy seat, those offerings could never pay for sin. This meant that the Israelites were continually conscious of the guilt of their sin before God.
- In contrast, Jesus' one offering for sins has forever satisfied God. Because our hearts have been “sprinkled” with Jesus' blood, we no longer have an “evil conscience” before God. Having a guilty conscience will cause us to have doubts and result in an insincere heart. To continue feeling guilty is to walk in unbelief, not resting in the blood of Christ (**Romans 8:1, 31-39; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 1:7-9**).
- We approach Him believing that He has completely forgiven and forgotten all of our sins because of Jesus' blood.
- “*Let us draw near [...] having [...] our bodies washed with pure water.*” This implies that we are born again by the Word of God through the work of

the Holy Spirit. It refers to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit at salvation when He placed us into Christ (**John 3:5; Titus 3:5**).

- We who are born again have been “washed” all over. Consider how dirty our feet get when we walk barefoot. They do get dirty and must be washed. In the same way, believers become “soiled by sin” and need to be constantly “washed.” Every day as we live in this sinful world which is under Satan’s control and walk in the flesh, our thoughts and actions are displeasing to God. Therefore, we need our minds and lives to be constantly cleansed by the Word of God.
- Many are confused regarding this washing and think they must do it themselves through Bible reading and prayer; however, it is a ministry of the Spirit in our lives. It is He who is leading us into truth (**John 16**). He is constantly working in our lives bringing us to the end of ourselves, thereby preparing us to rest in the truth of our identification with Christ. That is the daily washing that needs to take place in our lives—a daily resting in the truth of the finished work of Christ.
- This need for daily cleansing reminds us of the laver which was placed between the brazen altar and the first room in the tabernacle. It was there that the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the holy place. If they had not done so, they would not have been acceptable to God (**Exodus 30:18-21**).
- In a similar way, it is only as we appropriate our identification with Christ and walk in the Spirit that we become free from the daily reign and control of the flesh and thereby live lives that are pleasing to the Lord.

D. Continue Steadfastly In Our Confession of Faith in Christ

Read Hebrews 10:23.

- God's Word tells us we have been made completely acceptable to Him, and we can now boldly enter into His presence with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.
- Sometimes in the flesh we don't feel like these things are true, but by faith, we will hold fast to that hope—not because of feelings but because the One who has made these promises is faithful.

E. Encourage Other Believers

Read Hebrews 10:24.

- As we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, we will look for every opportunity to urge fellow believers to show forth God's love by their good works. As we walk in the Spirit and manifest the life of Christ, others will be provoked to good works (**Galatians 5:16; 22-23**).
- If we are to help others walk in love and do good works, it must begin with an understanding of what it means to walk in the Spirit. Resting in the finished work of Christ and our identification with it will enable us to walk in the Spirit; it is not simply training people to obey.

F. Continue To Meet Regularly With God's Children

Read Hebrews 10:25.

- The writer was concerned about people who weren't gathering with other believers on a regular basis.

- In the flesh, all that we do is for ourselves. Therefore, if, for whatever reason, we don't enjoy meeting with people, then we will avoid it.
- Keep in mind that individualistic attitudes are increasing today, but God has not designed Christians to function independent of one another. We were designed to need and encourage one another. To withdraw from the body of Christ is to invite disaster.

HEBREWS

LESSON 11

A. Solemn Warnings

Read Hebrews 10:26.

- To understand this verse, it might be good to re-read **Hebrews 10:23-26**.
- The writer gives a warning: remain connected to the church, and urge one another to trust, rest, and depend on God. Especially now as “*the day is approaching*,” that is, the time when Christ will return to this earth and God’s judgment will fall on unbelievers.
- A similar warning was given earlier in this letter (**Hebrews 2:1-3**).
- If these to whom the author was writing were to return to the temple and its sacrifices, they must realize that any future offerings they would make in the temple for their sins would be unacceptable to God. If they rejected Christ, “*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*.” All that would lie ahead would be God’s terrible judgment.
- If after understanding (but not embracing) the gospel message, someone rejects the sacrifice of Christ, that person cannot be saved because God has not provided any other name under heaven for salvation (**Acts 4:12**).

Read Hebrews 10:27.

- For those who have rejected Christ, the only future they can look forward to is God’s judgment, namely, the raging fire that will consume God’s enemies. But praise God, His anger will never fall on any of His children because it has already been poured out on

- Christ, our substitute (**Romans 5:10; 8:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10; John 5:24; Isaiah 53:4-6**).
- John the Baptist told his followers that the “wheat,” (the believers) will be gathered into the Lord’s granary, but the “chaff,” (the unsaved), will be burned with unquenchable fire (**Matthew 3:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**).

Read Hebrews 10:28-29.

- God commanded that any Israelite who rejected the First Agreement of Law by turning away from Him to worship other gods was to be stoned to death (**Deuteronomy 17:2-5**).
- But God’s punishment would be far greater on the Jew, who after being taught that Jesus was indeed the Christ, rejected Him. He would be guilty of having “*trampled the Son of God underfoot*.” In doing so, he would have “*counted the blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified a common thing*.” He would have come to the conclusion that the precious blood of Jesus on which the Second Covenant depends was of no more value than the blood of any other ordinary, sinful human being.
- Although the verse states, “*the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified*,” we should not conclude that all are saved. This is referring to the type of individual who is described in **Luke 8:13**.
- If any of these people were to reject Christ and God’s salvation through Him, they would also have “*insulted the Spirit of grace*.” The Holy Spirit had illuminated their minds concerning their sinfulness and led them to appreciate personally what Christ had done on their behalf, and then they reject it, it would be as if they were calling the Holy Spirit a liar.

Read Hebrews 10:30.

- God never says to His children, “I will recompense,” or repay you for your sins. Since God is just and faithful to His promises, He will not require His true children to pay for their sins because Jesus has already paid for them all (**Romans 6:23; Psalm 103:8-14; Romans 8:31-39; 1 John 1:9**).
- The quote, “*the Lord God will judge His people*,” is from **Deuteronomy 32:35-36**. This is not speaking of believers in Christ, but of Israel, God’s chosen people. Even in the New Testament, we find the nation of Israel, who had rejected Christ, referred to as God’s people (**Romans 11:1-2**).

Read Hebrews 10:31.

- This terrible warning is directed to the people described in verses 26-29. In contrast, God’s children are held in the loving hands of Christ their Savior and God their Father. There is no danger that believers will ever “*fall into the hands of the living God*,” the Judge of sinners (**John 10:27-29; 5:24**).
- God doesn’t use the fear of judgment to motivate believers to live for Him. Instead, He constantly reminds us of His great goodness, love, and all the spiritual blessings He has provided for us in Christ (**Romans 2:4; Romans 8:14-15; 31-32; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 John 4:16-19**).
- These warnings of judgment in Chapter 10 should never disturb children of God. We should never live in fear of God’s wrath, for it will not come on believers in Christ (**1 Thessalonians 5:8-11**).

B. Encouragement Not To Turn Back

Read Hebrews 10:32-34.

- While terrible punishment awaits those who scorn the gospel, this passage acknowledges that these readers are not like that. After a strong warning, the readers are encouraged that their past actions demonstrate their genuine faith. The memory of that closeness and their desire to serve Him would sustain them during difficult days.
- These believers had been publicly exposed to insult and persecution and confiscation of their property. They had further risked their reputation by visiting those in prison for their faith.

Read Hebrews 10:35-37.

- In the early days of their faith, these believers had great confidence, and this great confidence often caused them great hardship. Because they were unable to escape the hardship, they needed patience and endurance.
- As we read the final verses of Hebrews 10, it will become even clearer that doing the will of God was referring to trusting and resting and depending on Christ for all things.

C. The Necessity of Faith For Salvation

Read Hebrews 10:38.

- Endurance is not the way to earn salvation—instead, it is the by-product of the Christ-life.

- One of the promises that believers will receive is the return of Christ. This second coming of Christ and all the blessings that come with Him outweigh any discomfort faced by believers in this life.
- The “just,” the justified ones, those who have been declared righteous by faith in Christ shall live by faith; they will persevere to the end.
- However, if through fear of persecution any of these people were to “draw back” in unbelief, God would have “no pleasure in him.”

Read Hebrews 10:39.

- The writer made it clear that he and all others who believed were not included with “*those who draw back to perdition*,” that is, to complete destruction. Those who turn away, blatantly denying Christ, show they never belonged to Him and will therefore be eternally punished by God (**1 John 2:19, 22-23**).

HEBREWS LESSON 12

A. Introduction

- In Hebrews 11 the writer focuses on faith. He begins by explaining what faith is and shows its absolute necessity if a person is to please God. He goes on to remind his readers of some well-known Old Testament folks who, having believed God, were accepted by Him.

B. Faith Defined

Read Hebrews 11:1.

- This verse is God's definition of "faith."
- Biblical faith is being assured that God will do what He has promised in His Word.
- In a court room, evidence is always based on facts. What are the facts our faith is based on? God's Word. Therefore, we could paraphrase this verse in this way: ***"Faith standing on the facts of God's Word gives evidence of things not seen."***

Read Hebrews 11:2.

- ***"The elders"*** referred to here are Jewish forefathers who believed God and were accepted by Him. Some are mentioned later in this chapter.

Read Hebrews 11:3.

- By faith we know that when the Almighty God spoke, the whole universe was created out of nothing. How can we be so certain this is what happened? Because our confidence is not on what we think or on what

others say but solely on God's Word. He alone was there in the beginning and He has told us exactly how He created everything (**Psalm 33:6-9**).

C. Abel's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:4.

- We now come to the first person mentioned in this chapter, Abel, who through faith in God's Word was accepted by God. Abel was born a sinner. He was born unable to believe and please God until God worked in his heart through His Word (**Romans 10:17**).
- No one can have faith unless he has heard the Word of God (**Romans 10:13-14**). Therefore, we can rightly conclude that the reason Abel brought the correct offering was because he believed what God had revealed to be the only way for man to come to Him. With his confidence in what God had said, Abel approached God and was accepted by Him as a perfectly righteous man. He believed God's promise.
- On the other hand, Cain was rejected because he refused to believe God and bring the offering He had commanded. So we can see that Abel and Cain were just like the two different people spoken of in **Hebrews 4:2**.
- When Hebrews was written, Abel had already been dead for a long time, but "*he being dead still speaks.*" Through the things written about him in Genesis and here in Hebrews, it was just as though he himself were there testifying to these Jewish readers of his faith and encouraging them to follow his example.
- Abel's life of faith continues to speak even to us as we read about him. In the same way, each of our lives are either setting an example of faith in God or of unbelief. Even after we are dead, how we have lived

will continue speaking to our families and acquaintances, either influencing them to believe God's Word or to doubt and possibly reject it.

D. Enoch's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:5.

- As we look at Enoch's faith, an interesting scripture to ponder is **Jude 14 and 15**.
- Enoch was a righteous man who did not experience death. This passage states that God took him away (literally, God "translated" him). Enoch was translated from earthly life to heavenly life; he is one of two Old Testament characters who never died (the other being Elijah, **2 Kings 2:11-12**). Enoch was a righteous man who was commended as one who pleased God, and what pleased God was his faith.

E. The Necessity of Faith

Read Hebrews 11:6.

- The people to whom Hebrews was written had lost their possessions because of their association with Christians. Even though they had suffered much, without faith, they could never please God.
- Those who come to God must believe two things. First, that "He is," that God really does exist just as He has revealed Himself down through history and in His Word; second, those who approach God must have the assurance that God will do what He has promised.

F. Noah's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:7.

- Noah believed when God warned him about “*things not yet seen.*” It had never rained on earth before Noah’s time, let alone a world-wide flood (**Genesis 2:5; 6:13, 17**).
- Noah’s faith “*condemned the world,*” for they had no excuse for not believing God as Noah had. The people in Noah’s time had heard God’s warnings through Noah and the Holy Spirit had spoken to them, but they refused to listen (**Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:20**).
- Noah “*became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*” Noah was justified by faith. Although a sinner like everyone else, Noah believed God, and God in His grace accepted him as though he were a righteous man (**Genesis 6:8-9; Romans 4:4-5**).

G. Abraham’s and Sarah’s Faith

Read Hebrews 11:8.

- Can you imagine what it would be like to leave your home and all your relatives and set out for another country? This could be very difficult. But what if you did not even know where you were going? That would be even more difficult, and this is what Abraham did; he believed God and did not waver in unbelief.

Read Hebrews 11:9.

- Although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in Canaan, they did not own land on which they could settle. They lived in tents and moved from place to place. However, they were “*heirs [...] of the same promise.*” God had promised that in His own time, He would give the land in which they roamed to their descendants as a permanent possession. Although

Abraham was aware that he himself would never own the land of Canaan, he did not become discouraged. Why? Because his hope and ambitions were not set on an earthly home. He was looking forward to the wonderful, eternal place prepared by God in Heaven for all believers.

Read Hebrews 11:10-11.

- Although Sara laughed in unbelief when she first heard that she, a ninety-year-old woman, would have a child, she afterwards realized how wrong she had been. So, believing God to be faithful, she knew that He would do the impossible—enable her to conceive and give birth to a son (**Genesis 18:1-2; 9-15**).

Read Hebrews 11:12.

- Even though Abraham, at his age, was like a “dead” man regarding his own natural ability to father a son, because he believed God, his descendants cannot now be numbered (**Romans 4:19-22; Genesis 22:17**).
- Not only are the Jews the children of Abraham, so also are all who have faith in God as he did (**Galatians 3:8-9**).
- The children of Abraham whom God promised would be like “*the stars of the sky in multitude*” may refer to Abraham’s spiritual children, which would be all believers. The phrase “*innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore*” may refer to his natural descendants, the Jews.

Read Hebrews 11:13-14.

- Though these Old Testament believers did not see the fulfillment of God’s promises, they continued to believe God. Like them, we must live by faith as well.

- We cannot see our Heavenly Father to whom we pray. Neither can we see the Lord Jesus in whom we trust for our salvation, nor the Holy Spirit who lives within us. None of us have ever seen Heaven, our future home. Yet we, like the Old Testament saints, have God's Word on which we can rely. In fact, we have even greater reason to believe God than they did. The Old Testament saints only had part of God's Word, whereas we have the completed scriptures.
- Because there are so many circumstances we go through during this life which we don't fully understand, we must live by faith. It may even seem at times that God isn't fulfilling the promises He has made to us in His Word. For example, God has promised to supply our needs (**Philippians 4:19**). Yet sometimes it might seem that He does not supply what we consider as needs. Our loved ones might be taken from us even when from our point of view, we desperately need them. Or we might become sick when we think we need to be healthy. Many of God's children face difficult situations like these during their lifetime. However, like the people we are reading about in Hebrews, we, too, must look beyond the present difficulties and fix our eyes on the future when all God's promises will be fulfilled (**2 Corinthians 4:17-18**).

Read Hebrews 11:15-16.

- If Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob had been looking only for an earthly country to call their own, then they could have returned to the land from which God had originally called Abraham. Back in their own country, they could have lived with relatives and obtained land they would call their own. But they never turned back in unbelief. Why? Because their

- greatest desire was not for earthly possessions but to live with God forever in Heaven.
- Because these people looked forward to their new Heavenly home, “*God is not ashamed to be called their God*” (Exodus 3:6), and “*He has prepared a city for them*” (John 14:2).

Read Hebrews 11:17-18.

- When God commanded Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice, he was faced with a great dilemma. God had promised Abraham that through Isaac He would give him innumerable descendants. How would God do this if Isaac were dead? Being certain that God would not go back on His promise, Abraham concluded that even if he killed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead. Abraham trusted God, even though prior to this time, no one had ever been raised from the dead.

Read Hebrews 11:19.

- Abraham was so determined in his mind to obey God’s command that when God saved Isaac by providing a ram as a substitute for Abraham, it was as though Isaac had truly died and been raised by God from the dead.

H. Isaac’s Faith

Read Hebrews 11:20.

- During his lifetime, Isaac did not see the fulfillment of God’s promises which were first given to his father Abraham and then passed on to him. But being firmly convinced that God would fulfill everything He had

promised, he pronounced the future blessings of God on his two sons before he died.

I. Jacob's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:21.

- Jacob also died before God's promises, which were passed down to him from his grandfather Abraham, were fulfilled. Nonetheless, he was persuaded that all of God's words would come to pass, including the return of his people to Canaan. Therefore, Jacob worshiped God and spoke of the future blessing of Joseph's two sons.

J. Joseph's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:22.

- Like his father Jacob, Joseph died in Egypt before God took the nation of Israel back to their own land. But Joseph had no doubt that God would do what He had told his great grandfather Abraham, then confirmed to his grandfather Isaac, and passed on to his father Jacob.

K. Moses' and His Parent's Faith

Read Hebrews 11:23.

- Before Moses' birth, the king of Egypt had made a decree that all male babies were to be killed. But because Moses' parents believed their son was a gift from God, they trusted in Him and hid their baby boy (**Exodus 1**).

Read Hebrews 11:24-25.

- Because Moses believed the Israelite people had been chosen by God and He would fulfill all His promises concerning them, Moses refused to settle down to a life of luxury and sin he could have enjoyed in the king's palace. He chose instead to be identified with his own people, though they were only despised slaves at that time.

Read Hebrews 11:26.

- Moses suffered many things because he was an Israelite, the nation through whom Christ would ultimately come into the world. Yet he reckoned that his reward would be worth far more than all the riches he could have enjoyed as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He knew the wealth of Egypt would only last for the short span of his life, whereas his reward from God would last forever.

Read Hebrews 11:27.

- When Moses left Egypt the first time, he was afraid of what the king might do to him because he had killed one of his servants. But when he returned as God's messenger to command Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, he no longer feared the king, for he had learned to depend on His God, the Almighty and Invisible One (**Exodus 2:12-15**).

Read Hebrews 11:28.

- God's warning had been given that all the firstborn in Egypt would die, but Moses trusted God when He said, "***When I see the blood, I will pass over you.***" Being confident that God would keep His promise,

Moses instructed each family to kill a lamb, place the blood on the door posts and over the doors of their houses, and eat the lamb in preparation for their departure the next morning **Exodus 12:12-13**).

L. Israel's Faith At the Red Sea

Read Hebrews 11:29.

- When Israel first reached the Red Sea, they doubted and complained. However, when God gave the promise, “*stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,*” they looked to Him for deliverance and walked by faith through the path He opened up through the sea (**Exodus 14:10-22**).
- In the remainder of Hebrews 11, the writer mentions many more Old Testament men and women who, like those we have already studied, believed God in the midst of terrible suffering and death.

HEBREWS LESSON 13

A. Follow the Example

Read Hebrews 12:1.

- The “*great cloud of witnesses*” in this verse points back to the people mentioned in Chapter 11 who lived by faith.
- In the writer’s mind, these people were a great crowd who, having completed their life-race, were now encouraging others who were running their race.
- Please keep in mind that this does not mean believers in Heaven are actually looking down watching Christians on earth.
- Just as the shouts and cheers of the crowds of spectators at the games in Greece encouraged weary runners to keep going, so the example of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and all the others who trusted God when faced with hardship and death should have encouraged the readers never to give up and to continue trusting God.
- We can look back on their lives in God’s Word and see how God proved Himself faithful over and over in their lives. This should encourage us that God, who does not change, will be just as faithful in our lives as well.
- Those to whom this letter was written have now completed their race, and we are currently the ones who are running. Therefore, we, too, should be encouraged as we consider the lives of all who went before us trusting God to supply their needs (**Hebrews 11:13-16**).
- Since he has likened his readers to people running a race, he calls on all of us to “*lay aside every weight*,”

- every fleshly stronghold that could hinder us from living each moment by faith in the promises of God.
- Back in the days when this letter was written, those who competed in a race exercised daily and ate healthy food so they would not lose the race by being overweight or out of shape.
 - Let's apply these thoughts to our own spiritual lives. What could be some of the extra "weight" that is impeding us in living by faith? There are many different kinds of sins we can consider and know are hindering our walk. But the source of all sin is our flesh and we know God has provided all that we need to no longer walk in the flesh.
 - Besides being sure they are not overweight, runners had to be aware of another hindrance if they were to be winners. Before beginning the race, they removed any clothing that would cause them to slacken their speed. The long robes they commonly wore would tangle around their legs and trip them up if they tried to run.
 - The writer seemed to have this physical picture in mind when he told his readers to rid themselves of "***the sin which so easily ensnares us.***"
 - Though any sin in our lives will trip us up in our walk with Christ, it seems the particular sin the writer was referring to in this scripture is the sin of unbelief.
 - Truth is the foundation for our sanctification. We can do many "spiritually" looking things without appropriating truth, but we cannot truly walk in the Spirit, manifesting the life of Christ, without doing so.
 - In the last part of verse one, we read "***let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.***" Because the Christian race has been "set before us" by God Himself will not be finished until the Lord returns or until He takes us through physical death, we must run life's race "with endurance," or with perseverance. In spite of the physical trials, problems of life,

temptation to sin, and persecution from unbelievers that we face every day on our journey to Heaven, we must persist in faith, trusting God and believing His Word in every situation (**2 Timothy 4:6-7**).

- How can we endure or persevere? How can we run with patience? The next verse answers this question.

B. Fix Your Eyes On Jesus

Read Hebrews 12:2.

- If we are going to live our daily lives by faith in spite of temptations and problems, then there is but one way—by “*looking unto Jesus*.” Of course, we can’t physically “see” Jesus, but we are to trust, rest, depend, and abide in Him.
- While all other people, including those mentioned in Chapter 11, failed at some point to believe God, Jesus never failed. His race began when He took on human form as a baby in Bethlehem, and He continued to trust in God through the 33 years He lived on earth. He trusted in God’s promises recorded in the Old Testament; especially those promises relating to His own life and ministry. Whenever Jesus was tempted by Satan or faced a problem in life, He quoted God’s Word (**Matthew 4**). When He knew He was soon to die on the cross, He strengthened Himself by remembering those scriptures in which His Father promised He would raise the Savior from the dead (**Hebrews 5:7; Psalm 22:1-21**).
- Therefore, Jesus is not only the “author,” that is, our creator, our chief leader, or very best example in the life of faith, but He is also the “*finisher of our faith*.” He never gave in for one moment to unbelief. From His birth to His ascension, He believed God and so completed the “race” God placed before Him. At salvation we were placed into Christ. His life has

become our life and now we must keep “*looking unto Jesus*” and our identification with Him (1 Peter 2:21).

- Verse 2 states that it was because of the “*joy that was set before Him*” that Jesus “*endured the cross, despising the shame.*”
- What was the “joy that was set before” the Lord Jesus that enabled Him to remain steadfast in spite of the terrible suffering of crucifixion and the shame of being hung between two criminals? His first great joy was to please and glorify His Father. Besides this, there was the joy of knowing He would return to be seated “*at the right hand of the throne of God.*” Furthermore, there was the joy of knowing that by His death He would save His people from their sins and they would live with Him forever (John 17:4, 9-10, 19-20).

Read Hebrews 12:3.

- So that his readers would not grow discouraged and give up under persecution, the writer to the Hebrews encouraged them to look at their persecution in light of the sufferings of Christ. Regardless of what they had been through, they had not yet faced dying on a cross.

Read Hebrews 12:4.

- The more we walk in the Spirit and appropriate all that Christ has done for us, the more the Spirit will make Christ the object of our hearts, for the Spirit’s ministry is to point us to Christ. The more that Christ becomes the object of our hearts, the less we’ll be discouraged by our difficult circumstances.

C. Discipline and Training

Read Hebrews 12:5-6.

- These verses are a quote from **Proverbs 3:11-12**. Here we have yet another reason why we should not be unbelieving, doubting God's love and power, or give up when we suffer persecution, experience trials, sickness, or go through times of sorrow. We must remember that nothing happens by chance to the children of God. Our Father has a very definite purpose for all He permits in our lives. Trials are His way of training us to walk by faith and the outcome is a deeper relationship with Him. He uses difficulties to reveal those areas where we walk in the flesh and to turn us back to Himself in repentance and faith. When we are without problems and everything seems to be going well, it is very easy to become self-satisfied and careless in the way we think and live. But when trouble comes, we realize afresh how terribly weak and sinful we are and how dependent we are on the Lord for all our needs.
- How do we react when we are wrongfully accused? Do we continue to walk in the Spirit and manifest the life of Christ, or do we walk in the flesh and manifest its sinful characteristics?
- When we read of God chastening His children, we must not think that this is speaking of God punishing us for our sins. Suffering and sickness in the lives of God's children are not punishment for sin. There is but one punishment for sin and that is the death which the Lord Jesus paid, once for all, when He died on the cross. Therefore, God does not and cannot punish His children for their sins (**Romans 8:1; 31-35**).
- This doesn't mean that if we disobey the Lord, He will not allow us to experience the consequences of our sin.

- Although we all find it hard when the Lord permits difficulties in our lives, we should never forget that His discipline is not because He hates us but because He loves us. He knows if He allows sin to remain in our lives, it will keep us from that deep, intimate, abiding relationship with Him.
- What do we do when our child gets a thorn in his foot? We remove it. In order to remove the thorn, we may have to cut deeply, which hurts the child. Do we enjoy seeing him cry? No. But in spite of his protests, we continue on until the thorn is removed because we know that if the thorn remains, his foot will continue to hurt. In a similar way, the Lord must cut the thorns out of our lives in order to enable us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit. He does not enjoy seeing us in pain, but He knows that if there is no pain, there will be no hope of us ever becoming free from the reign of our flesh and go on to experience the abundant life that is already ours in Christ.

Read Hebrews 12:7-8.

- It's the discipline of perfection that the writer is bringing to our attention.
- God trains those who, by placing their faith in the Lord Jesus as Savior, have become "sons" (**Galatians 4:4-7**).
- Those who merely profess to be Christians but have not been born again are "not sons." He does not discipline or train those who are not His children.

Read Hebrews 12:9.

- Although our parents were not perfect in the way they raised us, we still appreciate how they taught us when we were young. If we respect them, imperfect though they were, how much more should we appreciate our

Heavenly Father who, because He is perfect, knows exactly what we need and always treats us justly and correctly. God's purpose in all things that He allows in our lives is to conform us to the image of Christ and to take us to a deeper level of relationship and intimacy with Himself. Our problem comes from doubting His goodness because we don't know Him. To the degree that we don't know Him, we will trust in other things (**Romans 5:1-5**).

- God is referred to as the “*Father of spirits*.” Our human bodies were fathered and mothered by our parents, whereas the life we now have in the spirit was received from God our Father (**John 1:12-13**).
- Before we believed, our human spirit was dead, separated from God and without the life of God. But when He saved us, the Holy Spirit came to indwell our human spirit and brought it to life. It was as though He raised us from the dead by giving us life in our spirit (**Ephesians 2:5**).
- It is by yielding ourselves to the Father's discipline of perfection that we really “live.” This doesn't mean we receive eternal life by yielding to our Father's training or that we lost the life God has given us when we don't.
- What it means is that we will only be able to enjoy the new life He has given us through His Son and be able to live for His honor and glory if we, by faith, yield to Him. This is made clear in the next verse.

Read Hebrews 12:10-11.

- God’s purpose is to use the hard times in our lives to teach and mold us so we will be “*partakers of His holiness*.” He does this by teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit. The more He shows us our flesh the more we will hate it and be willing to reckon it dead and reckon ourselves alive in Christ (**Romans 8:28-29**).

D. Don’t Be Discouraged; Be An Example

Read Hebrews 12:12-13.

- It was important for these folks that the difficulties of life not discourage them as they walked in the flesh; but by walking in the Spirit, they were made strong in the Lord. To remain in the flesh would leave a poor testimony to others who were “lame” (weak in their faith).
- When we are facing difficulties, we should bear in mind that others are watching how we respond and that the Lord has placed us in this situation, not only for our own growth and maturity, but also to give us the opportunity to model the Christ-life for others. But if we doubt God and complain, then others will probably follow our example when they are faced with hard times. If we stand firm in our trials, and trust our Father to the end, our lives will challenge others to trust God, just as the lives of the Old Testament saints do for us.

HEBREWS

LESSON 14

A. Exhortation To Holy Living

- In this last chapter of the book of Hebrews, the writer urges his readers to live holy lives. The first seventeen verses contain many practical commands which are designed to guide individuals and the collective assembly of believers. We must always remember that this will only be possible as we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Read Hebrews 13:1.

- Since all of God's children are members of one family with God as our Heavenly Father, we should love one another as brothers and sisters. How easy it is to forget this when a fellow Christian offends us by actions or speech.
- In the next two verses, very practical ways are given by which we can show our love for the members of God's family.

Read Hebrews 13:2.

- The first suggestion is to show hospitality. In **Genesis 18:1-16**, we have the story of Abraham welcoming men into his home; later he realized they were God's angels. In fact, one of them was the Lord Himself appearing in the form of a man even before He was born into this world (**Genesis 18:1-16**).
- Whether we discover that we have shown hospitality to angels or not is unimportant. What is important is that we show love for and hospitality to God's children. We should accept them as we would a member of our own family.

- We can only love and accept people as we walk in the Spirit; in the flesh, we care more for ourselves.

Read Hebrews 13:3.

- During the time when Hebrews was written, many of God's children were fleeing from persecution and in need of homes where they could find shelter and food. Others were imprisoned and were in need of food and encouragement. Here were two practical ways in which these Hebrew believers could continue showing brotherly love; they could host believers who came to their town, and they could visit those who were imprisoned. What are some practical ways in which we can show love to one another and to our brothers and sisters in other places?

B. Live In Purity

Read Hebrews 13:4.

- It was God Himself who created human beings male and female, and it was God who planned from the beginning that they should marry. Therefore, only sexual relations between married couples are acceptable to God. All other sexual relationships are forbidden by Him.
- In the flesh, we often become discontent with our spouse and think that a relationship with another man or woman will be different, as they appear to be more desirable. The fact is that our flesh will never be satisfied with anyone. Our only hope for contentment in marriage and faithfully fulfilling our role as spouse which God intends for us is to walk in the Spirit (**Ephesians 5:1-8**).

C. Be Content

Read Hebrews 13:5-6.

- In the flesh, the heart of man is never satisfied. The things we think will fulfill us today will cause us to become discontent tomorrow. Only as we walk in the Spirit with Christ as the object of our heart will we be able to experience true contentment (**2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 5:9-10; Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Timothy 6:5-12**).

D. Follow Godly Leadership

Read Hebrews 13:7-8.

- Believers are encouraged to remember and follow the example of church leaders who teach, believe, and live by God's Word. What they teach and how they live should never be forgotten because God's Word remains unchanged. What he said to the church in its beginnings is what He says to the church today. His commands and promises to His people never change. They are the same for every generation and all Christians, regardless of their geographical location, language, or culture. Therefore, let us beware lest we are fooled by the suggestion that the teachings of the Bible are old fashioned or that they do not apply to us. The Lord Jesus does not change nor does His Word (**Matthew 28:18-20; 24:35**)
- What is needed in the church is for men and women to set a good example by teaching, believing, and living by the scriptures. This is what Paul commanded Timothy (**1 Timothy 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 3:13-17; 4:1-5**).

E. Hold To Pure Doctrine

Read Hebrews 13:9.

- These people were not to forsake the teaching of God's Word given by faithful men because the Lord Jesus does not change. Therefore, they must not accept the false doctrine of some Jewish teachers who insisted that if God's children were to please the Lord, they must obey the Old Testament laws regarding food (**Romans 14:1-15**).
- These rules no longer applied to God's children, for it is not obedience to the Law that made them acceptable to God but rather His grace. Therefore, we should trust in His grace for salvation and also trust Him to continue working by His grace in our lives to make us holy like Himself (**Galatians 3:1-5; 2 Peter 1:2-8; Romans 6:14**).

F. Be Separated From Judaism to Christ

Read Hebrews 13:10.

- The Jews who continued faithful to the worship in the temple boasted that they had an altar on which they continued to offer animal sacrifices to God.
- In contrast, the Christians had left the temple and the altar and had no material altar on which they offered sacrifices. How then, the unbelieving Jews may have asked, could they possibly expect to be able to approach God? This may have been one of the arguments that were used in order to persuade professing Jewish Christians to return to the temple. To this argument the writer answers, "We Christians do have an altar." Christ is both our altar and our complete sacrifice for sin. It is by Him and Him alone that we approach God and are therefore fully

acceptable to Him (**Hebrews 10:11-23; Ephesians 1:6-7**).

- It is obvious the writer still has in mind those who were contemplating turning back to Judaism. But they must realize they could not return to the altar in the temple with its animal sacrifices and still think that Christ and His blood that He offered once for all as the full payment for sin would be of any benefit to them. If they were to be saved through Him, they had to make a complete break with the old priesthood and its sacrifices and put their trust in His finished work alone. God had ripped the veil in the temple from top to bottom to show that the way to Him was now open through Christ alone, and the temple altar and the sacrifices offered there were no longer acceptable to Him.
- In the next two verses the writer uses an illustration from the Old Testament to emphasize that it was not possible for a Jew to continue fellowshiping in the temple and trusting in its sacrifices and also benefit from the work of Christ on his behalf.

Read Hebrews 13:11.

- On the Day of Atonement, a bull and a goat were killed and their blood was brought by the high priest into the holy of holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat. But their bodies were taken outside the tabernacle and the Israelite camp and burned. Later, when the temple was built in Jerusalem, the bodies of these animals were taken outside the city walls and burned (**Leviticus 16:27**).
- This practice pointed forward to the Lord Jesus at the time of His death. Rejected by His own people, the Jews, He was handed over to the Romans to be crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

Read Hebrews 13:12-13.

- The Jews and their leaders had rejected the Savior; therefore, all those who put their trust in Him must accept that they, too, would be rejected and persecuted. They could not remain popular with their unbelieving Jewish friends if they turned from the temple to trust only in Christ. They would be cast out just as He was. Their hope and trust must not be in the city of Jerusalem or in the temple and its altar. They must look away from the earth to Christ in Heaven and remember His promise to provide them also with a heavenly home (**John 14:1-3**).

Read Hebrews 13:14.

- Being outcasts by the people of this world, Christians are to follow the example of Abraham, others, and Christ, who lived not for this world but for the world to come.

G. Offer Praise and Thanks To God

- During the Old Testament times, only the priests could offer the gifts and sacrifices of the people on the altar in the Tabernacle and the temple. All Christians are now able to come as priests offering their own gifts to God through Christ, their altar.

Read Hebrews 13:15.

- We should continually give God the sacrifice of praise for who He is: our wonderful God, Creator and Savior, and our thanks for all He has done, is doing, and has promised to do in and for us.

H. Give To Those In Need

Read Hebrews 13:16.

- Yet another offering we are to bring to God through Christ our altar is our gift of material things to help others who are in need. This will include the sick, the poor, the elderly, those who are unable to work, and those who have given their full time to doing the work of the Lord. God is very pleased with these offerings, so it is the responsibility of the church to continue to give so those who are working full time teaching or preaching the gospel will have their material needs supplied.
- If we are walking in the Spirit and Christ is the object of our hearts, this will come natural (**Romans 12:1-2**).

I. Obey Leadership

Read Hebrews 13:17.

- God has chosen to appoint elders over the local church to “*watch out for the souls*” of all the members. It is their responsibility to teach and lead God’s people remembering that they will give an account of how they guided God’s children to the Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the Church (**1 Peter 5:1-5**).
- To be submissive to faithful pastors who teach and follow the Word of God is necessary for God’s children; if we reject what they say, then we are rejecting God and His Word. This type of attitude makes the work of leading the flock difficult for leaders rather than making it a joy (**1 John 2:28; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15**).

J. A Request For Prayer

Read Hebrews 13:18-19.

- In closing his letter, the writer asks his readers to pray for him that he would soon be able to come and see them. Apparently, he had been falsely accused of doing wrong and may have written this letter from prison. Nevertheless, he knew his conscience was clear before God and he had lived honestly in accordance with His Word.
- We come now to the writer's prayer for these people.

Read Hebrews 13:20-21.

- Our God is “*the God of Peace*” for it was He who gave His Son to die for us so we would no longer be His enemies but be reconciled and obtain peace with Him. God also desires that we be filled with His peace (**Ephesians 2:13-19; Romans 5:1; John 14:27; Philippians 4:6-7**).
- According to the everlasting agreement that God made with His Son, He would give His blood for our sins and God the Father would raise Him back to life.
- All of God's blessings are given to us through Christ our Savior. One of His greatest blessings is the work He is doing in our lives day by day to change and make us like His Son. Our part is faith—faith in the finished work of Christ (**Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-15**).

K. Final Words and Greetings

Read Hebrews 13:22-25.

- In closing, the writer asks his readers to give careful consideration to all he has written and gives them the latest word regarding Timothy who had been imprisoned. He closes with these words: “*Grace be with you all. Amen.*”

