

The Pilgrim Way Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews



**A Reference Commentary
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Apology for This Work

This commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound these precious epistles.

This work grew out of over 40 years of both preaching through these epistles in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through them as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from Hebrews, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market, and they tend to be somewhat dull and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I figured there may be others out there who may benefit from this work, which is why I make it available, but the work is basically laid out in a selfish manner, for my benefit and assistance. You, as the reader, hopefully can find some profit in this.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”, he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin’s teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of the truth, but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal theological system influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is. I do identify with premillennialism and dispensationalism, but even my dispensationalism is used mainly as an interpretative tool.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and writings for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows, but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But

simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense,

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birthed and nurtured with an New American Standard Version (any edition)? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used, and that God has blessed. It is too late in Church history to change English translations. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant. This is the Greek text that forms the foundation for the Authorized Version. This commentary will not attack or change a single word in our Authorized Version.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of this epistle. A commentary over 40 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

Introduction to Hebrews

Hebrews has 13 chapters, 303 verses, and 6,913 words in our English text.

AUTHORSHIP- Unknown, as there is no identification at the beginning of the book. Many will hold to Paul, but many other possibilities have been put forth. Since the author is not named, everything is speculation, at best. I don't think Apollos would be a good choice as author as if Hebrews is aimed at the Tribulation period doctrinally, Apollos couldn't have written it as he wasn't saved until Acts 18.

If Hebrews is aimed at the Jews in the Tribulation doctrinally, and if Paul was the "Apostle to the Gentiles", then would he be writing letters like this to (future) Jewish believers? Or as a former Pharisee, would Paul be the best candidate to write such an epistle to these Jews?

Hebrews is classified as a "General Epistle", not a "Church Epistle" and Paul wrote none of the General Epistles. Those authors are James, Peter, John and Jude.

Surveying the Commentaries regarding authorship:

Unknown- the author of this work, John Cereghin,¹ John MacArthur, James Knox, Origen,² Thomas Constable, Kenneth Wuest, Clement of Alexandria, F. F. Bruce, Andrew Murray, Erasmus.² Most of these men do entertain the idea of Pauline authorship.

Paul- H.T. Spence,³ A. W. Pink, Finis J. Dake, J. Vernon McGee, E. W. Bullinger, Oliver Greene, J. Sidlow Baxter, Harold Sightler, Peter Ruckman,⁴ Charles Spurgeon,⁵ David Hoffman of *the Common Man's Reference Bible*, John Owen, Jerome, Augustine, John Phillips, the "Alexandrian School", H. C. G. Moule, William Kelly, John Nelson Darby,⁶ H. G. C Moule,⁷

Luke⁸- Franz Delitzsch

A. "There are important words and phrases here which are only found elsewhere in St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts, and for this and other reasons Delitzsch holds that this Epistle is the third work of Luke in the New Testament. Godet says: "This Epistle, without introduction or subscription, is like the great High Priest of whom it treats, who was without beginning of days or end of years, abiding an High Priest continually. It is entirely fitting that this book should remain anonymous."⁹

Apollos- Martin Luther, A. T. Robertson, R. T. France¹⁰

¹ Although I certainly believe that Pauline authorship is possible and is also probable. I simply cannot be dogmatic about it. I don't see how anyone can be dogmatic in their position on authorship.

² These men believed it could have been written by a disciple of Paul.

³ Probably O. T. Spence as well, as H T., his son, promoted most of what his father believed.

⁴ He leans heavily, but dogmatically, to Paul, especially believing that Hebrews 13 is Pauline

⁵ As seen in many of his sermons.

⁶ This means that the rest of, or at least a majority of other Plymouth Brethren writers would follow Darby in accepting Pauline authorship. They tend to parrot Darby and each other.

⁷ Unknown, but Paul was the "ultimate author".

⁸ The problem with Luke is that no book of Scripture was authored by a Gentile, especially not an epistle to the "Hebrews". If they would have rejected it for Pauline authorship, how much more if it was written by a Gentile!

⁹ Cited in Hebrews, *A Devotional Commentary* by W. H. Griffith Thomas.

¹⁰ But France does not hold to this position dogmatically.

**Barnabas- Tertullian,¹¹ the early African church
Clement of Rome¹²**

Arguments for and against Pauline authorship.

FOR:

1. Most of the church fathers supported Pauline authorship. They lived closer to the date of writing so they might have a better understanding of authorship.
 - A. By Origen's day, there was a tradition that Paul wrote this epistle although there was still much doubt in the Western church about Pauline authorship.
 - B. Eusebius (early fourth century) himself includes Hebrews as one of the "fourteen letters of Paul" but recognizes that others have followed the lead of the church of Rome in rejecting it as not by Paul.
 - C. It was Jerome and Augustine that swayed opinion in the Western Church for Pauline authorship.
2. Chapter 13 definitely uses Pauline language.
3. Although Paul does not identify himself as author, it was common knowledge among its readers that Paul wrote it. The assumption of Pauline authorship played a role in the acceptance of the epistle as inspired. If it had been written by anyone other than Paul, its inspiration would have been doubted.
4. Most early church heretics rejected Pauline authorship.
5. In the earliest manuscript editions of the New Testament books, Hebrews is included after Romans among the books written by Paul. This was taken as evidence that Paul had written it, and some Eastern churches accepted Hebrews as canonical earlier than in the West.
6. The King James Bible translators title the book "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." They assumed Pauline authorship.
7. There are many parallels to Paul's acknowledged writings in Hebrews. Compare:
 - A. Hebrews 1:1, 3 with 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Colossians 1:15, 16
 - B. Hebrews 1:4 and 2:9 with Philippians 2:8, 9
 - C. Hebrews 2:14 with 1 Corinthians 15:54, 57
 - D. Hebrews 7:16, 18, 19 with Romans 2:29 and Galatians 3:3, 24
 - E. Hebrews 7:26 with Ephesians 4:10
 - F. Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1 with Colossians 2:17
 - G. Hebrews 10:12, 13 with 1 Corinthians 15:25

AGAINST

1. The authorship does not identify himself.
 - A. John does not identify himself by name in any of his three epistles but the internal evidence is clear that the apostle John wrote them. The internal evidence identifying Paul as the author of Hebrews is not as clear.
 - B. It has been suggested Paul did not identify himself due to Jewish prejudice against him. If Paul did identify himself as the author, then the book would have been immediately rejected. Yet we can't see Paul being so squeamish about how his epistle would have been received that he would leave his name off of it.

¹¹ He was very dogmatic about this.

¹² Very unlikely but his name was thrown out there so we include it for sake of completeness.

- C. The murkiness regarding authorship would have questioned its inspiration and authority.
 - i. This did not seem to harm the acceptance of John's epistles although it did take longer for his epistles to be universally accepted as inspired.
- 2. Even in the early church, Pauline authorship was not universally accepted.
 - A. Hebrews is not included in the Muratorian Canon (a list of New Testament books accepted for reading in the Roman church ca. A.D. 180), which lists the thirteen letters of Paul but makes no mention of Hebrews.
 - B. Irenaeus (second century) and Hippolytus (early third century) denied Pauline authorship.
- 3. If Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:9), why is he writing to Hebrews?
 - A. We know that despite his appointment as the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul still carried a crushing burden to the salvation of the Jews in Romans 11.
- 4. The Eastern Church accepted Pauline authorship before the Western Church. The Western Church had its doubts and still does.
- 5. Even though there are doubts and debates as to the authorship, there is more conviction about the inspiration of the epistle.
- 6. Difference in style and vocabulary from other of Paul's writings.
 - A. Such differences might be explained by the fact that in all his other letters Paul was addressing Gentiles, whereas in Hebrews his audience was the Jews. Different audiences and themes require different styles.
- 7. If Paul is the author, there is no attempt to prove or promote his apostleship to his Jewish readers, something he would have been required to do if he was the author.

At the end of the day, we simply do not know who wrote Hebrews. You can be as dogmatic as you want about authorship, but we simply cannot be as dogmatic as we like. The evidence for Pauline authorship is strong but not absolute.

LANGUAGE- It has been suggested by both liberal and conservative writers that the original language that this book was written in may have been Hebrew, not Greek. If it was written to "Hebrews" then a Hebrew "original" would make more sense than a Greek one. "Even the *McClintock and Strong Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* asks, "In what language was it [the Epistle to the Hebrews] written?" It reports that writers during the early centuries and later affirmed that it was written in Hebrew, not Greek (vol. 4, p. 147). Hebrew was the language of the Jews. It appears often in the New Testament. Acts 1:19 says, "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood." Paul would only speak Hebrew to the Jews in Acts 21:40-22:2 and 26:14. Jesus read or spoke Hebrew in Matt. 27:46, John 7:15, Luke 4:16, Mark 5:41, 7:34, 14:36, 15:34, and Acts 26:14. The New Testament has many references to Hebrew words, such as 'Bethesda,' 'Gabbatha,' 'Golgotha,' 'Abaddon,' and 'Armageddon.' Peter understood Hebrew in John 1:42.¹³ Clement of Alexandria suggests that Paul wrote the book originally in Hebrew and that Luke translated it into Greek,

¹³ Gail Riplinger, *Hazardous Materials*, page 1100.

DATE- Unknown, as it would depend on the author, but I would place it in the 50s. It would need to have a rather early date if the primary doctrinal application is in the Tribulation period. This might also disqualify Paul from writing at least most of the book as he would not be saved until Acts 9.

THEME- Various themes present themselves:

1. Going unto perfection (spiritual maturity)- Hebrews 6:1
2. The superiority of Christ
3. Various warnings given to tribulation saints.
4. Exhortations to holiness. O. Talmadge Spence says that the "Quest for Christian Purity" ends in Hebrews.¹⁴

Doctrinally, the book seems to fit in best in the Tribulation period. I think this is what gives so many commentators so much difficulty in interpreting certain verses in chapters 3, 6 and 10. They are looking at it through the Church Age while it should be interpreted in a non-Church Age context. If there are so many verses that don't fit in with the Pauline revelation, it is a sign that the book is probably not Pauline in doctrine and should be placed in another dispensational setting. Of course, this dispensational view does not prohibit us from making applications to the New Testament Christian. We are dispensational, but we only use our dispensational understandings as an interpretative tool. We are not hyper-dispensational in that we would put Hebrews in a water-tight compartment and not make any applications to Christians at all. That is an unbalanced view.

OUTLINES

1. The Superiority of Christ, Hebrews 1:1-10:18
2. The Superiority of the New Way of Life in Christ, Hebrews 10:19-13:25

Seven Aspects of Christ in Hebrews:¹⁵

Aspects of Christ	Spiritual Experiences	Warning Against
Christ's Deity	The Great Salvation	Neglect 2:1-4
Christ's Humanity	Sanctification	Hardening the Heart 3:18
Christ as Apostle	The Rest of Faith	Unbelief 3:19
Christ as High Priest	Eternal Salvation	Indifference 6:12
Christ and the Promise	Christian Perfection	Slothfulness 6:4-12
Christ and the Sanctuary	The Holiest of All	Sinning Wilfully 10:26
Christ and the Inheritance	Holiness	Apostasy 10:26-31

Hebrews 1-7, the person of Christ

Hebrews 8:1-10:18- the mediatorial work of Christ

Hebrews 10:19ff, faith is stressed as the true response toward the person and work of Christ.¹⁶

¹⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, page 281.

¹⁵ H. T. Spence, *The Canon of Scripture*, page 247.

¹⁶ H. T. Spence, *The Canon of Scripture*, page 19.

O. Talmadge Spence,¹⁷ would expand this to Twelve Assurances:

1. Christ is greater than the angels who delivered the Word (1:4-14; 2:5-18).
2. Christ is greater than Moses who led you out (3:1-19).
3. Christ is greater than Joshua who led you in (4:8-13).
4. Christ is greater than Aaron with a temporary priesthood (4:14-8:6).
5. Christ is greater than the first covenant and its incompleteness (8:7-10:25).
6. Christ is greater than the prophecies without their fulfillments (8:7-13).
7. Christ is greater than types without antitypes (9:1-15).
8. Christ is greater than Old Testament "bloods": without the Lamb of God (9:16-10:39).
9. Christ and faith in Him is greater than works without faith (11:1-40).
10. Christ and His cross of suffering in the common cycle of life is greater than human ways in the common cycle of life without sacrifice and suffering (12:2-17).
11. Christ and Calvary are greater than Sinai and Law (12:18-24).
12. Christ and the Burnt Offering is greater than the tabernacle and its altar (13:10-17).

This is followed by The Eight Admonitions of Hebrews:¹⁸

1. The danger of neglecting the Word of God for salvation (2:1-4).
2. The danger of not entering into God's rest from unbelief and human weakness and works (3:7-4:13).
3. The danger of remaining babes in Christ and not appropriating the deeper experiences and growth and quest in the grace of God by the Word of God (5:11-6:12).
4. The danger of wilful sin after being saved, and drawing back from the truth while holding to human reliance (10:26-39).
5. The danger of letting master sins and human weaknesses destroy the sanctified life and quest (12:1,2).
6. The danger of leaving the quest for holiness because of the "Root of Bitterness" returning into the life (12:12-17).
7. The danger of refusing the preeminent Christ and Word in preference to personal righteousness and life (12:25-29).
8. The danger of going off on tangents and strange doctrines to error, away from truth (13:1-9).

The Warnings of Hebrews

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Neglect, Hebrews 2:1-4 | 4. Indifference leading to immaturity, Hebrews 5:11-6:3 |
| 2. Hardened Heart, Hebrews 3:7-19 | |
| 3. Unbelief, Hebrews 3:19; 4:1,11-13 | 5. Slothfulness, Hebrews 6:4-12 |

1. After the proof of Christ being more than the angels- *Not to neglect so great salvation* (Hebrews 2:1-4).

2. After the proof of Christ being more than Moses- *Not like Israel in the wilderness to come short of the promised rest* (Hebrews 3:7; 4:13).

¹⁷ Page 283 in his *The Quest For Christian Purity*.

¹⁸ *The Quest For Christian Purity*, page 284.

3. After the mention of Christ being more than Aaron- *Against the danger of sloth, standing still, and falling away* (Hebrews 5:11).

4. After the call to enter the opened Holiest- *Against sinning willfully, and drawing back to perdition* (Hebrews 10:26-39).

5. After the exhortation to patience- *Against falling short of the grace of God and refusing Him who speaks* (Hebrews 12:15-29).¹⁹

The Exhortations of Hebrews (the “let us” passages):

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Let us hear 4:1 | 8. Let us consider 10:24 |
| 2. Let us labor 4:11 | 9. Let us lay aside 12:1 |
| 3. Let us hold fast 4:14 | 10. Let us run 12:1 |
| 4. Let us come boldly 4:16 | 11. Let us have grace 12:28 |
| 5. Let us go unto perfection 6:1 | 12. Let us go forth 13:13 |
| 6. Let us draw near 10:22 | 13. Let us offer 13:15 |
| 7. Let us hold fast 10:23 | |

The “better things” of Hebrews:

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|---|---|
| 1. Christ better than angels 1:4 | 8. A better sanctuary 9:11 |
| 2. Christ better than Moses- chapter 3 | 9. Better sacrifices 9:23 |
| 3. Christ better than Joshua- chapter 4 | 10. A better substance in heaven- 10:34 |
| 4. Christ better than Aaron- chapters 5-7 | 11. A better country 11:16 |
| 5. A better hope 7:19 | 12. A better resurrection 11:35 |
| 6. Better promises 8:6 | 13. Better things 11:40 |
| 7. A better covenant 8:6 | |

Perils of Hebrews:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Drifting 2:1-4 | 4. Departing 6:1-20 |
| 2. Doubting 3:7-4:2 | 5. Despising 10:26-39 |
| 3. Dull hearing 5:11-14 | 6. Denying 12:15-29 |

The Dispensational Character of the General Epistles

Hebrews, James, the epistles of Peter, John and Jude are known as “General” or “Catholic” Epistles. While they all contain much church age doctrine, these epistles are unique in that their primary doctrinal and dispensational thrust is tribulational. The church age only accounts for about 28.5% of human history, as it makes up about 2,000 years of the 7,000 years of history. It is not logical then to assume that the entire Bible is written in a church age context. The Old Testament deals with the nation of Israel, not the Church. Acts 2-7 is a theological minefield, as it is a transitional period between the Old Testament and Church Age. No wonder so many people (especially Pentecostals, but also the Church of Christ) break their theological necks in that section of Acts. I teach that it was very possible that Christ could have returned at any time between Acts 2-7, where Israel had a “second chance” to accept the kingdom. That open door was closed at the death of Stephen when Israel rejected his witness. After that, the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8. In Acts 9, the Apostle to the Gentiles

¹⁹ Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All*.

is saved. In Acts 10 and 11, we have the Gentile Pentecost. Then the missionary call to the Gentiles is given in Acts 13 and we move solidly into the Church Age. That lasts until the Rapture.

We find church doctrine primarily in Paul's epistles, although they are also sprinkled through the gospels, Acts and the other epistles. But since Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles, we would expect him to deal with doctrines that deal with the Church. But Peter was the Apostle to the Circumcision in Galatians 2:7-9. If he was involved in a Jewish ministry, his preaching would be more Jewish in context and this would be reflected in his two epistles.

There are several passages in Hebrews (3:14, 6:4,6 and 10:26) that simply make no sense in a church age context as they seem to teach that a believer can lose his salvation. This is not Church Age doctrine but it is Tribulation doctrine. Many commentators simply gave up trying to expound these verses. The root of the trouble was that they were trying to fit a round peg (church doctrine) into a square hole (tribulation doctrine). But if the verses were applied to a Tribulation context, they make more sense.

James has caused a lot of theological consternation over the years. Martin Luther hated it because he couldn't reconcile it to Romans. But Luther's problem was that he was trying to compare apples and oranges, church doctrine with tribulation doctrine.

John and Jude are also primarily aimed at Tribulation saints, although there are still many church age applications to be made in all four epistles. The burden of the commentator is to discern the proper zip code or a certain verse- who is the author speaking to and about? Is this verse written to me as a Christian or is it written for a saint in the tribulation? Or maybe it has a millennial application?

The root for the majority of heresies today is a dispensational misapplication of verses. They take Tribulation doctrine and try to apply it to the Church Age. When someone claims that a Christian can lose his salvation, he is taking a Tribulation doctrine and is trying to apply it to a Christian. If a man claims that a Christian has to "endure to the end to be saved", citing Matthew 24:13, he is taking a Tribulation doctrine and is trying to apply it to the church age. Seventh Day Adventists, with their fixation on Sabbath observance today, have the right doctrine but the wrong dispensation. The same is true with their insistence that Christians have to keep the moral law and the ceremonial law to be saved. That's good Tribulation preaching, but it is heresy for the Christian in the Church Age. But if we can "rightly divide" these verses and place them in the correct dispensations, we will avoid such errors. But this can still be tricky because such verses may be mixed in with church age doctrines and some verses may have a double application that can apply to multiple dispensations. It can be very confusing! This is why the ministry of the Biblical commentator is not for the faint of heart or weak of spirit. If you are a deep student of Scripture, you will write things that will seem like heresy and you will be attacked for it.²⁰

²⁰ For an example, read about Peter Ruckman's teaching that salvation is by works in the Old Testament, Tribulation and Millennium, or at least that there is an element of works in salvation in those dispensations. Most shallower students will retort "Salvation is by grace through faith in every dispensation!", showing they do not understand dispensations. Many commentators may agree with Ruckman but do not want to be associated with him for a variety of reasons, so they simply "don't go there", play it safe and teach "approved doctrine" that is accepted by "the brethren".

The Bible has to be able to minister and guide to yet future generations, including those who will be saved in the tribulation period. Since the tribulation is a totally different dispensation that the church age is, we would expect a different set of doctrine to be presented for those who go into that dispensation, just as much as we would if we were considering the dispensation of the Millennium. Why do we assume that all of the Bible, especially the New Testament, has to apply only to Christians in this dispensation? The Bible is for all dispensations, so we have to expect there are going to be sections of it that apply to other dispensations than our own. This is not to say that the Christian should totally ignore anything that Paul didn't write, for there are doctrines and applications all over the Bible that still apply to the Christian. But we must know which ones do and don't.

The challenge with Hebrews is that is dispensational, with a primary doctrinal application to Tribulation saints who do not go in the rapture but who are saved in the Tribulation. What a time they will live, fraught with all sorts of dangers and challenges. Is there no word from God for them? What about Jews in that period? Will God have anything to say for them? The New Testament, in its entirety, is not written simply for the New Testament Church, but for other groups in other dispensations. Hebrews is directed toward Tribulation saints, not New Testament Christians living in the Church Age in the 21st century. But even the majority of dispensational commentators fail to see it as they do not want to deal with the implications of teaching "salvation by works" or "losing your salvation". They hit the verses involved that cannot be shoe-horned into a New Testament context, give up, make to doctrinal application and limit themselves to making spiritual applications.

I have never been satisfied with the standard position that Hebrews was written for Jewish Christians who were drawing back from fully going with Christ. That always seemed to be a rather simplistic understanding that ignored the dispensational character of the Book. It is written to Jews, or Hebrews, but primarily to Hebrews in the Tribulation, who need a unique revelation about the change in dispensation and what they need to do to survive and be saved in the Tribulation. New Testament doctrine won't work here as we are not in a New Testament context.

The vast majority of commentaries take the standard view and ignore the dispensational context. But if you want the full understanding of the theme of Hebrews, you must approach it dispensationally. Peter Ruckman does this but he is a voice in the wilderness. Even the Plymouth Brethren, despite their dispensationalism, won't go that far. Neither will the editors of the Scofield Bible. This explains why so many commentators struggle as much as they do in the "problem texts" in Hebrews. They are trying to interpret and apply them in a Church Age context when they are tribulation.²¹

Yet many of the "standard" themes presented by most commentators do apply and there is a practical application to the Church Age, but the ultimate doctrinal interpretation is tribulation. We do not reject them or despise them. We are simply trying to get them in the proper dispensational context so that we can understand and apply the book of Hebrews correctly. It is a difficult book but if we interpret it in a dispensational context, it becomes easier to understand.

²¹ Oliver Green, Harry Ironsides and whoever the current editor of the Sword of the Lord are prime examples of this.

Time Past: In Matthew through John we find the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ to the nation Israel. In the book of Acts we have the fall of Israel and salvation going to the Gentiles through the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

But Now: Romans through Philemon provide the doctrine for the present dispensation of grace.

Ages To Come: Hebrews through Revelation focus on the ages to come when God will bring to fruition His purposes for both the nation Israel and the Body of Christ.²²

THE PILGRIM EPISTLES

"The Epistle to the Hebrews in the canon of Scripture commences the last section in the New Testament commonly designated as the General Epistles. The General Epistles (Hebrews; James; 1 & 2. Peter; 1, 2., & 3 John; and Jude) are a unique blessing and hope, especially for the Christian who finds himself in the End Time of the last days, anticipating with intense desire the coming of the Lord. The General Epistles are the appointed epistles for pilgrims and strangers in the earth who find themselves more and more unwelcomed by the world and by the institutional church. As these particular epistles unfold, they unveil to us important truths for the pilgrim journey. The prelude book to these pilgrim epistles is the Epistle to the Hebrews.

One of the prominent truths found in Hebrews concerns the Mosaic Tabernacle. Although fifty chapters in the Bible are dedicated to this unique shadow and type of Christ, only the Epistle to the Hebrews gives its spiritual interpretation. Hebrews is also the only New Testament book to address the tabernacle. What is a tabernacle? A tabernacle is a tent for sojourning; it is also a place of worship for one who is on the move. In contrast, a temple is a fixed, permanent place for worship. The Mosaic Tabernacle was portable; its parts and pieces could be wrapped and moved, and then re-erected at the next camp. Christ is my tabernacle, the revelation of how Christ is to be with me in my earthly journey. Thus, one of the key burdens of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the presence of my Christ as my tabernacle for my earthly pilgrimage.

The pilgrim Epistle of James was written "to those scattered" by the Diaspora. James presents a practical religion; thus, no matter where one is scattered, this is the way he is to live. James exhorts believers to wisely face their trials along the way-trials from both God and the world.

James also calls for these scattered pilgrims to have an anointed tongue when speaking to others. No special favor is to be shown a wealthy person over a poor one-both must be treated with equal respect. James even instructs those who are sick or born with infirmity that there are always purposes in God's ways; one must seek the Lord to resolve them. The Book of James is dedicated to practical, day by day, pilgrim living.

Following the Epistle of James are the Epistles of Peter. First Peter is the epistle that presents the sufferings and persecutions of the pilgrim. It is most important to live wisely with your sufferings while on one's pilgrimage. It is also imperative to resolve in the heart how one responds to those who persecute the believer. At the same time, Peter exhorts the pilgrim to ever have upon his mind the hope of the imminent second coming of Christ.

²² R. A. Huebner, *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, Page 108

In his epistles John the Apostle steps forward to say that on the pilgrimage there are going to be those who proclaim they are Christians. How often the pilgrim hears, "I'm born again; I go to church; I talk about Jesus." Therefore, in his first epistle John presents six characteristics to test whether a person is truly a Christian.

John's second epistle reveals insight concerning those who may come in Christ's name but are not true Christians. The pilgrim must be warned about such men. John also speaks of the need for Christian hospitality toward other pilgrims as well as strangers in the biblical sense. Although there are those who present themselves as Christians simply to get a handout, there will be those who are strangers to us but not to God. For those who merely seek to take advantage of a Christian's hospitality, is it appropriate to even say to them, "Godspeed"? No. John also clarifies whom we can address as "brother." The word brother means "born of the same womb." Is this the womb of truth? Is this the womb of the true Christ, of the Word of God? Or is this of the mega-church womb, of the Neo-Christian womb? We must be careful concerning our spiritual words to others. Expressions such as "May the Lord richly bless you" should only be addressed to the right people. Some Christians may not have much to give to others, but they can grant them a spiritual benediction. However, even then we must be careful. When we tell a person with sincerity, "I trust and pray that God will bless you:" we are giving a powerful benediction from the heart and from the Word of God. Even in the aftermath we are still praying for God to bless that person. Second John gives these precious words to the pilgrim.

In the Third Epistle of John, we are warned that in this pilgrimage we will meet some church leaders who are very proud and arrogant, who love to have the preeminence.

The Epistle of Jude is an epistle that contrasts the beloved and the behated. This little epistle makes it clear that there are individuals that God does not love. In the light of the End Time and its global apostasy within the institutional church, Peter traces the origin of the apostasy to false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-3, 15-19), while in the Epistle of Jude all phases of the apostasy are addressed. Amidst the needed emphasis upon the behated and the apostasy, these epistles do not produce hopelessness; God and His promises are still accessible to the Christian pilgrim.

As we view these General Epistles, it becomes evident that there are a multitude of truths that a pilgrim and a stranger in this world (though of heaven's citizenship) must be careful about. We must consider how we live, how we act, how we talk, where we go, and what things we do. Our blessed Lord through these General Epistles gives us this exhortation "This is the way of the pilgrim."²³

"The term Hebrew should be observed with care as one enters this book. It is a mistake to believe that the terms Jew and Hebrew are synonymous. This epistle is not addressed to the Jews; it is addressed to the Hebrews.

First of all, the term "Jew" is a word that comes later in history. It is actually coming from the word "Judah". After the ten Northern tribes separated from Judah and Benjamin in I Kings 12 (in 975 B.C.), they eventually went into the Assyrian Captivity (in 721 B.C.). In the South were left the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. These two tribes are viewed as the Kingdom of Judah. These remaining two tribes in the south country were

²³ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 1-4.

viewed by other countries as Jews, an abbreviation of the word Judah (Heb., "to praise"). They began calling this southern area Jewry. Since the return from the Babylonian Captivity, these people have been called the Jews. Today, no matter what tribe these people may be from, the world still calls them Jews; however, they call themselves Israelites or the nation of Israel. This work is not a book called the "Epistle to the Jews."

In contrast to the word Jew, the word Hebrew concerns the offspring of Eber (or with the Hebrew language's hard breather, "Heber"), as mentioned in Genesis 10:25. The citizens of the land of Mamre (Gen. 14:13) called Abraham a "Hebrew;" meaning "a sojourner;" or one who simply travels through the land. He is a Hebrew, a refugee, a pilgrim, and a stranger seeking an abiding place. Thus, this epistle demonstrates that the Christian is a Hebrew looking for refuge; he is passing through this world as a pilgrim and a stranger."²⁴

Many writers believe that Hebrews was written to help waffling Jews in the early church era to finally settle it in their minds to accept Christ as their Messiah.²⁵ There may be something to this observation in a more prophetic and Tribulation view. The Jews will be left behind in the rapture. They will go into the Tribulation. Many of them had heard of Jesus but they obviously never accepted Him as their Savior. But now, after having witnessed the removal of the Church in the rapture and still having access to Bibles and other Christian literature and maybe even remembering the witnesses they received, they may be wondering if this Jesus was really the Messiah after all. This book is written to settle those doubts in their minds and to lead them to accept Christ. If this accurate, then Paul could have been the author as his heart's desire and prayer to God was that Israel would be saved (Romans 10:1). If modern Jews need to be convinced of the messiahship of Jesus, how much more will Jews in the Tribulation? No doubt the 144,000 Jews of Revelation 7 may use the book of Hebrews to aid them in their evangelism.

Hebrews may also be used by these same Jews to further their understanding about Jesus, His person and work, by using many Old Testament truths that any Jew would understand. Hebrews would serve as a good introduction to the messiahship of Jesus for the Jewish reader. While the New Testament Christian can glean much from Hebrews, it must be remembered that the primary thrust of the book is Jewish and the primary interpretation must be in that context. Many commentators tend to miss that theme, interpreting and applying the book primarily in a Christian context, which is one reason as to why there is so much confusion about the book. A proper dispensational understanding and application helps to clear up much of this misunderstanding.

In case there was to be any confusion as to who this Messiah would be, He is identified as "Jesus" in Hebrews 2:9; 3:1; 4:8,14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:10,19; 12:2,24; 13:8,12,20,21.

²⁴ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 5.

²⁵ There is a major branch of Judaism called "Lubavitch, Habad and Chabad-Lubavitch". This is centered around the life and teachings of Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who died in 1994. Many in the movement believe or are strongly inclined to believe that he was the Messiah. Hebrews would be written to help the Jews to get their eyes off of false messiahs and to point them to Christ as their true Messiah.

The burden and application of the Book of James is probably very similar to that of Hebrews.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 1

- 1:1,2 God speaking.
 - 1:2-14 Son of God. Better than angels.
- 2:1-4 God speaking.
 - 2:5-18 Son of Man. Lower than angels.²⁶

- A. The Expression of the Sonship of Christ by God (1:1-3)
 - 1. He Expounds the Mind of God (1:1-2a)
 - 2. He Executes the Will of God (1:2b-3a)
 - a. He Has an Inherited Claim to All Things (1:2b)
 - b. He Has an Inherent Claim to All Things (1:2c-3a)
 - i. Because of What He Is (1:2c)
 - ii. Because of Who He Is (1:3a)
 - 3. He Expresses the Heart of God (1:3b-c)
 - a. As Christ Crucified (1:3b)
 - b. As Christ Crowned (1:3c)²⁷

Summary of 1:1-3

- A. God does speak, in various ways
 - 1. He spoke through the Old Testament prophets
 - 2. He speaks today by His Son

1. Christ- Better than the Prophets 1:1-3

1:1 God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Thus begins the “orphan epistle” since we do not know the author. Everyone has an opinion and a guess. Epistles usually start with the author’s name. In a sense, “God” wrote Hebrews, since His name is at the head of the epistle! It is not necessary to know who wrote any of the Biblical books as an anonymous works has as much inspiration and authority as does a book where the author is known. We simply cannot be dogmatic regarding authorship.

“This is the most sonorous piece of Greek in the whole New Testament. It is a passage that any classical Greek orator would have been proud to write. The writer of Hebrews has brought to it every artifice of word and rhythm that the beautiful and flexible Greek language could provide...There is something of interest even here. The man who wrote this letter must have been trained in Greek oratory. When he became a Christian, he did not throw his training away. He used the talent he had in the service of Jesus Christ.”²⁸

“Counting the book of Revelation, there are 22 epistles in the New Testament. We can express them in the formula 9+4+9. There are 9 letters addressed to Christian churches, four letters addressed to individuals and nine letters addressed to Jewish Christians. Comparing the two major groups of nine we note that each group begins with a major theological treatise in which

²⁶ Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*.

²⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*.

²⁸ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*.

the Old Testament is interpreted in the light of Christ and Calvary. Romans introduces the first nine epistles. It discusses the relationship of the gospel to Israel's moral law. Great appeal is made to the Old Testament prophetic ministry. Hebrews introduces the last nine epistles. Hebrews discusses the relationship of the gospel to Israel's ritual law. Great appeal is made to the Old Testament prophetic ministry."²⁹

“sundry” Only used here in the Bible, from the old English “syndrig”, from “sundor”, “separate”. “Sundry” means “separate, special, private, various, diverse”.³⁰ So “God, who at various, distinct and separate times...”

1. Grocery and drug stores used to sell “sundries”.
2. God is not restricted to one way of expressing Himself or in giving revelation, but He limits Himself to certain methods. There are some ways He could use but chooses not to.

“divers”

1. “It is from the French divers, “different”. Thus, “divers” means different, diverse, varied, unlike, distinct, various or several.”³¹
2. “From the Latin diversus, to be turned in different ways (di= ‘utterly apart’ and ‘vertere= ‘to turn’). Thus, as an adjective, “divers” modifies its noun (always plural) as ‘being different in character or quality in comparison to other things or to each other.’ As a plural noun, divers are ‘two or more people that are different in character or quality from other people’.”³²
3. God never limited Himself in communicating to man. He used different kinds of men (and some women)- rich, poor, educated, uneducated, through dreams, visions, and speaking directly, face-to-face. God is never limited in His instrumentalities to get His word across. He would also reveal Himself for a while and pour own revelation upon revelation but then He wouldn't say anything for decades or even centuries.
4. Despite the fact that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), that does not mean that he limits Himself to one mode of revelation. His nature and plans do not change but He has an infinite number of instrumentalities He can employ to work out His will and purposes.
5. Even with all these divers manners of revelation through about 40 men over 2,000 years or so, the Scriptures fit together wonderfully, with nothing out of place or joint. It is like a orchestra, with its numerous and differing instruments, blending their sounds into a wonderful symphony with no dissonance, under the direction of a skilled and learned conductor. Another example are the four gospels. God took four diverse men of differing backgrounds and experiences and blended them into a unified biography of Jesus Christ.

“spake”

1. We see here then the two different methods God employed as He gave His revelation.
 - A. In Old Testament times, He generally spoke through prophets.
 - i. He did not speak to the people or to Israel directly, but He always spoke through appointed prophets.
 - ii. We are not to expect a return to an Old Testament type of prophetic ministry in this dispensation, although we would certainly expect such a ministry to reappear

²⁹ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, page 19.

³⁰ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 322.

³¹ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 107.

³² Steven White, *White's Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 349.

in the tribulation period, as Israel returns to the forefront of God's plan and as we return to a more Old Testament dispensation.³³

iii. When we see a Charismatic or Pentecostal or some other flavor of contemporary "preacher" pretending that God is speaking to him in the same manner and with a similar message as God spoke to an Old Testament prophet, we automatically know we have a false prophet and a liar on our hands. God will do that later, but not now. Right ministry- wrong dispensation. Many modern heresies and ministries might very well be true and valid after the rapture, but they are not for the Church Age.

iv. The Roman Catholic Church is very Old Testament in its doctrine and practice with its "priesthood" that the people need to go to and through to get to God and to hear from God.

B. In New Testament times, He spoke through His Son.

i. In the New Testament, He speaks directly to every believer by His written word.

2. In various ways:

A. Through His earthly ministry

B. Through His four written gospels

C. Through the New Testament writings

D. It would also apply to the written Scriptures.

i. The Father has spoken to be understood by all. What is the point of speaking, only to do so in some unknown tongue where no man can understand? God did speak in Hebrew and Greek but then had those original words translated into the languages of man through highly accurate translations so that today, over 99% of humanity has the words of God in their own language.

"fathers"

1. The patriarchs and the Old Testament fathers. This is an Old Testament idea than a Jew living in New Testament times would relate to. While there is certainly nothing wrong with the Old Testament revelations or prophets, we now have a **"more sure word of prophecy"** in these latter days (2 Peter 1:19).

2. The Jews took great pride in the fact that God had spoken to them- and only them!- through the great and mighty Old Testament prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Never mind that they reject the majority of those prophetic messages and killed most of those prophets, but hey! God had spoken to them through the prophets! How could Christianity hope to top that with its "gospel?" Easy. The gospel of Christianity was the natural outgrowth and fulfillment of the messages of those Old Testament prophets and was the culmination of their messages and ministries. Besides, God Himself has spoken to use in these "last days" not through human prophets but through His Son Himself, which makes for a superior revelation.

1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

What the Father did here:

1. Spoke to us by His Son

2. He appointed this Son as Heir Of All Things

3. By this Son, He made the worlds

³³ The tribulation period is a very Old Testament-type of dispensation. The entire Bible is very Old Testament-like, with the New Testament more of a parenthesis.

“spoken unto us by his Son” as in John 1:1 where Christ is called the “Word”. We speak and communicate through words, both spoken and written, and whatever the Father has to say to mankind in any generation, He will say through Christ. This “Son” is the true Messiah that Israel should be looking for. The Messiah spoke to Israel and will speak to them again.

Jesus is not named until Hebrews 2:9. Up until that time, He is just referred to as the “Son”. The recipients apparently know the name of this Son, which is why there is no apparent hurry to name Him.

The **“last days”** and the **“latter days”**:

1. They technically started with the ministry of John the Baptist, ended with the rejection of the kingdom by Israel in Acts 7 via Stephen’s stoning, and will resume after the rapture and expend through the tribulation to the second coming, leading up to the Millennium. It is a prophetic term as seems to be largely a Jewish term. It is thus dispensational. The Book of Hebrews, doctrinally, is a Jewish book so its primary doctrinal applications will be tribulation Israel.

2. Biblical presentation of “last days”.

A. Genesis 49:1, **And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.**

i. General prophetic

B. Numbers 24:14, **And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.**

i. Prophetic, relating to Israel.

C. Deuteronomy 4:30, **When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.**

i. Direct reference to Israel in the tribulation period.

D. Isaiah 2:2, **And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.**

i. Millennial

E. Isaiah 9:1, **But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.**

i. Millennial

F. Jeremiah 3:20, **The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.**

i. Prophetic, could be either tribulation or Millennium.

G. Jeremiah 30:24, **The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his mind. In the latter days you will understand this.**

i. Prophetic, could be either tribulation or Millennium.

H. Jeremiah 48:47, **Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in the latter days, declares the LORD.” Thus far is the judgment on Moab.**

i. Millennium

I. Jeremiah 49:39, **But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the LORD.**

i. Millennium

J. Ezekiel 38:8, **After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them.**

i. Tribulation

K. Ezekiel 38:16, **You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.**

i. Tribulation

L. Daniel 2:28 **but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:**

i. General prophetic

M. Daniel 8:23, **And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise.**

i. Tribulation

N. Daniel 10:14 , **and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.**

i. General prophetic

O. Hosea 3:5, **Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.**

i. Millennial

P. Micah 4:1, **But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.**

i. Millennial

Q. Acts 2:17, **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:**

i. Since the ultimate context of Acts 2 is tribulational (projected ahead to the Tribulation), this will have to be tribulational. There would be no need for dreams and visions in the Millennium. Indeed, they are forbidden.

a. Zechariah 13:3,4, **And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:**

R. 2 Timothy 3:1, **This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**

i. This is probably dealing with the last days of the Church Age, leading up to the rapture. It certainly is also dispensational but since this is a church-age epistle, it would not refer to the tribulation but to events leading up to the tribulation period.

- ii. The last days would be marked by “perilous times”, even as the “days of Noah” (Matthew 24:37).

S. Hebrews 1:2, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;**

- i. Since we are approaching Hebrews as a tribulational treatise (doctrinally), we will apply the “last days” in Hebrews as a tribulational reference.
- ii. The author identified the day he was writing in as part of “these last days”. This would place the “last days” as also extending back to the early church period, especially the transitional period of Acts 2-7, before the rejection of Israel after the stoning of Stephan. This because the Lord could have returned at any time from Acts 2-7 if Israel had repented. I am not going to repeat my remarks expanding on this “second offer” that I mentioned in my notes on Acts 2 and 3.³⁴

T. James 5:3 **Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.**

- i. Unsure about application but it has a tribulational-type warning to it.
- ii. James is direct to a Jewish audience so the “last days” would have a Jewish application here.

U. 2 Peter 3:3 **Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,**

- i. This has a similar tone to Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1.
- ii. The last days would be marked by scoffers who walk after their own lusts.

3. The phrase “last days” can have several applications, but they primarily seem to be future, mainly dealing with the Tribulation and the Millennium, starting with the tail end of the Church Age. It started at the beginning of the Church Age and had an application to Acts 2-7 but after the “second offer” of the kingdom was rejected, God turned to the Gentiles, so the fulfillment of “these last days” was now extended to our day and beyond, leading up to the Millennium. Of these references:

- A. Church Age, leading up to the rapture, two references
- B. Tribulation, eight references
- C. Millennial, six references
- D. Could be either tribulation of Millennium, two references
- E. General prophetic, three references

If God is speaking through His Son, then we, and Israel, had better listen and not despise Him Who is speaking (Hebrews 12:25. **See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven).**

1. Many examples in Scripture where people did NOT hear the Lord (through the preaching of the prophets) and they were “destroyed”.

A. Nation of Israel- book of Jeremiah, culminating in Ezekiel. They heard from multiple prophets over a long period, and they ignored it and the nation went into two exiles as a result. In that sense, Israel was in a “last days” situation as the judgment of the Babylonian invasion was looming. They ignored Jeremiah and the nation was destroyed. The exiles in Babylon would later ignore Ezekiel.

B. Also see Acts 7:51-53, 51 **Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye,**

³⁴ See my *Pilgrim Way Commentary on Acts*, available free at www.pilgrimway.org

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

2. Hebrews 2:3- how shall we escape if we neglect this? How do we expect, or hope, to escape from judgment and the consequences for refusal to hear?

3. What if we do not hear?

A. Judgment is certain and inescapable.

B. Isaiah 1:20, **But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

4. Hearing usually has the same idea as to obey. We often use this language when we admonish someone who did not do what we told them. We will say "didn't you hear me?"

5. God is not silent as He is speaking today. The problem is that we are not listening as we are not reading the Bible.

A. He seems silent at times and He may be, but that does not mean that He is ignoring us or that He is ignorant of our situation.

i. Psalm 28:1, **Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.**

B. He may be silent when we are disobedient or in sin, as a form of judgment.

i. Deuteronomy 28:23, **And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.**

6. So many people are quite willing to hear some man or woman claim to speak the truth of God and follow them. But when God speaks through His Son and through His word, all of a sudden, these people go deaf. They will listen to Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Taze Russell, Ellen G. White, Joseph Smith, Jack Hyles, some charismatic "prophet", any pope, etc, but are not as eager to listen to God.

A. God's people will not listen to strangers

i. John 10:5, **And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.**

a. What about those who do? Are they really saved?

b. God will give a discernment to a Christian regarding a false shepherd and the Good Shepherd.

c. Take heed how you hear!

(i). Luke 8:18, **Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.**

d. In the last days, men will have "itching ears" and will refuse to hear properly.

(i). 2 Timothy 4:3, **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**

B. God is NOT speaking through:

i. Men

a. No man can claim to be a sole or exclusive "voice of God". There was a false prophet named R. G. Stair (who styled himself as "Brother Stair") who was all over shortwave radio. He called

himself "THE last days prophet of God" (not "A" last days prophet).³⁵

b. This goes for false teachers of other religions, like Eastern gurus.

ii. Movements

a. No church or theological system can claim to be infallible in the sense that it speaks for God without error.

b. The Church of Rome makes this claim and they are not alone. It claims to be the ONLY expression of Christianity on earth and all other expressions are invalid. If you are not in submission to the pope and to the Church of Rome, you cannot be saved.

iii. Mary

C. God is speaking through His Son through Scripture, which is our only safe guide.

i. Every other "holy book" is disqualified.

7. We wonder if God will speak to Israel in the Tribulation in a special, verbal manner, to let them know the reason for their tribulation persecutions and to encourage them to "**endure to the end**" (Matthew 24:13) and not to compromise to the Antichrist.

Christ- as God, is appointed **the Heir of All Things**. This is the same "heir" as in Matthew 21:38/Mark 12:7 , Who was cast out and killed by the wicked husbandmen. Christ was appointed by God as being this Heir. In a similar manner,

1. Matthew 21:38, **But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.**

2. Mark 12:7, **But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.**

Despite being appointed Heir of All Things by the Father, Israel still rejected Him and killed Him. The Matthew and Mark reference above gives the idea that Israel wanted His inheritance to be theirs.

1. Despite their rejection, Israel knew that Jesus was the Heir, yea, even the Messiah, but hated Him and may very well have been jealous of Him.

Christ, as God, is **the Creator of All Things**, thus again witnessing to the truth of Genesis 1 and 2. There is no room for any kind of evolution here.

Reasons for the Superiority of Christ:

1. He is the "heir of all things", Hebrews 1:2

A. No one else is.

2. He "made the world", Hebrews 1:2

A. No one else did.

B. Rejection of evolution of any sort.

3. He is "the brightness of His glory", Hebrews 1:3

A. No one else is.

B. Romanists may try to apply some of this to Mary but there is not a single verse to support any such idea.

4. He is "the express image of His person", Hebrews 1:3

A. No one else is.

³⁵ Stair was a nut who was arrested for statutory rape at his compound in Walterboro, South Carolina. He was a devotee of the Pentecostal heretic William Branham, Stair styled himself as the "Seventh Angel Leader" at his website <https://rgstair.com/nobody-gonna-replace-this-leader/> He died in 2021.

5. He "upholds all things by the word of His power", Hebrews 1:3
 - A. No one else does.
6. He "purged our sins" Hebrews, 1:3
 - A. No one else did. Christ had no help in purchasing our salvation.
 - i. Isaiah 63:3a, **I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me...**
 - B. Again, Mary had absolutely no role to play in our salvation.
7. He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high", Hebrews 1:3
 - A. No one else is seated there.
 - B. Romanist artists will try to place Mary on or near this throne but there is no basis for such a belief.

He also made the worlds. "Worlds" is the Greek word for "ages" or a period of time, Strong's #165 aiōn. This does not speak to creationism. It would do more with the creation and arrangement of the various ages and dispensations, how God ordered the operation of His creation and His dealings with man. God has a plan for the ages and is very organized in what He is doing in time. This is not the Church Age as the writer has all ages in view. Hebrews is also a tribulational epistle so the Church Age is not the primary dispensation in view.

1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Starting in Hebrews 1:3, the author is stressing the deity and superiority of Christ over all things. If his audience are tribulation Jews, then they would have difficulties with the doctrine of Christ, since they are Jews. These verses will strengthen and promote the doctrines of Christ for these Jews to consider.

Christ, the brightness of the Father. He has all the glory of the Father, seeing that He is One with the Father and that He is God Himself. Christ has His own glory as God plus access to the glory of the Father as well.

Christ, **the express Image of the Father.** If you have seen the Son, you have seen the Father (John 14:9). Christ is the exact image, expression, or impression, of the Father, as when metal is pressed into a die, or as a seal upon wax.

Christ, as God, Upholder (and Sustainer) of All Things in this Creation.

1. The Word of God is the active force that sustains all creation, that binds it together, that keeps it orderly and functional. In 2 Peter 3:7, Peter says that all things are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment". In 3:10, he adds that the heavens shall pass away with fervent heat. This involves the loosening of the binding force in creation that keeps all of the atoms and atomic particles together. This binding force is what keeps everything you see from flying apart. One day, between the end of the Millennium and the start of Eternity, the Lord is going to turn it binding force off. When He does, the loosening of all things will take place. Everything will fly apart. They will no longer be bound together. We know from nuclear physics and nuclear devices that when you start splitting atoms, a tremendous amount of heat and energy is released. Consider when God turns off this binding force. Every atom in the universe will explode and the amount of energy that will be involved in that cannot be calculated.

- a. Why does the heaven need to be cleansed by fire? Because of sin. Man has sinned against creation and there's always the Satanic activity and the devilish

activity in the heavens since Lucifer's fall. The heavens are contaminated, and they are polluted with sin. Think about how much junk we have left on the moon and on Mars. We have sent space probes out beyond Pluto all over the solar system. We are cluttering up the solar system with our junk even though we have difficulty leaving earth. The fingerprints of man's sin and of Satan's sin are all over the creation. That has to be cleansed and purged as we go into the Golden Age as there will be no remnants or evidence of any sin to be found in that day.

"purged" Strong's #2512 *katharismos*; a cleansing, purification, a ritual purgation or washing, of the washing of the Jews before and after their meals, of Levitical purification of women after childbirth, a cleansing from the guilt of sins wrought by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. This is a similar word and usage to the use of the word "perfect" in Hebrews 13:21.

Christ purged our sins at Calvary, not by baptism or by any other religious ritual. Christ did this "by Himself", meaning:

1. He did alone, with no help (Isaiah 63:3a, **I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me...**).
2. He did it through Himself, through His bearing those sins in His body on the tree, when He literally became sin incarnate on the cross. Christ Himself purged our sins and nothing else- no water, fire, mass, ritual, nothing and no one else.

The purging of sins is a common theme in the Old Testament and is something that would be familiar to the Jews:

1. Psalm 51:7, **Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**
2. Psalm 65:3, **Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.**
3. Psalm 79:9, **Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.**
4. Isaiah 1:25, **And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:**
5. Ezekiel 20:38, **And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**
6. Ezekiel 43:20, **And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.**
7. Ezekiel 43:26, **Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves.**
8. Daniel 11:35, **And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.**
9. Malachi 3:3, **And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.**
10. Matthew 3:12, **Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.** (also Luke 3:17).
11. 1 Corinthians 5:7, **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:**

12. 2 Timothy 2:21, **If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.**

13. Hebrews 9:14, **How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

One purpose of the Tribulation period is to purge Israel from her national sins and to prepare them to assume their role designed for them in the Millennium.

1. Zechariah 13:9, **And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.**

His work completed, He sat down, showing that no further work was necessary to add to our redemption or salvation. No baptism was needed, no religion, ritual, rite, no mass, nothing else! It was all finished, completed and nothing could be added to it.

1. The "right hand" is the position of honor and power, reserved only for those who are worthy, like the Son of God.

2. Christ, Better Than Angels 1:4-14

Summary of 1:4-14

A. Christ is better than the angels.

1. Because He is God and the angels were created.

B. Christ is a Son, no angel is.

C. Christ is to be worshipped. No angel is to be worshipped.

D. The angels are ministers. Christ is never referred to as a minister.

E. Christ is creator of all. No angel created anything.

F. Christ is eternal. Angels are as well but not from eternity past.

H. Christ is a ruler Who sits at the Father's right hand. No angel has any ruling authority.

I. Christ is better than anyone or anything. Nothing and no one can be compared to Him. His work, His person, His atonement are all greater than the accomplishments of all the human race combined.

1. The Jews would have held up Abraham and Moses as the greatest of men, but Jesus was greater.

2. God gave Israel the Law and the offerings and the sacrifices, but Jesus was greater.

3. The Moslems elevate Mohammad and his false god "Allah" but Christ is greater.

4. The Hindus have their multitude of gods and the Buddhists have their "enlightened one" but Christ is greater.

5. Christ is greater than any pope. He is greater than any church, theological system, tradition, teaching, man or movement.

6. He is also greater than any political system, any political party, any politician, any government or economic system. He is greater than all.

7. We can call this "Christ the Superlative".

8. Colossians 3:11 **Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**

J. Angels are great and powerful but Christ is better in all aspects.

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

The better things of Hebrews:

1. Christ better than angels 1:4
2. Christ better than Moses- chapter 3
3. Christ better than Joshua- chapter 4
4. Christ better than Aaron- chapters 5-7
5. A better hope 7:19
6. Better promises 8:6
7. A better covenant 8:6
8. A better sanctuary 9:11
9. Better sacrifices 9:23
10. A better substance in heaven- 10:34
11. A better country 11:16
12. A better resurrection 11:35
13. Better things 11:40

Angels have a good name but the name of Christ is better. Christ is infinitely better than the angels as He is God. Even in His human incarnation, Christ is still better than angels because He was still God although He was incarnated as man. As a man, He still had a perfect, unfallen human nature. Everything about Christ is better than the forms of Judaism that the Jews knew about and practiced.

1. Christ will always have a greater name than any angel.
 - A. No angel is divine.
 - B. No angel was involved with the creation or sustaining of the universe.
 - C. No angel died for man or purchased or redemption.
 - D. It is never said that angels love man.
 - E. Angels are but creatures, created beings.
 - i. They are powerful and higher than man, but they could not bring the truth or life of God down to man.

2. We live in a day when the occult/New Age movement places a great emphasis on angels, something the Bible forbids in Colossians 2:18 ("**Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**").

3. Man would rather exalt an angel than to exalt Christ.

4. The Jews had a very high regard for angels, but they still cannot be compared to the greatness of Christ.

Where is this **obtained**? On the cross as He obtain salvation and fulfilled the will of the Father? The perfect tense shows that his "obtaining" is perfect, never to be lost or removed or amended.

1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Angels are often called "sons of God" in the Old Testament but not in a physical, begetting sense, as Christ is. No angel is a "son of God" in the same way Christ is and no angel is begotten.

“For unto which of the angels said he at any time...” The quote here is from Psalm 2:7. Nowhere is this said to any angel. God never spoke to any angel with this kind of language than He spoke to Christ. Angels are called “sons of God” in Job 1,2 and 38:7 but in the sense that they are creations of God, not in the same way Christ is the Son of God or that Christians are sons of God. Angels are created but are not begotten. The second part of the verse is quoted from 2 Samuel 7:14. Nowhere does God refer to angels as sons.

1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

This is Christ.

1. The angels worship Christ. No one is commanded to worship angels.
2. This was Lucifer’s downfall as a cherub; he wanted to be worshipped, and he had no such standing to expect it or to demand it.

Christ was begotten of Mary by the Holy Spirit at His birth when He showed up on this earth for the first time as a man.

This is not stated in the gospels but we do see the angels celebrating His birth in Luke 2:13,14.

1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Angels, like other heavenly beings, are spiritual beings that can take on a physical body.

“ministers”

1. Probably angels, not human ministers. Seraphim are often referred to a “burning ones” because of their ministry regarding the holiness and purity of the things of God. Seraphim are not angels per se as they are different orders of heavenly beings, though.
2. The verse is a quote from Psalm 104:4.
3. There are some other verses where angels, or heavenly beings (they may have been seraphim!) have been depicted in fiery form:
 - A. 2 Kings 6:17 **And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.**
 - B. Ezekiel 1:13 **As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.**
 - C. Daniel 7:10 **A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.**
 - D. Isaiah 6:5, **Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:**
3. Angels are servants, not sovereigns. The Son rules. The angels serve.

1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptere of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

The Son is not a minister. He is a King with a throne and a scepter, something no angel has. Notice the deity and sonship of Christ are mentioned here, in the referring of Christ as "Son".

The Son, Jesus, has a throne. Not only is He a messiah but He is also a king. No angel does since no angel is entrusted by God to rule anything. They minister.

1. The throne speaks of the sovereignty of Christ, as it speaks of His kingship.
2. No angel has a scepter since no angel has any ruling authority over anything.
3. Christ's scepter is one of righteousness because the nature of Christ's kingdom and reign is one of absolute righteousness. This is because it is the very nature of Christ that He be righteous and do only righteousness, since He is God.
4. This speaks of the authority of Christ, as the scepter always speaks of the authority of a king. It is the symbol for His power.

Jesus, the Messiah, is called God. This is a very clear declaration of the deity of Christ.

The quote is from Psalm 45:6,7.

"is forever and ever" Not just a millennial, earthly kingdom, for that lasts but a mere thousand years. Christ's ultimate reign is eternal. The "forever and ever" speaks of the dynasty of the rule of Christ, as His rule will be an eternal one. It does not last for merely 1,000 years, but for eternity.

1:9 Thou hast loved, and hated; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

How could Christ, as God, do otherwise? If He loved sin, He would cease to be God.

In Scripture, prophets, priests and kings are all anointed. Christ fulfilled all three offices, so we would expect such anointings.

1. Christ received an anointing that no one else has ever received or ever will, as He was God.
2. Jesus is an anointed Messiah.

"even thy God, hath anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." This would include Old Testament prophets, priests and kings. All of them would be inferior to Christ in their anointings. This is quoted from Psalm 45:7.

1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

See Genesis 1. Creationism is asserted. No one can claim to be a believer in God or the Bible and reject the Biblical account of creation. Jesus is the Creator as well as God and Messiah.

1:10,11 is quoted from Psalm 102:26,27.

1:11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

“They shall perish” The earth, the heavens, everything you see will one day burn (2 Peter 3:10). But Christ will remain for eternity because He is God. This is a blow against materialists, who say that matter is all there is. It will have an end one day but the God whom they deny will continue forever.

1. Jesus, as God, is eternal, and cannot perish.
2. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that all closed systems lose energy and orderliness over time unless new energy is injected from external sources. God is not now infusing the creation with new energy as He is allowing it to run down and decay. But since He is God, He is not bound by the laws of nature that He has laid down for His creation, so He will not decay or grow old or wear out. God is eternal and is not bound by time or the laws of nature that lead to the decay and eventual death of all things. Thus, evolution is impossible as it teaches that new energy is being added to our closed system that would enable life to continue to become more complex, but the evolutionist has no idea where this additional energy is coming from! Evolutionists believe that everything is “running up” but common sense and observation clearly indicate that everything “runs down”.

“wax” is from the Old English “weaxan”, meaning “to grow”. “Wax” means “to grow old or become”.

1:12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

“vesture” comes from the French “vesture” meaning “clothing” and it goes back to the Latin “vestis” meaning “clothing”, from which we get our English word “vest”. “Vesture” is “clothing or something that covers”.³⁶

“thou fold them up” As one would take an old, worn out shirt, fold it up and place it in a drawer, so shall God do with His creation one day.

“they shall be changed” Consumed by fire, broken down, cleansed from sin, re-arranged and the re-created. (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1).

“thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” God has no need for change as He never wears out. See Hebrews 13:8. Jesus, as God, is just as consistent and faithful in His person and works because He does not change as men change. His nature and personality are immutable.

1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

No angel sits at the right hand of God but the Son does.

1. God has made no such promise to any angel. But God has promised His Son that He will bring all His enemies under subjection under His feet.
2. This is a quote from Psalm 110:1.
3. You can also see that Psalm 2 is a one of these promises, also Philipians 2:10.
4. Jesus will destroy His enemies at the Second Coming in Revelation 19 and finally at the end of Revelation 20, at the end of the Millennium.

³⁶ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 362.

5. This is important for the Tribulation Jew who is suffering greatly at the hands of the Antichrist and his system. He may be tempted to compromise or abandon his newfound faith in Christ or his faith in Judaism, but if he is assured that the Antichrist will be destroyed in short order, that may encourage him to continue to remain faithful for just a little while longer.

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

These are not Christians, for nowhere are Christians called “**heirs of salvation**”.

1. Christians do not inherit salvation for our salvation is a gift (Ephesians 2:8).
2. To be an heir of salvation assumes you don’t have yet it, that it is still a future thing, yet Christians already have their salvation- now!
3. It must apply to tribulation saints who will probably receive their inheritance in the millennium. It is to these saints that the angels will minister unto through eternity.
4. “The inheritors of salvation appear to be the children of the saved nations in eternity or the believers who endured to the end of the Tribulation without receiving the mark of the beast (Matt 24:13; Heb 3:14; Rev 22:14). Born again believers in Christ can only inherit rewards.”³⁷

The closest New Testament application would be Titus 3:7 “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” But there are differences between Hebrews 1:14 and Titus 3:7:

Titus 3:7	Hebrews 1:14
No angels involved	Angels involved
“heirs according to the hope of eternal life”	“heirs of salvation”
Church age doctrine	Tribulation doctrine
We know salvation is a gift- Ephesians 2:8,9. Our inheritance is never spoken of as “eternal life,” for this is by grace through faith.	Nothing mentioned about tribulation salvation being a gift in Hebrews
The only place where an inheritance is connected with our salvation in this age is where Peter says that we have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...” (1 Peter 1:4–5),	People who endure to the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:13) without taking the “mark of the beast” have a system of faith and works that is connected with their salvation so they can be said to “inherit salvation” as an earned reward: no one in the church age can.

Revelation of Jesus, the Messiah, in Hebrews Chapter 1:

1. He is the Mouthpiece of God, the way the Father talks to us- 1:1,2.
2. He is heir of all things- 1:2.
3. He is the Creator- 1:2,10.
4. He is the brightness of the glory of God- 1:3.
5. He is the express image of the person of the Father- 1:3.
6. He upholds the creation- 1:3.
7. He purged our sins- 1:3.
8. He is seated at the right hand of the Father- 1:3,13.
9. He is better than the angels- 1:4.

³⁷ David Hoffman, *The Common Man’s Reference Bible*.

10. He has a better inheritance- 1:4.
11. He has a better name- 1:4.
12. He is the Son of God- 1:5.
13. He is begotten- 1:5.
 - A. Firstbegotten in 1:6.
14. God is a Father to Him- 1:5.
15. He is to be worshipped- 1:6.
16. He has a throne, which means He is a king- 1:8.
17. He is anointed by the Father- 1:9.
18. He is eternal- 1:11,12.
19. God will deliver His enemies to Him- 1:13.

We can see that Hebrews 1 is a mini-compendium on the doctrine of Christ. Such a presentation should impress any Jew reading it.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 2

Perils of Hebrews³⁸

1. Drifting 2:1-4
2. Doubting 3:7-4:2
3. Dull hearing 5:11-14
4. Departing 6:1-20
5. Despising 10:26-39
6. Denying 12:15-29

H. T. Spence sees 5 warnings³⁹

1. Neglect 2:1-4
2. Hardened Heart 3:7-19
3. Unbelief 3:19; 4:1,11-13
4. Indifference leading to immaturity 5:11-6:3
5. Slothfulness 6:4-12

Summary of 2:1-5

- A. Warnings against careless hearing and spiritual neglect of the preached word.
1. Even angels were used to give revelations from God, and we must neglect their ministrations to us either.
- B. Neglect of the word will lead to judgment and there is no way to escape that.

3. A Warning Against Spiritual Carelessness 2:1-5

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

We ought not simply to pay attention to the Word of God, but to pay more attention to it, both in its preached and written forms. We need to devote 110% of our attention to it, which is never an easy thing, seeing how easy it is for our minds to wonder. And we ought not just to give heed but the “more earnest heed” to this Word, in both its preached and written forms.

1. “Someone is in danger of letting something slip away from them, and it will cause them to “neglect salvation” (vs. 3). No reader of the Bible would mistake such a discourse for Pauline salvation for half of a second. This is not Paul’s doctrinal revelation to the Gentiles (Rom. 1–10) or to the church (Eph. 1–5). Paul was no more worried about “neglecting salvation” by letting it “slip” than by neglecting Santa Claus through “flipping” (see Rom. 8, for example).⁴⁰
2. This “drift” is slow and sometimes imperceptible, like a boat slowly drifting away from the docks.

This call to diligence regarding the Word of God is a common one in Scripture:

1. Deuteronomy 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

³⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*.

³⁹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 20.

⁴⁰ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 36.

2. Psalm 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
3. "Careless soul, it is thy Maker who weeps over thee. Is there none of you who will listen to your Maker?"⁴¹

In a Tribulation context, this would include preaching and teachings from the Scriptures, prophecies (which will return in the Tribulation) and any revelations and preaching that will come from the 144,000. God will speak in the Tribulation, both to and through Israel. But for us today, God has spoken to us through His Word and we should give earnest heed to that and to what the preacher has to say to us as he preaches that Word to us.

Letting things "**slip**" can happen when we get careless and we forget what we have heard or neglect what we have heard. We can let the word of God slip and suffer judgment as a result, both now, and in later dispensations. The danger in so doing in the tribulation is since there is no "eternal security" in the tribulation which we will see later), letting the word "slip" through neglect or apostasy could be fatal to the soul.

1. The warning is to believers, notice the "we" in 2:1, where the author identifies himself with his audience. This is not written to unbelievers although we can certainly make an evangelistic application.
2. How can this happen? We hear the Scripture, but we ignore it. We hear a Bible sermon, but we do not respond. We sit through a sermon, but we sit with no intention of doing about it. The people are like what is described in Ezekiel 3:4-7 and 33:2. We hear but have absolutely no intention to heed or obey. This leads to apostasy, and worse.
3. The main threat of our life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should slowly drift into sin. There are few people who deliberately and, in a moment, turn their backs on God. Rather, there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from Him. We must be continually on the alert against the peril of the drifting life.

2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

While angels occasionally deliver messages in both testaments (such as the birth of the Messiah), they never preach.

1. The law was delivered by the ministration of angels in Acts 7:53 but the angels delivered it- they did not give expositions of it nor did they preach it as angels do not preach or teach in such fashion.
2. Acts 7:38 is an interesting commentary on this- "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." So angels did speak to Moses and to the elders of Israel in the wilderness in the ministry of delivering the law and associated revelation and information. The Law was also "ordained" by angels in Galatians 3:19, as they acted as the "middlemen" or the "intermediary" in the delivering of it to Israel.
3. But even when they are serving as messengers, those messages are not to be ignored. There will be only one period in human history when angels will really "preach" and that will be at the end of the tribulation, when the Two Witnesses have been killed. Since there will be no more organized human witness in the last days of the tribulation, there will be an angel preaching the Everlasting Gospel through the heavens (Revelation 14:6-8).

⁴¹(Robert Murray McCheyne, *Sermons on Hebrews*, pages 3-4.

4. To ignore or despise a message by an angel brought a “just recompense or reward”. Look at what happened to Zacharias in Luke 1:18 when he questioned the angel’s words. How much worse result awaits those who treat the words of God in such a manner?

There was little mercy under the Mosaic system for deliberate transgression, which is a deliberate sin, often caused by a failure to listen or heed, which leads to the disobedience. Provision was made for it in the form of an animal sacrifice but punishment for it could be severe. We will see this general treatment of similar sin return in the tribulation period as we return to an Old Testament-type of dispensation.

Related verses to judgment in refusing the Word of God:

1. Deuteronomy 17:12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.
2. Deuteronomy 27:26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.
3. Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
4. Hebrews 12:25- See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Many carnal Christians believe that since they are supposedly “under grace and not under the law” (Romans 6:14), then God does not care how they live and that He will not punish sin, carnality or disobedience. But such self-deception is clearly dispelled here, and in a hundred Biblical examples where God did not allow sin to go unpunished.

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

This is The Unanswerable Question. “How shall we escape?”

1. Also see Hebrews 12:25, where this question is repeated. The short answer is, we can’t. This rhetorical question expects a negative answer. Ignoring, neglecting or despising the Word of God and the salvation it brings is fatal and it will result in judgment and condemnation.
2. Related verses:
 - A. Ezekiel 17:18 Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape.
 - B. Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
 - C. Romans 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
3. This is a great salvation, given by a great God to meet a great need. To neglect it will result in a great judgment.

“neglect”

1. To treat lightly, to despise, to make a mock at something, consider something unimportant or unworthy of attention. It can also have the idea of drifting away, like an untied boat drifting away from the dock. This is done by neglect and apathy to spiritual

truth. We get lazy and cease to apply ourselves to spiritual truths we read and hear, and it leads to backsliding.

A. It is not necessarily a rejection of salvation but a careless neglect of it.

B. It is like the parable of Matthew 22:2-5. A king gave a great wedding feast for his son and sent out invitations, but they made light of it and gave every excuse they could not to come. That is neglect.

C. Neglect is the easiest thing in the world to do. All you have to do is...nothing! The hardest thing to do is to get the hearer to "stir himself" to do something and react! (Isaiah 64:7).

D. To neglect something unimportant or inferior is no sin. I can neglect the Oscars, the Grammys, the World Series, the latest Number 1 movie in the land and suffer no ill effects. But to neglect the most important thing of all, the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, is the height of folly and will result in only sorrow and judgment.

2. Who are some who neglect this great salvation?

A. Backsliders.

i. They were at one time faithful to the meetings at the church house but are now turned back. They were once faithful to prayer meetings but no more. They put their hand to the plough but have since drawn back. They have left their first love. They knew something of the excellencies and beauties of Christ. They did taste and saw that the Lord was good. They once wept at preaching and had a desire to be holy, but those embers have faded. And they do not see their danger, in that they are getting worse and worse spiritually. They continue to sink deeper into their pit which they have dug, yet they do not discern their danger. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help (Hosea 13:9)."

B. Moral sinners

i. The Lord warned the Pharisees that the publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom before they would (Matthew 21:31). They rely on their own supposed righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. They are outwardly respectable, moral, decent, but within are full of dead men's bones and all manner of corruption. Yet their pride prevents anyone, not even the Holy Spirit, from dealing with them. That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination to God (Luke 16:15).

3. **"neglect"** "Not, if we are murderers, adulterers, thieves, infidels, atheists, scoffers. It is, if we merely "neglect" this salvation - if we do not embrace it - if we suffer it to pass unimproved. "Neglect" is enough to ruin a man. A man who is in business need not commit forgery or robbery to ruin himself; he has only to "neglect" his business, and his ruin is certain. A man who is lying on a bed of sickness, need not cut his throat to destroy himself; he has only to "neglect" the means of restoration, and he will be ruined. A man floating in a skiff above Niagara, need not move an oar or make an effort to destroy himself; he has only to "neglect" using the oar at the proper time, and he will certainly be carried over the cataract. Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple "neglect." By neglect of education children grow up in ignorance; by neglect a farm grows up to weeds and briars; by neglect a house goes to decay; by neglect of sowing, a man will have no harvest; by neglect of reaping, the harvest would rot in the fields. No worldly interest can prosper where there is neglect; and why may it not be so in religion?"⁴²

⁴² Albert Barnes.

Spoken by Him personally during His earthly ministry, recorded by the Gospel writers, expounded upon by the epistle writers.

“confirmed unto us by them that heard him” This would identify the writer as someone who was an eyewitness of the Lord’s earthly ministry. This would seem to eliminate Paul as a writer. The Lord spoke directly to him and gave him direct revelations regarding the Gospel of Grace and the Church Age. Paul didn’t have to rely too much on “second hand information” to get his doctrinal information or insights. This makes it likely that the author of Hebrews was not an apostle.

This identifies the writer as a witness to the life and teachings of Jesus. You may hear many things by hearsay but you cannot improve upon eyewitness accounts. A Jew, considering the messianic claims of Jesus, may wonder about how accurate these claims are, but when reading the testimony of a man who was there and who heard the teachings of Jesus, that will be more difficult to reject.

“When a mighty King sends an ambassador to some distant king, if the ambassador be some great General or Statesman, he carries all his medals and ribbons of honor upon his breast. And in his credentials, all his titles and his great deeds are enumerated. All this to give weight and authority to his embassy. So has God in speaking to poor sinners by His Son. See how He crowds in all the glorious titles and doings of His Son: Heir of all things; Maker of the worlds; Brightness of His glory; Express image of His Person; Upholder of all things; Who by Himself purged away our sins; Seated at the right hand; Better than the angels; and then He asks the awful question, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”⁴³

2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

This took place in the Old Testament, starting with Moses and continued through the ministry of the prophets. It took place during the ministry of the Lord. It continued through the Book of Acts. But as we move out of Acts and into later church history, these signs and wonders ceased.

1. There are several reasons why:
 - A. Israel needs signs to believe- Exodus 4:1-9,29-31; 1 Corinthians 1:22.
 - i. These signs and wonders will return in the Tribulation, probably done by the 144,000.
 - B. Gentiles do not need or require signs. Wisdom and intellectualism are sufficient for them- 1 Corinthians 1:22.
 - C. The canon of Scripture was not complete, so signs were needed to confirm the fact that the prophet or preacher was indeed of God.
2. The ministry of signs and wonders is primarily a Jewish one, not one geared to Gentiles. For Charismatics to make such a big deal over signs and wonders and miracles show that they have their dispensations mixed up. Such a ministry would be valid in the tribulation period, since that will be a return to a Jewish dispensation, but such a ministry to Gentiles would not be very effective. Gentiles respond to reason, logic and presentation.
3. This passage then would have a prophetic application to Israel in the Tribulation, probably to the fact that the 144,000 will be able to do signs and wonders as they

⁴³ Robert Murray McChesney, *Sermons on Hebrews*, page 3.

minister to both Jew and Gentile during the first half of the Tribulation. It's going to be a repeat of Acts 2-7!

“divers”

1. “It is from the French divers, “different”. Thus, “divers” means different, diverse, varied, unlike, distinct, various or several.”⁴⁴
2. “From the Latin diversus, to be turned in different ways (di= ‘utterly apart’ and ‘vertere= ‘to turn’. Thus, as an adjective, “divers” modifies its noun (always plural) as ‘being different in character or quality in comparison to other things or to each other.’ As a plural noun, divers are ‘two or more people that are different in character or quality from other people’.”⁴⁵

“wonders” Strong’s # 5059 *teras*; a prodigy, portent, miracle.

1. “‘Something strange,’ causing the beholder to marvel, is always used in the plural, always rendered “wonders,” and generally follows *semeia*, “signs;” the opposite order occurs in Acts 2:22,43; 6:8, 7:36; in Acts 2:19 “wonders” occurs alone.
2. A sign is intended to appeal to the understanding, a “wonder” appeals to the imagination, a power (*dunamis*) indicates its source as supernatural. “Wonders” are manifested as Divine operations in thirteen occurrences (9 times in Acts); three times they are ascribed to the work of Satan through human agents, Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:9.”⁴⁶

“gifts of the Holy Ghost” Not church age gifts, but spiritual gifts given to those 144,000 Jews, especially fitted for their very unusual ministry in the tribulation period.

“I think signs and wonders are less common in developed countries today because most of these countries have the complete Word of God. God now typically validates the gospel through His Word (cf. Rom. 8:16; 1 John 5:1-13). Occasionally we hear reports of miracles that validate the gospel, but they are usually in places where the Word of God is not as available.”⁴⁷

2:5 For unto the angel hath he not put in subject the world to come, whereof we speak.

Angels have not been given any ruling authority in the Millennium or in the eternal age that will come afterwards. Saints will, and, of course, Christ will, but not angels. Angels serve and minister- they do not rule.

Summary of 2:6-8

A. Why does God pay so much attention to man and put so much energy into his redemption?

B. What is man? Or the son of man?

1. He is made a little lower than the angels.
2. He is crowned with glory and honor.
3. He is put over the creation.
4. Not all things are put under his feet yet.

C. Do verses 7 and 8 deal with man in general or Christ, as the Son of Man?

⁴⁴ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 107.

⁴⁵ Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 349.

⁴⁶ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

⁴⁷ Thomas Constable, *Constable’s Study Notes on Hebrews*.

4. What is Man? 2:6-8

See Psalm 8:4-6 for this passage.

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

The Hebrew word “**man**” that is quoted from Psalm 8:4 is used for man in his frailty, his mortality.

“What is man?”

1. Puny, scrawny, man! Man, who likes to imagine that he is the “measure of all things”, that he is the “capstone of evolution”. Man is an arrogant little creature, rebellious against his maker, imagining that he evolved from a puddle of slime, that he is a “lucky monkey”, worshipping blind chance and random processes and calling it “science”. He is about 200 pounds of skin and bone that will live maybe 70 years, who must sleep a third of his life away. He is dependent upon food and water and sunshine to live. He needs a six-inch layer of topsoil and rain to survive. He has a three-pound brain that he only uses a fraction of. He contracts so many diseases, physical problems and other maladies that it is hard to keep track of them all. Yet this little fellow will strut his stuff before God, shake his fist in God’s face, build towers into heaven, name his space programs after demons (Apollo- Apollyon!) and create thousands of his own religions. “What is man” that God continues to put so much time and energy into him! That God would even devise a plan of salvation to redeem such an ungrateful, sinful wretch! When God sent His only begotten Son to redeem man, man murdered Him in the cruelest way he could imagine. Even today, man despises the Word of God, the Church of God, the Truth of God and the People of God. Yet God refuses to give up on man! Who can understand this? But we can fall on our knees and thank God for the infinite mercy and grace that He has bestowed upon our race, else we would all be in hell- and rightly so! In Psalm 8:4, the Hebrew word for “man” is for “infirm or miserable man—by which it is apparent that he speaks of man not according to the state of his creation, but as fallen into a state of sin, and misery, and mortality.”

2. But there is also a positive side to this question. “What is man?” He is made in the image and likeness of God. No animal or angel was. He is the capstone of creation, given dominion and stewardship over the planet Earth. When he fell, God gave His only begotten Son to die for him, something God did not do for the angels when they fell. The fall of Adam brought out something very special in the heart of God to provide such a plan of redemption. God gave man intelligence, a soul, a spirit, a will, an imagination, the capability to dream, to write, to sing, to create, to commune with God, to dare dream to great things, to even imagine of things beyond time and space. Every man’s mind is a universe unto itself. God has given man a Book to learn of Him. Man may read and study this Book to learn of God and Satan, time and eternity, heaven and hell, holiness and sin. God would be found of man and God would actually enter into a personal relationship with man, as intimate as man wants it. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, actually dwells within the heart of a redeemed man. And when this man dies, a redeemed man has a place prepared for him by God (John 14:1-3) forever in heaven and in the future eternal golden age. What love, what attention, what concern God has towards man!

"The Scripture gives many answers to this question. Ask the prophet Isaiah, "What is man?" and he answers (Isaiah 40:6), man is "grass"—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." Ask David, "What is man?" He answers (Psalm 62:9), man is "a lie," not a liar only, or a deceiver, but "a lie," and a deceit. All the answers the Holy Ghost gives concerning man, are to humble man: man is ready to flatter himself, and one man to flatter another, but God tells us plainly what we are. . . . It is a wonder that God should vouchsafe a gracious look upon such a creature as man; it is wonderful, considering the distance between God and man, as man is a creature and God the creator."⁴⁸

"What is man?" It depends who you ask.

1. The evolutionist says he is the product of accidental and impersonal biochemical forces and through billions of years of evolution, is at the pinnacle of life on earth.
2. The politician says he is just another vote.
3. The social worker and liberal theologian says he is basically good, but has been harmed by his environment. He simply needs to have his environment changed and he will be a better person.
4. The humanist says he is the measure of all things
5. God says he is a direct creation of God who fell into sin and needs to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

What is man?

1. He is born unto trouble- Job 5:7
2. Every man is vanity- Psalm 39:11; 144:4
3. Brutish in his knowledge- Jeremiah 10:23
4. Not justified by works- Galatians 2:16; 3:11

"visitest" Strong's # 1980 episkeptomai; from epi (Strong's #1909), an intensifier, and skopos (Strong's #4649) to mark; to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes, to look upon in order to help or to benefit . God does provide for the sparrows and the for the beasts of the field, so we should expect God to also provide for the "capstone" of creation as well, but how God does provide for man, even the lowest of man! What care, with what deliberation God uses! It is an amazing thing to consider. God doesn't just give us the bare essentials, but He gives bread and that to spare, and even the desires of our hearts if we delight ourselves in Him.

"Did you ever see "man"? I've seen 'em! Brown, black, white, gray, pink, yellow, red, and everywhere in between. I've mixed with the throngs of Japanese in the railway stations waiting to board the express; I've been jammed in between mobs of Filipinos in the meat markets; I've lain on the iron decks of Liberty ships in the rain at night trying to get some sleep as they sailed the Pacific; I've lain across the bodies of Negroes between railroad cars on the way to POE'S; I've flown in DC-10's and Piper Cubs all over Florida, Canada, Hawaii, California, Michigan, and New York. I've cut down bamboo in the thickets near Corregidor, bodysurfed at Wainai and Haleiwa on Oahu, sat cross legged on bamboo mats in Katsura while eating sukiyaki, and fished for the pike and pickerel in the backwoods of Ontario. Mankind is an ant heap. When you die there will be 4,000,000,000 people on this earth that didn't even know you ever lived, and a year after you're dead there will probably not be more than a dozen people who really miss you. The most famous people on this earth, with the aid of television, shortwave, and satellite, will live and die with as many as 1,000,000,000 people not knowing who they were, what they did, or when they died. "What is man, that THOU art mindful of him?" Old Job said it and said it right: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" (Job 7:17–

⁴⁸ Joseph Caryl, cited in *Treasury of David*.

18). What is all of the testing for? What is it about God and His creation that causes the Almighty to be concerned about the welfare and the judgment of the work of His own hands? Nobody is going to miss you long when you die. For example, take Bob Jones, Sr., Beauchamp Vick, J. Frank Norris; and Billy Sunday. No one really worries about their absence except a few close relatives. When you die what will it mean? Nothing. There are 3,000,000,000 people in Africa, Europe, China, and India who don't know your name or where you live. You could not name ONE of them if your soul depended on it. There is a mess of folks on this planet, brother! What is God doing wasting His time with us? God not only takes time out to deal with individuals, but He also takes time to speak to them. He even came down to this earth to die for them (John 3:16). Why? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" You haven't had a thought about Bronco Nagurski or Rudolph Valentino since you got up this morning. Hitler, Himmler, and Goering have been burning in hell for more than forty years. Who worries about it? No one takes any thought at all for the POW's who never got back from Korea any more than for the German boys who died in prison camps in Siberia after the war was over (1944–1980). If God didn't care for you, who would?"⁴⁹

"God is more interested in people than He is in planets, more interested in souls than He is in stars, more interested in us than He is the universe! And because He is interested in us, He visits us."⁵⁰

2:7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crowned him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

Evolution says we are a little higher than monkeys, but God says we are a little lower than angels. In the great "celestial chain of being", man is immediately below the angels although he has been given dominion over the earth. Only Biblical Christianity gives man the dignity he is due as he is created in the image and likeness of God. Evolution and humanism degrade man to nothing more than a lucky monkey, an accident of impersonal forces and chance, a meaning blob of flesh adrift in a vast and uncaring universe with no purpose and destiny other than oblivion.

Although a little lower than angels, man has a privilege that no angel has- the possibility of salvation for sins. When a man sins, he can be forgiven. When an angel sins, there is no provision for that and no salvation offered. Christ came as a man to die for man. He took the nature of Abraham to save men. He did not take the form of angels to save angels since angels cannot be saved in the same way man can be saved.

Although man is a little lower than angels now, he will be exalted above angels at the end.

"thou crowned him with glory and honor"

1. When? Where? Man is the capstone of creation and has dominion over the earth but is hardly "crowned" as any sort of "king" over the earth. Man is never referred to under such a title in Scripture.

2. Man has been given dominion over creation (Genesis 1:28) in dominion and stewardship, but not in ownership. The angels have not been given this dominion. Man has been given the earth while God has reserved the rest of the creation unto himself (Psalm 115:16). Man might be able to reach the moon a few times but it is unlikely that man will be able to establish any sort of permanent presence on the moon or Mars or any other planet. The distances are simply too large and the technological challenges

⁴⁹ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 39-40.

⁵⁰ John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms*, volume 1, page 66.

are simply too great. Besides, will God allow man to corrupt another planet with his sin? Earth has been corrupted. Man has sown the initial seeds of his corruption by piling more and more of his junk on the moon and even on Mars, but God will allow man to go only so far in his space explorations. Man would do better to concentrate on his stewardship of planet earth than in worrying about the moon or Mars.

2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Man will receive greater things to be placed under his subjection in the eternal age, probably on a galactic scale. But when all things are “put under him”, it will be done so eternally and perfectly, not to be undone or amended, as seen by the use of the perfect tense.

The question is whether Hebrews 2:7,8 deals with man in general or Christ, as the Son of Man?

1. It would seem that the primary application is to Christ. It is true that man will be assisting in the ruling during in the millennium and we are not told what man will be doing in the golden age after the millennium.
2. Man, as the capstone of creation, will finally have his chance to shine during the millennium and beyond. The record of 6,000 years of human history is man trying to exalt himself over the creation without God and what a disaster that has been! But in the millennium and beyond, man will get his chance to exalt himself, but this time, with the help and approval of God.

Summary of 2:9-16

- A. In His humanity, Christ was born a little lower than the angels, just as all mankind is.
- B. The full humanity of Christ is on display in this chapter.
- C. Christ will suffer death and will taste death of every man.
- D. Christ was made perfect through sufferings.
- E. Christ took upon Him human nature to destroy death.
- F. In His incarnation, Christ took upon Him human nature and was a Jew.
- G. Jesus was not an angel. Some cults teach this. He may have been the “Angel of the Lord” in the Old Testament but he was never a literal angel.⁵¹

5. Jesus- Made a Little Lower Than Angels 2:9-16

2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

“**Jesus**” The “Son” of Hebrews 1 is now identified by name. The Messiah’s name is Jesus.

“**made a little lower than the angels**” In His incarnation, because He was made a man, as other men. In His incarnation, Christ went from being far above the angels as God to below the angels as man. The Messiah of Israel was a real human being.

⁵¹ The Jehovah Witness cult teaches that the archangel Michael was Jesus. See <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/2010250>

“suffering of death” The Messiah actually died a human death, as all men die, as He died a real death.

“crowned with glory and honor” As a result of His obtaining salvation for all men as per His victory over sin on the cross. This involves His resurrection.

“that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

1. We deserved none of this! God was under no obligation at all to provide any plan of salvation for mankind after the Fall of Adam! God would have been perfectly just and righteous to write the entire human race off to sin and condemnation. But out of His love, grace and mercy, He did not, but devised the plan of salvation which involved the sending of His Son and Him dying of the cross under the kind of death that He did. That was nothing but the pure grace of God and nothing else- no human merit, no divine obligation- nothing but pure grace. And you don't have to be any sort of a Calvinist to believe that! We don't need John Calvin to explain these things to us. Paul did just fine on his own.

2. This is part of the substitutionary death of Christ, that Christ dies for every man, in the stead and in the place of every man, so that they would not have to. The man who accepts this substitutionary death of Christ of Christ on his behalf by placing his faith in the person and work of Christ through the gospel.

3. Christ has tasted death for every man, even so-called “reprobates” and “non-elect” but this is only efficacious for those who believe. The “many” that He gave Himself for as a ransom are “all” men according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4, and the context of 1 Timothy 2:6 is also “all men”. Christ did not taste death just for the “elect”. The Calvinist doctrine of “limited atonement” is refuted here, in its teaching that there are some men for whom Christ did not die, which is determined by the “sovereign election of God”. This is generally taught by the more hard-shell Baptist version of Calvinism, which is defined as “hyper-Calvinism”, an over-emphasis of the various teachings of John Calvin.⁵²

2:10 For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Christ created all things.

“bringing many sons unto glory”

1. This was one of the objects in the death of Christ.

2. These sons are believers and the ultimate purpose of the workings of God in our lives is to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). All the workings of God in our lives and all the circumstances of God in our lives are designed to bring us to this spiritual maturity and Christlikeness so that we may glorify Him.

3. You'll be surprised how many sons that Christ will bring to glory! It will be “many”. We may think that there are “few” that be saved but there will be “many” sons that will be led to glory by the Captain of our Salvation.

a. Just as Joshua brought three million Jews into Canaan as the Captain of the hosts of the army of Israel, so will the Captain of our Salvation, our Joshua, lead us into our Promised Land.

⁵² Hyper-Calvinism denies that we have any duty to preach to the lost. The Gospel Standard Baptists and the Hardshell or Primitive Baptists hold to this teaching, attacking what they call “duty faith”. More mainline and moderate Calvinism acknowledges the need and duty for evangelism of the lost.

“captain of their salvation”

1. Christ, here referred to by an interesting military term. It suggests a march, as Moses through the wilderness and as Joshua invading Canaan.
2. It suggests a pilgrimage like Christian in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.⁵³
3. It is a quest for the Christian life and for heaven.
4. It is not a quick jaunt around the block, but it is a large march through the howling wilderness of this world, fraught with many dangers and enemies. Perils abound and there will be many casualties. We need a strong and experienced captain to see us through such a trek, to bring us home to our desired haven. Such is Christ.
5. As Moses got his people through the wilderness and as Joshua got his people into the land, so will Christ get His people all the way home to heaven, whether they be of the Church or of Israel.
6. A **“captain”** is a commissioned officer rank historically corresponding to the command of a company of soldiers.
 - A. Jesus is not referred to as a higher rank here, like general. This is because the captain usually went into action with his men, leading them against the enemy, unlike generals, who may generally order the battle from behind the lines. Jesus is right there with us, leading from the front, standing ahead of us in our spiritual warfares.
 - B. The word captain is from “CAP” for the head, which indicates a CAPSTONE (headstone).
 - C. “The term ultimately goes back to Late Latin capitaneus meaning “chief, prominent”; in Middle English adopted as capitayn in the 14th century, from Old French capitaine. The military rank of captain was in use from the 1560s, referring to an officer who commands a company. The naval sense, an officer who commands a man-of-war, is somewhat earlier, from the 1550s, later extended in meaning to “master or commander of any kind of vessel”. A captain in the period prior to the professionalization of the armed services of European nations subsequent to the French Revolution, during the early modern period, was a nobleman who purchased the right to head a company from the previous holder of that right. He would in turn receive money from another nobleman to serve as his lieutenant. The funding to provide for the troops came from the monarch or his government; the captain had to be responsible for it. If he was not, or was otherwise court-martialed, he would be dismissed (“cashiered”), and the monarch would receive money from another nobleman to command the company. Otherwise, the only pension for the captain was selling the right to another nobleman when he was ready to retire. (Wikipedia).”
 - i. In the Roman army, a captain would also be known by the rank of a centurion, a man who commands 100 men. The Roman Centurion was often of the humblest origin; he had been promoted from the ranks simply on account of bravery and military efficiency. At the drill, on the march, and in battle, they were at the same time the role models and the leaders of the soldiers. The Roman centurion was a skilled professional who could be relied on to run a legion on campaign and in battle.
7. This “captain” is a man who can inspire others. He can lead men by his example and by his partaking of the same trials, dangers and sufferings as his men do. Stonewall Jackson was a “captain” (although he was a general) who inspired such confidence in his men.

⁵³ A required book to read for all Christians.

A good secular example of such a “captain” would be Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton, who was active in the early part of the 20th century. He wanted to be the first man to reach the South Pole he didn't make it. He then determined to be the first man to cross Antarctica on foot. He needed a crew to man his ship and expedition. Shackleton put advertisements in the newspapers in London something along the lines of “Men wanted for hazardous journey to the South Pole. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.” Shackleton was very upfront and honest about the description of the dangers of his Antarctic expedition. The men who volunteered knew exactly what they were getting in to. They made it to Antarctica and his ship got caught in an ice floe and eventually is trapped in the ice. Their ship was crushed but all the crew got off with as many provisions and with as much equipment as they could take. They are marooned on an ice floe and nobody knows their situation or condition since they have no radio. For over a year, these men undergo extreme hardships, including cold, wet, exhaustion, hunger and months of darkness in isolation. Eventually, Shackleton's group makes it a barren and rocky island called Elephant Island and finally set down on dry land after all of those months on the ice. But they have the same problem as nobody knows where they are or the condition that they are in. There would be no rescue, so Shackleton decides he has to go and get help. The nearest point of rescue was a whaling station on South Georgia Island, which was in the south Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of South America. The only way to get help was to somehow make it to South Georgia Island but all they had were some lifeboats. They took the lifeboats, lashed them together and waterproofed them as well as they could. Shackleton took five other men with him and they had to go 800 miles with just a map and the sextant and a compass over some of the stormiest seas on Earth to try to get help. If they were off by as much as a degree in their plot and their course, they would miss South Georgia and go out into the open Atlantic and perish. His men on Elephant Island would also perish. Shackleton and his men did make it to South Georgia, but they have landed on the wrong side of the island. Their ship was not in any condition to try to navigate around the island to get to the whaling station. They would have to go over the mountains, some several thousand feet high. They had no experience in mountain climbing and no equipment for it. The men were tired and weak, but Shackleton led the way over the mountains without a guide and without a map. They did make it to the whaling station and Shackleton did get help and he did manage to send a rescue ship for his men. The rescue ship was unable to land several times because of the weather but eventually, the stranded men were rescued without the loss of a single man. Shackleton's men had full faith in “the Boss” that he would get them through their ordeal. If these men were willing to follow such a man like that, how much more should we be willing to follow the Captain of Our Salvation to even greater exploits? Will the Tribulation saint be willing to suffer for Christ in the manner and be faithful about it without compromise or abandoning his profession when the persecution and suffering really get intense?

“perfect through sufferings.”

1. Who can understand this? How can God, Jesus Christ Himself, be made “perfect”, seeing that He is God and is already perfect? What can be added to God? What can be more perfected in God? What can be added to Him that He does not already have? Human experiences.

A. He had to learn about this- omniscient God had things to learn! There was one thing Jesus did not have as God and that was learned human experience from suffering that would draw Him closer to the Father. Jesus was as close to the Father as it was possible to get. But could He have gotten even closer? Could something been added even to that to make it even more precious? While Jesus was in His human form on earth, He learned something about suffering and obedience. He had to submit Himself to the will of the Father, both in His ordinary conversation and in the events leading up to the cross. That obedience

and the associated suffering made a perfect relation with the Father even stronger. This is something that we can indeed understand. Every Christian has a relationship with God of a sort. But those who have actually suffered something for God find themselves with a deeper and a stronger relationship with God that cannot be understood or experienced by someone who has not experienced that kind of suffering.

B. There is a level of fellowship and divine intimacy that the nominal and carnal Christian knows nothing about and cannot know. Suffering for a cause produces a dedication for that cause. Suffering for something produces a love and a dedication to that cause that nothing will be able to shake. You “learn” certain things as a result of having suffered for causes- or for God.

C. Christ’s already perfect obedience and relationship with the Father is already that much-more perfected by the things He suffered while on earth as He did the Father’s will perfectly. His sufferings according to the will of God produced a human perfection for His relationship to the Father to go along with His divine relationship with the Father.

D. Christ had a two-fold perfect relationship with the Father- a perfect divine one, based on the fact that He was God, and a perfect human one, based on the fact of His perfect human obedience while He was one earth, made perfect by the things He suffered while on earth.

2. If it took suffering to make Christ “**perfect**”, how can we expect to be made “perfect” and attain spiritual maturity without suffering? The television preachers living in mansions with multi-million-dollar budgets will never become mature and perfect for they know nothing about suffering, but saints languishing in communist prisons or who are being persecuted by Moslems will understand this.

A. Christ was made perfect through suffering. Although He was the Son of God, and though He was God Himself, His perfect life does not save us. His virgin birth does not save us. His teaching does not save us. His miracles do not save us, nor does His example save us. But it is His death upon the cross that saves us.

B. “Perfect” never means sinless in a theological context as Christ was already sinless on earth even before His sufferings. “Perfect” means “entire, complete, mature, lacking nothing”.

3. There were things Jesus had to learn as a man. He needed to learn nothing as God but He was also a man. As such, He “**increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man**” in Luke 2:52. God increasing in wisdom and stature? Being made perfect through suffering? As Christ, as man, had to grow spiritually, so must we. It seems like a paradox that a perfect God had to be made perfect and that an omniscient God had to increase in wisdom.

“The idea is simply this: it is one thing (and the Devil knew this, and this is why he had something to say to Jesus Christ when He showed up in Luke 4:1–10) for the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to be sitting back there in eternity, sinless and holy, and talk about what a sinner should do and should not do, and it is another thing for a man down on this earth under God’s laws to try to keep those laws—which are holy and pure.

Now, the Devil “had a point” with Christ in these matters. The Devil used to come around and accuse the Lord (see Zech. 3:1–5), and Christ would turn to the Devil and say “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan...” (Zech. 3:2). When the Lord came down and showed up “in the flesh” on the mountains of Palestine, He didn’t say, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan”; He said, “Get outta here!” What is the difference? Well, before the incarnation, the Trinity is in a spirit state, and the Devil brings home his point, “Well, after all, what do you know about it? Did you ever get hungry or thirsty? When were YOU tempted, Lord God?!” (Don’t worry, the Devil really

is very audacious.) “You’ve never bled. You own the cattle on a thousand hills, what do you know about poverty and being in debt? You don’t know what it is like to be slapped in the face and have your hair pulled out or be spit on! I mean, you made those men down there, and you are responsible; but what do YOU really know about their condition!”

Ah, that is the Devil!

And about that time here comes the Lord down here as a man (“He took on him the seed of Abraham,” vs. 16), and He is cursed and spit upon. He is maligned and whipped; He is slandered and betrayed; and finally, He is murdered (Acts 7:52) as a criminal (Phil. 2:6–8). He squares off with His adversary and says, “Now what is it that you were saying?” (Oh, it’s all there! Look at it in Isaiah 50:5–8. It’s all written back there in Isaiah!) Jesus is bound and sitting in the chair; and He is being punched, slapped, and spit on. He says, “Who is mine adversary? Let him come near; let him come on!” Satan steps in and pours it on (Matt. 27:29–31). The Lord says, “I can take more than that. I’m not about to quit. Do your worst!” Satan does (John 19:1). The Lord says, “I’m not going to quit. Pour on some more.” The Devil fires his biggest guns (Matt. 27:40–42) and says, “Quit! Quit! You’ve got to quit!” And the Lord says, “I DON’T HAVE TO QUIT. IT’S FINISHED!” (John 19:30).

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). Jesus Christ made a fool out of Satan. He was the only man who ever did and the only man who ever will. At Calvary He “put him down!” (John 16:11). But to do it He had to live, bleed, and die as a man, not as a member of the Trinity. He had to “learn obedience.” Now you figure THAT out! God—that eternal Almighty One we spoke of in Hebrews 1:10–12—learning how to “obey” that He might be “perfected”! It is a remarkable thought, brother; absolutely shattering.”⁵⁴

“And as he was adapted in his nature, so, beloved, it is very clear to us that he was also adapted by his experience. A physician should have some acquaintance with disease; how shall he know the remedy if he be ignorant of the malady. Our Savior knew all because “he took our infirmities and he bare our sicknesses. He was tempted in all points, like as we are.” He looked not at sin from the distance of heaven but he walked, and lived in the midst of it. He did not pass hurriedly through the world as one might hastily walk through a hospital without clearly understanding the disease, but he lived his more than thirty years in the very center of it, seeing sin in all its shapes; yes, seeing it in shapes that you and I have not yet seen. He saw it in demoniac forms, for hell was let loose for a season, that the combat might be the more terrible and the victory the more glorious. He saw sin carried to its most aggravated extent, when it crucified God himself, and nailed Jesus, the heir of heaven, to the accursed tree. He understood the disease; he was no empiric; he had studied the whole case through; deceitful as the human heart is, Jesus knew it; fickle as it is in its various appearances-Protean as it is in its constantly varying shapes, Christ knew and understood it all. His life-long walking of the hospital of human nature had taught him the disease. He knew the subjects, too, upon whom to operate. He knew man, and what was in man; yes, better than the most skilled surgeon can know by experiment. He knew by experience. He himself took our infirmities and bare our sorrows. He was himself the patient, himself the medicine. He took upon himself the nature of the race he came to save, and so every feeling made him perfect in his work; every pang instructed him; every throb of anguish made him wise, and rendered him the more accomplished to work out the purposes of God in the bringing of the many sons unto glory.”⁵⁵

2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

⁵⁴ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 47–48.

⁵⁵ Charles Spurgeon, “Christ-Perfect Through Sufferings”, sermon 478 in *New Park Street Pulpit*.

This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

“both he that sanctifieth” This is Christ, as He is totally and completely sanctified.

“they who are sanctified”

1. Those who are set apart and who are made holy.
2. These are believers who are positionally sanctified at salvation.

There is one Who sets these believers apart and makes them holy and that is, of course, God. He sanctifies His people. There is a sense where we sanctify ourselves practically but only God can sanctify us positionally. Only God can save us and only God can really sanctify us.

“he is not ashamed to call them brethren”

1. Can you imagine that! Christ is not ashamed to call sinners “brethren!” And a lot of these “brethren” were guilty of murdering Him or would have if they had been alive in that day. Before they were saved, some of these “brethren” were some of the meanest, most worthless, low-down pieces of humanity you’d ever want to deal with. They’d slit your throat in a minute and rob you blind. But then they repented, got saved and entered into a new relationship with God. Now Christ, as their Elder Brother, is not ashamed to call them “Brother”.
2. Doctrinally, this would apply to Israel. Israel rejected Christ multiple times in the Gospel and in Acts. In the last 2000 years, the Jews have been hardened against the Gospel. Yet in the Tribulation, there will be a softening among the hearts of the Jews, starting with the calling of the 144,000, which will be Jews, to evangelize the world. By the end of the tribulation, all surviving Israel will be saved, and they will embrace the Messiah that they had neglected and rejected. Yet Christ will forgive 2000 years of abuse by Israel and will embrace the rebellious nation and will not be ashamed to call them His brethren in that day. Israel would have nothing to do with Jesus but He was not ashamed to own them.
3. How many Christians are ashamed to make a similar public proclamation of Christ in this manner? How many times do we deny Christ, fail to speak a word on His behalf or in His defense, to witness for Him in public? We are far too often ashamed of Him Who is not ashamed of us. And we have no reason to be ashamed of Him for He has never done anything against us to embarrass us, although we give Him an infinite number of reasons for Him to be ashamed of us because of our sins.
4. See also Hebrews 11:16, “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”
5. This world is ashamed of Christ as is the carnal Christian. Christ is ashamed of them as well and will judge them in that day. The genuine Christian who is not ashamed of Christ on earth, of Him will Christ praise at the bema judgment before all creation.

“Ashamed of Jesus” by Joseph Grigg

1 Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?

2 Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine
O'er this benighted soul of mine.

3 Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon
Let midnight be ashamed of noon;
'Tis midnight with my soul till He,
Bright, Morning Star, bid darkness flee.

4 Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name.

2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

In a larger context, “church” here does not have to mean a “church” in a New Testament context but any gathering or assembly. In a Jewish context, it could refer to a synagogue gathering. We have “brethren” in the midst of a “church” but if this is doctrinally aimed at the tribulation saints, the “church” is not the New Testament church. The word “church” could apply to any gathering of people from the definition of “ekklesia”, which is the word used here.

This verse is quoted from Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17,18. This is the only mention of the Church in Hebrews, showing that it is not a major theme of the author. One explanation for this is that if this is a Tribulation epistle, the Church has been raptured out. No Tribulation saint is or was a member of the New Testament Body of Christ as it simply is not on earth during the Tribulation. There is the **“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect”** in Hebrews 12:23 but that is not a term applied by Paul anywhere in his writings to the New Testament Church. There is a “church” made up of “called out believers” in the Tribulation but it is a different body from the New Testament Church.

2:13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

This quote is also from Isaiah 8:18 as above.

2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Christ also partook of flesh and blood through His incarnation and His birth of Mary. He literally became a man. He still retained His deity, but He took upon Him a human body and an unfallen human nature. Thus, He partook of the same physical body as we have and of the same human nature as we have, with the only exception that His was as Adam's was before Adam sinned.

Verses 14 through 18 are great verses dealing with the humanity of Christ.

Through one man's disobedience, man fell into sin. It would have to be through the obedience of one man, Christ, the Second Adam, that the damage of that initial disobedience and sin would have to be undone. What one man did, another Man undid. Through what the Man Christ Jesus did on the cross, dying as a Man for the sins of humanity, He undid the effects of Adam's fall and destroyed the works of Satan and the damage he inflicted upon the human race.

Satan, up until this time, had the power of death. But at the death, and later, the resurrection of Christ, He arose victorious over sin, death and the grave. Satan lost the keys of death at the resurrection of Christ and now Christ owns them, just as He before Adam's fall. We must assume Christ was in original possession of these keys, which symbolize power and authority over death, but that He probably entrusted them to Adam as part of Adam's original commission in Eden. When Adam fell, these keys fell to Adam's new master, Satan. It took the death of Christ on the cross and His resurrection to gain back what Adam lost.

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

What are some of these fears, that even a Christian may be subject to? Charles Spurgeon lists a few of these fears that the devil employs through the "fear of death":

1. Sometimes the devil hath power in death over the Christian, by tempting him to doubt his resurrection, and leading him to look into the black future with the dread of annihilation.
2. Full often the devil comes to us in our lifetime, and he tempts us by telling us that our guilt will certainly prevail against us, that the sins of our youth and our former transgressions are still in our bones, and that when we sleep in the grave our sins shall rise up against us.
3. The evil one has another temptation for him. "It may be very true," saith he, "that you are to live for ever and that your sins have been pardoned; but you have hitherto found it very hard work to persevere, and now you are about to die you will be sure to fail."⁵⁶
4. Before Christ came, people under the law who were saved were still in bondage to fear of death because they didn't know for sure whether God would accept them or not. You have an extraordinary case like David's where "sure mercies" (Acts 13:34) are promised to him, but even then, when David sinned, he was scared to death that he had lost the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:11). After the death of Christ, this fear is taken away (1 Corinthians 15:50-56).

This includes everyone, Jew and Gentile. This fear and bondage of death is a universal thing since all men are subject to it because of sin. Through Christ's successful work on the cross, we have been delivered from that fear, although the sinner is still bound to such fear through his sin.

2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

⁵⁶ Charles Spurgeon, "The Destroyer Destroyed", *New Park Street Pulpit*, December 6, 1857, sermon 166.

“he took not on him the nature of angels”

1. If Christ had done this, He could not have died for man. Angels cannot die for man. A goat or a bullock cannot die for a man. Only a man can die for a man. Angels are spirits, not physical beings, although they can take physical form.
2. Christ did not come to die for angels, so why take the form of angels? If Christ had come as an angel, what sort of an example would that have been for us? How could we have possibly have identify with that? There is no concourse between man and angels.
3. “Suppose I should tell an angel that I could scarcely resist my corruptions and temptations. An angel would look at me and wonder what I meant. If I should tell him that I find this world a vast howling wilderness: how could he believe me, for he has never heard howlings, his ears have only been saluted by golden harps and sweet choral symphonies of praise. If I should tell him that I found it hard work to hold on my way, and keep close to my Savior, the angel could only say, “I cannot sympathize with you, for I am not tempted as you are; I have no clogging nature to abate my ardent zeal, but day without night, with unflagging wing, I circle his throne rejoicing; nor have I a wish nor will to depart from my great Maker.” There you see the Savior's wisdom. He would become a man and not an angel.”⁵⁷

“he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

1. Not only did Christ take on a true human nature and body at His incarnation, but He was also a Jew, born under the law, of the line of David (really a double claim to that line, through both Mary biologically and Joseph legally) to fulfill the law. The Jewish Messiah was as much a Jew as any other Jew.
2. This is the condescension of all, from God Almighty and Infinite in all things to puny, insignificant, woefully limited and weak man, born in a backwater Roman province to a poor and humble Jewish couple- in a barn! This is beyond our understanding and such things angels desire to look into. It is no trouble for men to fall “upward” in terms of the social or economic scale. Paupers and beggars usually have little trouble falling “upwards” into the penthouse. But whoever voluntarily goes down that same ladder- all the way from the absolute top to the lowest rung? We cannot imagine how far down Christ had to stoop. Christ, as God, existed in multiple dimensions. How many, we do not know.
3. Some modern “string theorists” have suggested there are as many as 11 dimensions and possibly more.⁵⁸ Going up just one-dimensional level is an infinite leap. Just imagine going up from a two-dimensional existence to our three dimensional one. Can you imagine living on a two-dimensional plane, where all you knew was breadth and length but not depth? Could you imagine a third dimension such as ours? If you could somehow access our third dimension, that would make you a god to the two-dimensional beings you left behind. Going up just one dimension would place you so far above those beings you left behind that you might as well be a god to them. Now go up two, three, four, six dimensions, and that gap of existence becomes unimaginable. Going up from a two- or a three-dimensional existence to, say, an eight-dimensional existence would be something we could not comprehend. What if God existed “way up there”, maybe in eleven or fifteen dimensions, as compared to our three? He would be so far advanced as compared to us, no wonder He would be God!
 - a. Now try going the other way, from eleven or so dimensions down to three! Can you imagine losing twelve dimensions of existence? Can you imagine going from our three-dimensional existence down to a one-dimensional existence? Instead of living in a cube as we do, could you live on a line? Could you give up

⁵⁷ Charles Spurgeon, “Men Chosen- Fallen Angels Rejected, *New Park Street Pulpit*, June 29, 1856, sermon 90.

⁵⁸ See Hugh Ross, *Beyond the Cosmos: The Transdimensionality of God*.

two dimensions of your physical existence? Could you live in a reality where you only had a “backward” and “forward” but no “right” and “left” and no “up” and “down”? Can you imagine going down so low on the planes of existence, if there was actually life on such a plane? Christ did- for us! What He gave up! What He sacrificed! We cannot possibly imagine or comprehend!

4. “A physician should have some acquaintance with disease; how shall he know the remedy if he be ignorant of the malady. Our Savior knew all because “he took our infirmities and he bare our sicknesses. He was tempted in all points, like as we are.” He looked not at sin from the distance of heaven, but he walked and lived in the midst of it. He did not pass hurriedly through the world as one might hastily walk through an hospital without clearly understanding the disease, but he lived his more than thirty years in the very center of it, seeing sin in all its shapes; yes, seeing it in shapes that you and I have not yet seen. He saw it in demoniac forms, for hell was let loose for a season, that the combat might be the more terrible and the victory the more glorious. He saw sin carried to its most aggravated extent, when it crucified God himself, and nailed Jesus, the heir of heaven, to the accursed tree. He understood the disease; he was no empiric; he had studied the whole case through; deceitful as the human heart is, Jesus knew it; fickle as it is in its various appearances—Protean as it is in its constantly varying shapes, Christ knew and understood it all. His life-long walking of the hospital of human nature had taught him the disease. He knew the subjects, too, upon whom to operate. He knew man, and what was in man; yes, better than the most skilled surgeon can know by experiment. He knew by experience. He himself took our infirmities and bare our sorrows. He was himself the patient, himself the medicine. He took upon himself the nature of the race he came to save, and so every feeling made him perfect in his work; every pang instructed him; every throb of anguish made him wise and rendered him the more accomplished to work out the purposes of God in the bringing of the many sons unto glory. If you will add to his perfect experience his marvelous character, you will see how completely adapted he was to the work. For a Savior, we need one who is full of love, whose love will make him firm to his purpose, whose love will constrain him to yoke every power and talent that he has to the great work. We want one with zeal so flaming, that it will eat him up; of courage so indomitable, that he will face every adversary rather than forego his end; we want one, at the same time, who will blend with this brass of courage the gold of meekness and of gentleness; we want one who will be determined to deal fearlessly with his adversaries, who will put on zeal as a cloak, and will deal tenderly and compassionately with the disease of sin-sick men, such an one we have in Christ. No man can read the character of Christ with any sort of understanding without saying, “That is the man I want as my friend.” The argument which Christ used was a very powerful one—“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.” Why? “For I am meek and lowly in heart.” The character of Christ qualifies him to be the world's Savior.”⁵⁹

Summary of 2:17,18

- A. Christ was a merciful and faithful high priest.
- B. He made conciliation of the sins of the people.
- C. Since He knew what it was like to be tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.

⁵⁹ Charles Spurgeon, “Christ- Perfect Through Sufferings”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* volume 8, sermon 478.

6. Jesus- A Merciful High Priest 2:17,18

2:17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

“behooved” “from the Old English “behofian”, “be”= intense thoroughness and “hof” to heave and “ian” the action of. It is an intense lifting up, requiring much effort, but done in order to give a useful or necessary advantage, hence the idea of “ought” or “necessary”.⁶⁰

“His brethren” are the Jews here, but is humanity is a broader and larger sense. Jesus was made like His brother Jews in His incarnation.

What kind of a high priest is Jesus?

1. **A merciful one.** This is necessary for a priest. What good is a priest who cares nothing for the people he ministers unto? He must walk among them, share their joys, sorrows and burdens, and be one of them. This is what Christ accomplished in His incarnation. He became one of us, whom He would minister among and on behalf of. Since He was one of us, He understands what it was like to be one of us. He was there. He lived it. He experienced it. He can have sympathy and compassion upon us, as a good priest must.

2. **A faithful one.** An unfaithful priest is a murderer of souls who will have much to answer for at the judgment. And who is more faithful than Christ, Who fulfilled all the Father’s will and that, perfectly? He always did all those things that always pleased the Father.

3. **A High Priest.** Not just a priest, but a High Priest, One with the responsibility to go into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement and make the atonement for the sins of the people. This did Jesus do, with His own blood, after His death, as He went into the heavenly Holy of Holies and sprinkled His own blood on the heavenly mercy seat, to satisfy to sin question once and for all. No “mere” priest could do that. It required a High Priest.

A. “High Priest. Occ. very frequently in Gospels and Acts; seventeen times in Hebrews; and nowhere else after Acts. A significant silence.”⁶¹

B. Paul spoke very little about the High Priest in his epistles, but the High Priest is mentioned 17 times in Hebrews, as noticed by Bullinger.

This means that Jesus is a better high priest than any other high priest Israel ever had or will have.

Christ is a priest but not a Levitical one as He was from the tribe of Judah, not Levi. He was a priest after the order of Melchizedek. We will take up more of this truth when we get into Hebrews 7.

“high priest” Used 17 times in Hebrews. The priesthood of Christ is more of an Old Testament concept that a Jew would appreciate, but something Gentiles would not be as interested in.

⁶⁰ Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 156.

⁶¹ Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*.

“to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

1. This is ultimately what the priest does- make reconciliation for the people before God for their sins through the offering of the proper and appropriate sacrifices and offerings and the performing of the necessary and the correct rituals.

2. **“RECONCILIATION** is one of those words like imputation, redemption, sanctification, etc. These Bible words nearly all end in “-tion” or at least “-ion.” They compose a sort of “salvation vocabulary” that is unique to the Bible. Their origin is exclusively SPIRITUAL, and they encompass the great doctrines of salvation (notice the “-tion” on that one). You may hear these words used occasionally out in the world, but they came from the Bible. When people talk about “reconciliation” they are using a Bible word that deals specifically with the doctrines of salvation. One of the ways you brethren know that Christian America has “gone to pot” (among 1,000 other ways!) is by the fact that when you turn on the radio or the TV and hear a preacher preach you do not hear the “-tion” words. Every one of those words emphasizes some phase of salvation or some aspect of salvation. Notice the shades of meaning.

A. Salvation: a general term describing the whole process from start to finish.

B. Redemption: a completed payment so a thing can be released or be “freed.”

C. Propitiation: a specific payment to placate or appease an offended party.

D. Regeneration: an actual act whereby a man is born again by the Spirit of God.

E. Adoption: a judicial act whereby a sinner is declared to be a part of God’s family.

F. Justification: a judicial act whereby God declares a sinner to be righteous.

G. Imputation: a judicial act where God attributes someone’s sins to someone else and attributes someone’s righteousness to someone else.

H. Sanctification: a three-stage process whereby a sinner is saved from the penalty of sin (Hell), the power of sin (daily), and the presence of sin (at the Advent: see 1 Thessalonian 5:23.)⁶²

I. Reconciliation is the bringing together two quarrelling parties and making piece between them.

3. “Reconciliation” is the bring back into fellowship parties that were at odds with each other. That describes the relationship between God and Man before the cross. This “falling out” took place in Genesis 3 at the fall of Adam. Since that time, both God and Man have been at odds with each other and fellowship has been broken, all because of sin. But when Christ, the God-Man, came, He was able to take “both sides” in the controversy and see both positions. As God, Christ was acceptable before the Father and as Man, He was acceptable to men. Christ, as man, knew all about human frailties. Christ, as God, knew all about the holiness of God. When Christ died on the cross, He took God’s demands for the punishment of man’s sin upon Himself and suffered the penalty that Man was to suffer for his sins. When Christ successfully paid for man’s sin on the cross, God’s demands for payment of that sin was satisfied and there was no longer any basis for the separation between God and Man that has existed before. Through the work and death of Christ, man’s sin-debt was now paid, so reconciliation between the two parties was now possible.

A. Christ reconciled Jew with Gentile through the establishment of the Church and He also reconciled fallen man with God through His work on the cross.

Enemies are now made friends! The Jew and Gentile hated each other before Christ’s work of reconciliation. Now believing Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ and call each other “brother”.

4. Also see 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 for more information on reconciliation.

A. God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ- 2 Corinthians 5:18a.

⁶² Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 55-56.

B. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation- 2 Corinthians 5:18b.

1. This involves our ministry of evangelism in trying to reconcile the sinner to God.

2. We cannot reconcile men with God ourselves. Only Christ can do that. But we can act as a “middleman” to set up the personal reconciliation of a sinner with Christ through salvation. That is what evangelism is- the bringing of a sinner who is separated from Christ and setting up the reconciliation between the two of them through the blood of the cross. But how difficult it is to reconcile men to God today when so many people hate God and the things of God and have no desire to be reconciled to God. You can reconcile two parties if one of them has no desire to be reconciled.

C. God reconciled the world unto Himself through Christ- 2 Corinthians 5:19a.

D. He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation- 2 Corinthians 5:19b.

2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

“he himself hath suffered being tempted”

1. There is no suffering when one gives way to temptation, but there is suffering if one resists it. But the very fact that Christ was tempted must have been especially painful for such a Holy One as He is. It would not bother a sinner too much since we are so accustomed to sin. But for One Who is infinitely holy and sinless, the very presence of sin to Him like this must have been very painful indeed.

2. “**succor**” to help, assist. It also includes the idea of comfort. It is to rescue someone with provisions. The original Latin root literally signified “to run under”.⁶³

Christ knew temptation while on earth even if He never knew sin as He never sinned during the 33 years of His life. There were the three temptations of Satan in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, plus others. There was the struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. Who knows what else Christ went through in His earthly ministry that was not recorded in the gospels? In short, He knew temptation, as He was tempted. The thing is, unlike us, He suffered His temptations, while we tend to enjoy our temptations. Unlike us, He never gave into His temptations, whereas we give into the majority of ours.

1. Because He has been tempted and knows what it is like and how to fight it, He is able to help us as we deal with our temptations. All heirs of heaven pass under this yoke. All gold must feel the fire. All wheat must be threshed. All diamonds must be cut. All saints must endure temptation. Christ must as well. We do not have to go through them alone and unaided. We always have divine aid and assistance at our disposal when we find ourselves under temptation. Our problem is that we rarely avail ourselves of it since we tend to enjoy the sin too much and eventually surrender to it.

2. Christ also suffered being tempted. It's not just that He was tempted but knew none of the combat and none of the struggle that went along with it. It is not as one who walked through a briar patch dressed in armor, who felt none of the thorns and scratches. No, the temptations also scratched and bruised Him, as they do us. He wrestled with it as we do. They assaulted Him as they do us. They wearied Him as they do us. He knew the horror of it, the slyness of it, the seductiveness of it, the bluntness of it, just as we do. Christ experienced the full force of temptation, just as we do. There was nothing diluted in the mixture of the cup of temptation that Christ drank from. It was

⁶³ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 320.

just as strong, if not stronger, as the mixture that we also drink from. If fact, temptation would be a greater abhorrence and horror to Christ than to us since He was God and did not have a fallen nature. He would not be as acclimated to sin as we are and would not be nearly as tolerant of it as we are. The very thought of sin would be so utterly repugnant to Christ so as to be unimaginable to us, since we are so accustomed to sin and since we practically live and move and breathe in sin.

3. 1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

A. There are three basic temptations, and they are found in 1 John 2:16, Genesis 3:6 and Matthew 4:1-11.

i. Lust of the eyes.

ii. Lust of the flesh.

iii. Pride of life.

4. Christ suffered being tempted. We enjoy it although He endured it. Sin was torture with Christ.

5. The Jew in the Tribulation who is suffering greatly is looking for a Messiah who knows what it is like to suffer. All they need to do is to read the Gospel accounts of Jesus to see that He knew sufferings, so He can identify with, help and encourage those who are also suffering.

In Hebrews 4:15, we are told that Christ was “**in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**” Christ was tempted with every type of sin. He was not tempted with television or computers or fast cars. There are only three categories of sin (lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life, 1 John 2:15) and all these sins can be placed under one of those three categories.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 3

Summary of 3:1-6

- A. Christ is called the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.
- B. Christ and Moses compared and contrasted in this passage.
- C. An exhortation to hold fast to our profession.

7. Christ- Better Than Moses 3:1-6

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

“**holy brethren**” is the title used by the author to identify himself with the Jews of his day and with the future Jews of the Tribulation period who were considering the Messianic claims of Jesus.

Christ is referred to as:

1. **An apostle.** Of course, He is greater than the apostles of the early church. Christ is an apostle in the sense that He is “sent with a commission”, which is the meaning behind the word. The Father sent Christ with a commission for the cross, which He fulfilled perfectly, so in that regard, Christ was an apostle. The word cannot be limited to the original 12 apostles or even just to men.
 - A. An “apostle” is “one sent with authority, with a commission”. We get our English word “postal” from this Greek word. When you put a stamp on a letter and give it to the postman, you are sending him with a commission to deliver that letter on your behalf.
2. **High Priest of our profession.** He is not a high priest after the Aaronic priesthood (dealt with in Hebrews 7) but after the order of Melchizedek.

“**consider**” Stop and dwell long and hard on the person, work and Messianic claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sinners need to consider Him for their salvation. Saints need to consider Him for their sanctification. This will involve much meditation, but the rewards are worth any and all time and energy spent. There is no higher, no better topic for a man to dwell upon!

3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

The Father appointed the Son to His earthly ministry.

Jesus will now be compared with Moses. The Jews revered Moses as their lawgiver, but Jesus will be shown to be even greater than Jesus. Both Jesus and Moses were faithful in their charges and in their ministries, although Jesus was more faithful than Moses, because there was no failure in Jesus’ life as there was in Moses.

1. Moses, as any man, had several failures in his life and ministry, including:
 - A. Murdering the Egyptian
 - B. Reluctance to obey God in going back to Egypt
 - C. Unfaithfulness in his first appearance before Pharaoh in relating the message from God (compare Exodus 4:22,23 with Exodus 5:1,3).
 - D. Striking the rock the second time, which eventually cost him his chance to go into Canaan.
2. Christ was completely and totally faithful, with no failings or shortcomings in either His life or ministry. In this regard, He was superior to Moses. Moses, overall and in general,

was a faithful man in doing what God asked him to do, in leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, giving the Law to Israel and in building the tabernacle, but that was not the same perfect faithfulness that Jesus exhibited while on earth.

3. If Moses could be honored and trusted by Israel, so could Jesus, and even more.

“The one notable exception to Moses’ faithfulness was his defection from the exact order of Numbers 20:10–14. It was this that caused him to lose his “entrance ticket” into the Promised Land (Deut. 3). The reason why this is “overlooked” in Hebrews 3:2 is exactly the same reason why we find the Lord “overlooking” David’s adultery in Hebrews 11, Sarah’s infidelity in Romans 4, Jonah’s backsliding in Matthew 12, Rahab’s lying in James 2:25, Abraham’s lying (Gen. 12:12–13) in James 2, Samson’s immorality in Hebrews 11, and Jacob’s deception (Gen. 27) in Romans 9:13. The New Testament has a strange way of ERADICATING the sins of the Old Testament saints. It was almost as though all of the authors of the New Testament had been in “collusion” and decided NOT to mention them. Grace is a wonderful thing, isn’t it?”⁶⁴

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

This will really irritate a Jew, to suggest anyone, including Jesus, is greater than Moses. To a Jew, there was no man greater than Moses. After all, God gave them the Law through Moses. He was the hero and idol of every Jew in this day (see John 9:28,29, for example, “**Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.**”). Yet it is clear that Jesus was greater than Moses since Jesus was God. Look at Moses honoring Jesus at the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10 and Luke 9:28-36. This is a stumbling block that Israel must get over regarding Christ but to date has not and will not until the Second Coming.

“**he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.**” When you look at a piece of art, to whom do you give the most glory- the piece of art itself or the artist who created that piece of art? When you look at a house, do you marvel at the house itself or the builder of that house? The final product that you are looking at may get a lot of very worthy honor, but you also give the greater honor to the man who had the skill to create that finished product in the first place. You may admire the Church, the Bible, the Law, the nation of Israel, even the Universe and nature, but the greater glory always goes to the One Who did the actual designing and construction of what you are marveling at, and that is God. This is the sin of the secular scientist, always giving glory to the creation but not to the Creator in his blind insistence of trying to attribute the existence of whatever it is that he is studying to blind “evolution”.

3:4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

God, as Creator of all things and Builder of All Things, regardless of what the evolutionists claim. Moses may have “built” the nation of Israel by his law, but Jesus built all things because He is God.

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

To say that Jesus was more faithful than Moses is no attack against Moses, as Moses was faithful in his ministry and has obtained a blessed name among the faithful. There is no denying

⁶⁴ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 62-63.

that Moses was a great man, but Jesus was greater. Jesus is greater than the greatest man and all the greatest men who ever lived combined

3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

The “house of Moses” was the nation of Israel was Moses was faithful over that. Christ has a House and that is all the Redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, including but not limited to, the Church.

“if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

1. The context is still Jewish as the audience is still Jewish, written primarily (doctrinally) to Tribulation Jews, so this is a warning (repeated and enforced in the section below) against apostasy on the part of these Jews who are in the Tribulation.
2. We are not dealing with Church doctrine in this context so the truth of the security of the believer and “once saved always saved” need not apply in other dispensations.
 - A. We can always make a spiritual application. We should always hold fast to our profession of salvation and our public profession of the truth. There may come some instances that we need to “tweak” our public profession as we continue to grow, mature and come to a fuller and more accurate understanding of Biblical truth. But we should never renounce the truth and we understand it.
3. It is clear that a man can lose his salvation in the tribulation period if he fails to “**hold on to the end**” (Matthew 24:13).
4. Notice the “if” here...we are this house IF we hold fast the confidence...” This is not church doctrine for our salvation is not dependent on our maintaining our faith but on the finished and final work of Christ. In the tribulation, the only way a Jew stays “in the house” is IF he remains faithful to the confidence that he has in the truth that he has received in the tribulation. He must not fall away, grow cold, apostatize or in any other way fall away, else he will lose whatever salvation he might have gained in the tribulation.
5. This is a church-age heresy, but the teaching is clear here, so the only interpretation is that the doctrinal application here is not for this dispensation and that it is not directed to Christians. Any and all attempts to shoehorn Hebrews 3:6 and 3:14 into the Church Age is bound to end in theological failure.
 - A. This is how you approach a paradox, where you have two truths that seem to contradict both presented as truth. They are both true but seem to conflict? How is that possible? The idea may be that you are dealing with truths that apply to a different dispensation or situation.

“unto the end”

1. The end of what? The end of our life on earth for one application, if applied personally. To the tribulation saint, he must maintain his faith in Christ until the end of the tribulation and the second coming in Revelation 19. If he abandons that profession before Revelation 19, he is lost. If he takes the mark of the beast, he is lost. There is no eternal security in the tribulation. The security of the believer is a Church Age fact and doctrine, but it does not apply in the tribulation, which is a separate and different dispensation.
2. This is the same “end” as in Matthew 24:13 and Hebrews 3:14.

The rest of Hebrews 3 deals with the wilderness life of the carnal Christian. Hebrews 4 deals with the Canaan life of the sanctified Christian.

We can naturally make a Church Age application, even with a Tribulation doctrine. Although the Christian enjoys eternal security,⁶⁵ that security is not to be presumed upon. One of the points of Calvinistic doctrine is the perseverance of the saints, which carries the idea that the true Christian will endure to the end without renouncing or abandoning his profess. With this, we tend to agree. What shall we do with a professing Christian who claims he is saved, only to abandon the faith years later? This is becoming increasingly common today, especially of public figures. Were they truly saved? Did the grace of God do a genuine work in the heart? Or did they merely have some religious experience, mistaking that for the new birth? I believe many people who claim they are Christian truly are not. I am not sure who said it (it may have been A. W. Tozer), but one preacher observed that he doubted if 10% of church members were truly saved. It is these professors who have a tenuous grip on salvation that they will abandon at the first sign of reversal, peer pressure or tribulation. I heard a missionary say once "the faith that fizzled before the finish was flawed from the first". We cannot be as dogmatic as we like as we do not know the heart, but we would doubt that any professing Christian who fails to maintain his confidence (or testimony) until the end (of his life) was truly saved. This does include seasons of backsliding, coldness or disobedience, as long as the person involved repents and resumes a normal Christian life. But what do you do with a man who has been a backslider for 40 years or a professor who hasn't been to church on 40 years? Are they truly saved? Even if a true Christian could lapse like this and still maintain his salvation, things will be very difficult for him at the bema seat judgment!

"When the battles rage against him, when the weight of the ministry is upon him, when people desert him, and some even become traitors, the preacher must keep on preaching; he must keep on living for God; he must keep on exhorting and pleading. The man of God cannot allow anything to dissuade him, because there are others that need a voice crying in the wilderness. As Moses was faithful, we must continue to be faithful."⁶⁶

Summary 3:7-19

- A. Admonition against hardening of the heart against the voice of God.
- B. A historical recounting of Israel's provocation against God at Kadesh-Barnea.
 - 1. This was done through unbelief.
- C. The judgment was a lack of spiritual rest and instead, the judgment of spiritual wandering.

8. Warning Against Hardening the Heart 3:7-19

Summary of 3:7-19

- 1. Admonition not to harden your hearts against what the Holy Spirit may tell you, 3:7,8,15-19
 - A. It would result in departing from God, 3:12
 - B. Such hardening is caused by the deceitfulness of sin, 3:13
 - C. It is a provoking of God, 3:16
- 2. A review of Jewish hardening of their collective hearts, 3:9-11
 - A. Because of this, God would not allow them to enter into His rest, 3:11,18,19
 - i. Probably a reference to Numbers 13 and 14 and the failure at Kadesh-Barnea.

⁶⁵ Ff he is truly saved, we must always emphasize that! We have so many false professors today.

⁶⁶ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 59.

- ii. God was grieved with that generation, 3:10,17
- 3. Exhort each other daily to prevent from falling into a hardened heart, 3:13
- 4. We are made partakers of Christ, 3:14
 - A. Only if we hold fast our confidence to the end, 3:14

3:7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

God always urges in the “today”, never the “tomorrow”. In 2 Corinthians 6:2, see where unsaved Gentiles are told that today (not tomorrow) is the “day of salvation.”

Moses does this as well when speaking to Israel in Deuteronomy 9:1, **Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven.**

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

To harden the heart is to shut off every avenue of communion with God. The idea is of a once-soft element drying up and hardening over a process of time.

1. Sinners can do this when they resist the convicting power of the Holy Spirit for salvation. Christians can do this when they resist the convicting power of the Holy Spirit for sanctification.
2. Some hearts are so hard that neither ministry, nor misery, nor miracle, nor mercy can soften them. When a heart gets to this stage, it is beyond all remedy. God Himself cannot move such a heart.
3. You can also harden the neck as in 2 Kings 17:14 (**Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.**) but that deals more with stubbornness and does not appear to be as serious as hardening the heart. The hardened the heart is to harden the very essence of a man's being, every compartment of his life. In this state, no one can deal with you, or even change your mind about anything, not even God. You imagine yourself to be right and justified in everything you do, and you are not able to be convinced otherwise.
4. This is also displayed in rejection of the Scripture, when it is preached or read. Some
5. professors will sit in a service and fight the preacher over every word he is faithfully preaching, and he will have absolutely no intention of doing anything the preacher says, and, by extension, what the word of God is telling him.
6. The hard heart can become so insensitive that even signs, wonders and miracles from God will have no effect on that heart. Consider Pharaoh. He witnessed 10 great signs and didn't relent until his own son was dead. The Pharisees and Sadducees saw the miracles of Christ yet still had Him put to death.
7. Signs of hardening of the heart:
 - A. An increasing bad attitude toward the preached word of God
 - B. Increasing criticism of the local church
 - C. A leaving off of private prayer and personal devotion
 - D. An increasingly hyper-sensitivity toward any and all admonitions, either by God or man
 - E. An increasing unwillingness to admit or confess any fault for any sin
 - F. The final remedy may be our own destruction, like the Prodigal Son. It was not until his life was destroyed that his heart was finally softened enough to

recover himself from his sin. He was full of self-will and rebellion, refusing to hear any admonitions about the destructive course he was on, until it was too late.

8. Specific verses on the hardened heart:

A. Sometimes God will harden the heart- Exodus 4:21; 7:3,13; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8,17; Joshua 11:20; John 12:40

i. This is usually done in judgment

B. Sometimes we harden our own heart- Exodus 8:15,32; 9:34; 1 Samuel 6:6; Proverbs 28:14; 2 Chronicles 36:13; Psalm 95:7,8; Isaiah 63:17; Mark 3:5; 10:5; Romans 2:5; Hebrews 3:8; 4:7

9. Also see Psalm 95:8, **Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.**

10. Steps to apostasy⁶⁷

A. Refusal to hear- Hebrews 3:7

B. The hardened heart- Hebrews 3:8,15

C. Unbelief- Hebrews 3:12

D. Departure from the living God- Hebrews 3:12

E. Provocation of God Almighty- Hebrews 3:8,9,16

F. Habitual sinning- Hebrews 3:10

G. Final apostasy- Hebrews 3:11

Different types of hearts in the Bible:

1. Evil heart- Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 3:17; 16:12; Hebrews 3:12

2. Hardened heart- Exodus 4:21; 7:3,13,14,22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,12,34,35; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8,17; Joshua 11:20; 1 Samuel 6:6; Proverbs 28:14; 2 Chronicles 36:13; Psalm 95:8; Isaiah 63:17; Ezekiel 3:7; Matthew 19:8; Mark 3:5; 10:5; John 12:40; Romans 2:5; Hebrews 3:8; 4:7

3. Wise heart- Exodus 28:3; 31:6; 35:10,25,35; 36:1,2,,8 1 Kings 3:12; Job 9:4; Proverbs 10:8; 16:21; Ecclesiastes 7:4; 10:2

4. Willing heart- Exodus 35:5,22,29

5. Stirred heart- Exodus 35:21,26; 36:2

6. Discouraged heart- Numbers 32:7,9; Deuteronomy 1:28

7. Trembling heart- Deuteronomy 28:65; 1 Samuel 4:13; 28:5; Job 37:1

8. Melted heart- Joshua 2:11; 5:1; 7:5; 14:8; Isaiah 13:7; Nahum 2:10

9. Glad heart- Judges 18:20; Isaiah 30:29

10. Merry heart- Ruth 3:7; 1 Samuel 25:36; Proverbs 15:13,15; 17:22

11. Another heart- 1 Samuel 10:9

12. Touched heart- 1 Samuel 10:26

13. Failed heart- 1 Samuel 17:32; Psalm 40:12; 73:26

14. Dead heart- 1 Samuel 25:37

15. Heart of a lion- 2 Samuel 15:13; 17:10

16. Understanding heart- 1 Kings 3:9

17. A large heart- 1 Kings 4:29

18. Turned away/back heart- 1 Kings 11:3,9; Acts 7:39

19. Double heart- 1 Chronicles 12:33; Psalm 12:2

20. One heart- 1 Chronicles 12:38; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Ezekiel 11:19

21. Perfect heart- 1 Kings 8:61; 15:4; 2 Kings 20:3; 1 Chronicles 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 2 Chronicles 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Psalm 101:2; Isaiah 38:3

22. Whole heart/all the heart- Deuteronomy 4:29; 6:5; 11:13; 13:3; 2 Chronicles 6:14,38; Psalm 9:1; 119:2,10; Jeremiah 3:10

23. Unprepared heart- 2 Chronicles 12:14; 20:33

⁶⁷ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 67-70.

24. Lifted up heart (to the Lord)- 2 Chronicles 17:6
25. Lifted up heart (to destruction)- 2 Chronicles 26:16; Daniel 5:20
26. Free heart- 2 Chronicles 29:31
27. Lifted up heart (proud)- Deuteronomy 8:14; 2 Chronicles 32:25; Ezekiel 28:2,5,17; 31:10; Daniel 11:12
28. Prepared heart- 1 Samuel 7:3; 1 Chronicles 29:18; 2 Chronicles 19:3; 30:19; Ezra 7:10; Job 11:13
29. Soft heart- Job 23:16
30. Deceived heart- Job 31:9; Isaiah 44:20
31. Stony heart- Job 41:24; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26
32. Upright in heart- 2 Kings 3:6; 2 Chronicles 29:34; Psalm 7:10; 11:2; 32:11; 64:10; 94:15; 97:11
33. Proved heart- Psalm 17:3
34. Heart like wax- Psalm 22:14
35. Panting heart- Psalm 38:10; 42:1; Isaiah 21:4
36. Hot heart/Burning heart (good sense)- Psalm 39:3; Luke 24:32
37. Clean heart- Psalm 51:10; 73:1,13; Proverbs 20:9
38. Broken heart- Psalm 51:17; 69:20; 109:16; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Acts 21:13
39. Contrite heart- Psalm 51:17
40. Fixed heart- Psalm 57:7; 108:1; 112:7
41. Smitten heart- Psalm 102:4
42. Wounded heart- Psalm 109:22
43. Established heart- Psalm 112:8
44. Enlarged heart- Psalm 119:32
45. Heart as fat as grease- Psalm 119:70; Matthew 13:15
46. Desolate heart- Psalm 143:4
47. Froward heart- Psalm 101:4; Proverbs 11:20; 17:20
48. Sick heart- Proverbs 13:12
49. Backslider in heart- Proverbs 14:14
50. Sound heart- Proverbs 14:30
51. Proud in heart- Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 16:5
52. Fat heart- Isaiah 6:10; Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27
53. Fearful heart- Isaiah 35:4
54. Departed heart- Jeremiah 17:5
55. Deceitful heart- Jeremiah 17:9
56. Faint heart- Leviticus 26:36; Deuteronomy 20:8; Isaiah 7:4; Lamentations 5:17
57. Whorish heart- Ezekiel 6:9
58. New heart- Ezekiel 36:26
59. Heart of flesh- Ezekiel 36:26
60. Uncircumcised in heart- Leviticus 26:41; Ezekiel 44:7,9; Acts 7:51
61. Divided heart- Hosea 10:2
62. Heart as an adamant stone- Zechariah 7:12
63. Obstinate heart- Deuteronomy 2:30
64. Hot heart (bad sense)- Deuteronomy 19:6
65. Circumcised heart- Deuteronomy 30:6
66. Grieved heart- 1 Samuel 1:8; Psalm 73:21
67. Naught heart- 1 Samuel 17:28
68. Wicked heart- 1 Kings 2:44
69. Integrity of heart- 1 Kings 9:4
70. Heart not perfect- 1 Kings 11:4; 15:3; 2 Chronicles 25:2
71. Tender heart- 2 Kings 22:19
72. Set heart- 1 Chronicles 22:19

73. Tender heart- 2 Chronicles 34:27
74. Faithful heart- Nehemiah 9:8
75. Pure heart- Psalm 24:4; Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:5; James 4:8; 1 Peter 1:22
76. Strengthened heart- Psalm 31:24
77. Stoutness of heart- Isaiah 9:9
78. Rent heart- Joel 2:13
79. Lowly in heart- Matthew 11:29
80. Honest heart- Luke 8:15
81. Good heart- Luke 8:15
82. Slow of heart- Luke 24:25
83. Troubled heart- John 14:1,27
84. Heart "not right"- Acts 8:21
85. Filled heart- Acts 14:17
86. Opened heart- Acts 16:14
87. Foolish heart- Romans 1:21
88. Darkened heart- Romans 1:21
89. Impenitent heart- Romans 2:5
90. Blind heart- Ephesians 4:18
91. Singleness of heart- Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22
92. Stablished heart- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
93. Unblameable heart- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
94. Directed heart- 2 Thessalonians 3:5
95. Erring heart- Hebrews 3:10
96. True heart- Hebrews 10:22
97. Nourished heart- James 5:5
98. Stout hearted- Psalm 76:5; Isaiah 46:12
99. Stiff hearted- Ezekiel 2:4

Out of this list, we have the following hearts in this passage:

1. Hard heart- Hebrews 3:8; 4:7
2. Erring heart- Hebrews 3:10
3. Evil heart of unbelief- Hebrews 3:12

"provocation"

1. The reference is to the Hebrews provoking the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:26, 6:17) and provoking Moses to speak "unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalm 106:33).
2. How do we provoke God?
 - A. By refusing to obey- Exodus 23:21; Psalm 95:8
 - B. By refusing to believe- Numbers 14:11; Psalm 95:8
 - C. By hardening the heart against God
 - D. By corrupting ourselves through sin- Deuteronomy 4:25; 9:18; 31:29; 1 Kings 16:2,33; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chronicles 33:6
 - E. Idolatry- 1 Kings 14:9; 2 Kings 17:11; 22:17; 23:19; 2 Chronicles 34:25; Jeremiah 7:18; 11:17; 32:29; 44:3
 - F. Lack of separation (from Egypt)- Ezekiel 16:26
 - G. By murmuring (see the times Israel provoked God in the wilderness, under 3:9)
3. How many times did Israel do this while in the wilderness! At least 10 times they provoked God, always caused by unbelief. They saw the works of God, heard the voice of God, saw the miracles, heard the man of God, and still did not believe. Unbelief hardens the heart and makes it that much harder to break off the chains of that sin and to start believing God. Israel saw the works and the miracles of God for 40 years in the

wilderness and yet that did little to strengthen their faith. They entered Canaan with as much unbelief as they had when they left Egypt. This shows that miracles do not help to strengthen faith. Seeing the mighty works of God may be impressive but it does not leave the men who witnessed the miracles much better spiritually for having seen the miracles. What made Moses the man of God that he turned out to be? It was not the miracles that he saw. It was the time alone that he spent with God on the mount for the 40 days that made him the man he was. The Charismatics are certainly wrong in their emphasis on “signs and wonders and miracles” today while neglecting the written and preached word of God. As usual, they are operating in the wrong dispensation. This warning, directed at Israel in the tribulation, is also directed at us. We can also be guilty of similar unbelief after hearing the voice of God. We may not see the same works of God that Israel saw in the wilderness as God does not work in that manner today. But we live in the day of the “still small voice” where God works in quieter ways. But the warning is just as valid and the judgment just as severe for us today if we harden our hearts against the dealings and the voice of God in our hearts.

A. I think the primary incident is at Kadesh Barnea, when the nation believed the 10 unfaithful spies rather than believe God and His promises and covenant in Numbers 13 and 14. This failure resulted in the 40-year wilderness wandering.

4. What were some of these provocations Israel committed against God while in the wilderness?

- A. Exodus 15:23-25, murmuring for water
- B. Exodus 16:2,3, murmuring for hunger
- C. Exodus 17:1-7, murmuring for water again
- D. Exodus 32, the Golden Calf incident
- E. Numbers 11:1-3, complaining
- F. Numbers 11:4-33, murmuring for meat
- G. Numbers 12:1-15, murmuring against Moses
- H. Numbers 14, failure at Kadesh Barnea
- I. Numbers 16:1-40, rebellion of Korah
- J. Numbers 16:41-50, murmuring against Moses again
- K. Numbers 20:2-13, murmuring for water again

3:9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

It was one temptation and provocation after another in the wilderness. The book of Numbers especially lists and details these temptations, examples of unbelief, lapses of faith and rebellions. This is why Numbers has to be my least-favorite book in the Bible, with Judges coming in a close second.

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

Unbelief and hardness of heart grieve God like no other sins do. Unbelief calls God a liar and hardness of heart is just plain stubbornness and self-will that flies in the face of the will and the sovereignty of God, where we exalt our will above that of God.

A man who knows the ways of God and accepts them will not be guilty of the sins of unbelief and a hard heart. Thus, it is the man who is either ignorant of the ways and will of God or who has deliberately rejected them (not through ignorance but with full knowledge) “always errs”.

“they have not known my ways” If anyone should have known the ways of God, it should have been Israel, especially in the light of their advantages that Paul laid out in Romans 2 and 3. Ignorance is not the issue here, but a rejection of and a despising of the ways of God on the part of Israel. They simply did not want anything to do with the ways of God, as laid out in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, so any “ignorance” was self-inflicted. It is not that they could not know the ways of God, they simply didn’t want to know them, like most people today. How little interest there is in God, His ways and word. You go on visitation or pass out tracts and you mainly are hit with indifference if not outright hostility.

3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

That generation never made it into Canaan, into the land that God had promised them, but they all died in the wilderness. They wasted away in the wilderness for those 40 years, in the spiritual no-man’s land between Egypt (a type of the world) and Canaan (a type of the full Christian life). They wandered, walked in circles, but never came into their promised possession, inheritance or rest because of their unbelief. They could never settle down and could never be content and “rest”.

1. “Rest” here has the idea of to permanently settle down. So many Christians never get settled, never get grounded, never enter into a spiritual rest due to their carnality, rebellion and spiritual unsettledness. Israel wandered for 40 years in the wilderness and that sinful generation never found their rest due to their unbelief.

A. There are four rests mentioned in this passage:

i. The Canaan rest 3:16-19

a. For Israel, the rest after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness for their carnalities and disobedience. It also comes after the lengthy battles under Joshua to secure the land and to drive out the Canaanites.

b. You can’t have rest in your (spiritual) inheritance (as a Christian) until you drive out the Canaanites (the besetting sins in our lives).

ii. The creation rest 4:3,4

a. Reference to the Sabbath, as God rested on the 7th day of His creation in Genesis 2:3. If God rested God rested for a day in Genesis 2:3. The creation rests for a thousand years in the millennium. The creation rest may refer more to the creation resting as it groans under the weight of man’s sin (Romans 8:22). The millennial rest may apply more personally to believers and their thousand years of rest, living in a perfect world under the reign of Christ.

iii. The millennial rest 4:7,8

a. All creation will finally rest from the curse and from the sin of man.

iv. The believer’s rest 4:9,10

i. This can apply anytime to any believer, as mentioned above, to those who are saved by grace without works, as we rest from the religious obligations imposed on us by the various theological systems, and simply rest in the finished work of Christ on the cross. This is the rest of sanctification, as we rest from our own strivings and works and rest in the finished work of Christ in our salvation and for our sanctification.

ii. "When a preacher or musician is controlled by truth, his countenance will portray it. But if either loses communion with God, the people of God can detect the absence of His controlling rest and truth. In spite of one's ability and talent to preach, sing, or play, the absence of holiness of God in his life reveals that God truly is not present, energizing that life to his glory. No matter to whom the preacher or musician ministers, he must come to a rest, realizing God must minister in and through him. This is part of the rest of sanctification."⁶⁸

iii. "We must come to a rest about our Christian works and living the Christian life. We must come to despise trying to live the Christian life on our own, through the power of the flesh- oh, what weariness...The Canaan rest of Hebrews 4:1 is a rest from my works. The Canaan rest of Hebrews 4:8 concerns the way I live in Christ; I am at rest in Him, in His provision of redemption for me. No longer am I questioning His provision; no longer am I doubting; no longer am I leaning toward my own works to keep me. One becomes burnt-out in the ministry only when he is consumed with ministerial labor that is not energized by God's power. This burn-out should never happen to a Christian. Although sixteen hours a day can be physically exhausting, vision for Christ should ever be burning...To be absolutely physically drained is normal; it happened to Paul in Colossians 1:27,28."⁶⁹

Israel believed God to bring them out of Egypt but not to bring them into Canaan. Many believe God can save them but not all believe God can lead them into a full Christian life.

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

A heart of unbelief is an evil heart as it refuses to believe God, thus effectively calling Him a liar and implying that His word and covenants are no good and cannot be trusted. The first step in apostasy and eventually leaving God is to harden the heart against God. Unbelief is the fruit of a hardened heart.

1. It can involve many things:

A. Stopping attendance at church services.

B. Rebelling against the Scripture, both as we hear it preached and read in in written form. We hear and reject.

C. Fighting against any and all movings of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

D. Refusing any admonition from the brethren regarding spiritual matters.

2. Unbelief has to be the worst sin any Christian can commit. Yes, it is worse than adultery or murder because an unbelieving heart is an evil heart. We call God a liar in unbelief. We refuse to believe the promises and the warnings of what God said in the Scripture. We see a promise, yet we refuse to act on it in faith and worry our life away. Or we see a warning against sin, ignore it, sin that sin and suffer the consequences. To live for God involves believing God and applying that faith and belief to every compartment of the life. Israel was guilty of this sin through much of her Old Testament history.

⁶⁸ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 77.

⁶⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 78.

3. Unbelief leads to a departure from God, an apostasy, a falling into apostasy. No good comes from doubt and unbelief.

Any unbelief in the person and work of Christ or in the words of God is evil, for unbelief and doubt ultimately call God a liar and thus slander His character.

This is not a church age verse. The “departing” has the idea of a final apostasy that leads to a loss of salvation (in the Tribulation), which is not church age doctrine.

1. This departing is first caused by an “evil heart of unbelief” but it is committed by “brethren”, so it is directed at believers. It is not a sin committed by unbelievers. They were believing but then, for some reason, stopped. Something came along that caused a loss of faith.

2. The context is tribulational, so we can only assume that one of several things may have happened:

A. The spirit of the age finally caught up to them and they fell victim to the worldliness of the tribulation period.

B. The persecution of the tribulation was too hot for them and they renounced their profession.

C. They believed The Lie, that the Antichrist was God and fell in with him.

Whatever it was, it resulted in them falling away from the truth and following a lie, thus losing their salvation. This is Tribulation doctrine, as it does appear that there is no eternal security in the Tribulation, as there is in the church age. The loss of salvation is a church age heresy, but it appears to be a Tribulation truth. This Tribulation saint does indeed need to “endure to the end” (Matthew 24:13) in order to be saved. That is not a church age verse but is directed at the saint in the Tribulation who is going toe-to-toe against the Antichrist and his forces, while trying to stay true to the message of the 144,000.

3. The obvious question then arises about a professing Christian in this dispensation, who makes a profession of Christ, and then falls away from it and renounces it. Does he lose his salvation? Ultimately, we do not know who is saved and who is lost, but our “general” approach to this matter is that no genuinely saved man will apostatize in such a fashion. If a professing Christian did fall away in such a manner, then we seriously doubt that he was ever saved to begin with.

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

This is a Tribulation exhortation, to encourage each other not to fall away against the very severe trials, temptations and pressures that will face the Tribulation saint. We can also do this today when we see a brother starting the process of turning away from God in the hardening of their heart.

“deceitfulness of sin” And how very deceitful it is! If you think it is bad today, even with the presence of the church and the widespread preaching of the gospel and availability of the Bible, think how much worse it will be in the tribulation, with no church, no Holy Spirit in the earth (He will have been removed with the church at the rapture) and the Bible largely ignored, and with the spirit of Antichrist in control, marching through the worldly largely unchecked and unopposed! Sin never tells the truth about itself but is always misrepresenting itself to lure in as many victims and slaves as it can.

This is one way to prevent and reverse the hardening of the heart, by having our brethren exhorting us to “go on to perfection” (Hebrews 6:1), but we must be reading, willing and able to accept such exhortation if they are going to have any positive effect on us.

“There are two kinds of carnal Christians.

1. There are those who are longing to be delivered from the power of this sin principle, this old man, the carnality of Romans 7. These cry out ‘**O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**’ (Romans 7:24). There is much hope for this child of God to be delivered.

2. Then there are those who give up any battle with the sin principle and enter a state of carnality (1 Corinthians 3). They have become complacent and are no longer struggling with the war. They have yielded to the old man and have become passive in the contention between the old man and the new man. These individuals will eventually go back on the Lord.”⁷⁰

3:14 For we are made of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

No Christian in this age is “made a partaker of Christ”. At salvation, we become a member of His body, not just a mere partaker! Tribulation saints who missed the rapture do not enter into His body when they believe as Christians did, so their relationship to Christ is different than that which is enjoyed by church-age saints.

1. This language is never applied to any Christian in a salvation context in any of the Pauline epistles, since our salvation is never dependent upon what we do. Rather, it is totally dependent upon what Christ has done. The tribulation saint, just like the Old Testament saint, is responsible to maintain his own salvation, since the only dispensation where eternal security is operating is in this current one. Before and after the church age, there is no eternal security, so the believer must not only initially believe, but must keep on believing, right to the end (Matthew 24:13) without falling away and abandoning that belief.

2. We can make the spiritual application that if we hold to our profession and our confidence in the work of Christ and His ability to break the power of sin in our lives, we can come into a full possession of Christ and the Christian life. So many believers give up in their quest for Christian purity after the first reversal or after a great spiritual failure. The devil tells them that there is no hope to live that victorious kind of Canaan life and they believe that lie and they give up. We live in a carnal age and thus, we must live carnal. The Lord understands! But these believers will never enter into a full partaking of Christ. They will experience His fulness in bits and pieces and will only catch occasional views and insights to the glory of Christ and the life He offers. On the other hand, there are those Christians who see that good land of Canaan and desire to come into their full possession through sanctification. These ones follow hard after heart purity and they will not be denied. These believers will become full partakers of all that is Christ.

“**the end**” This is the same “end” as in Matthew 24:13 and Hebrews 3:6.

The interpretation would be that there is no eternal security in the Tribulation period. If a Gentile or Jew accepts Christ after the rapture (probably somewhere between Revelation 5-13), he is not a member of the Body of Christ as Christians were. The rules are different between

⁷⁰ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 66.

salvation in the Tribulation and salvation in the Church Age. A believer after the rapture must hold on to his profession until the end (as in Matthew 24:13). If he apostatizes, he loses his salvation. This would involve taking the mark of the beast or otherwise abandoning his profession of faith in Christ and following the Antichrist. I know how foreign this sounds to the ears of the 21st-century believer who has been told that God only has one plan of salvation and who has been taught the doctrine of the security of the believer. But again, the Tribulation is NOT the Church Age! The Church is gone after the rapture and the ministry of the Holy Spirit changes. The New Testament is not just written to Church Age saints but also to believers in the Tribulation, to give them insight about how they must live. See remarks under Hebrews 3:14.

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

This could be any of the 10 provocations of Israel that the Lord complained about in Numbers 14:2. Any time we demonstrate either unbelief or hardness of heart against God, God considers it a provocation!

Verses 15-19 summarize 3:7-10 about the inability of Israel to come into the full blessings of the Promised Land because of their unbelief and hardness of heart. Their unbelief at Kadesh Barnea doomed them to wander and eventually die in the wilderness over the next 40 years. They never did see the good land or the good life that God had planned for them and had promised to them. The twin sins of hardness of heart and unbelief doomed them to a life of wilderness wandering, between Egypt and Canaan, in a sort of a spiritual limbo. These twin sins will also doom any Christian to a similar fate, of preventing us from coming into the full will of God for our lives and seeing the very best life that God has intended for us. If we refused to believe and if we insist upon having our own way, we will also fail in the hour of trial and Israel did, we will also disbelieve our prophets and believe the evil reports of the unfaithful spies, and will rather embrace the fleshpots of Egypt than the corn and wine of Canaan. Then we will be judged by God to wander in the limbo of the wilderness of this world, between Egypt and Canaan, between two worlds, with no home, no certain dwelling place, wandering lost and aimless, unsatisfied and unfulfilled, awaiting death and eventual judgment and the Bema Seat judgment of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 3. This is the life that so many Christians have resigned themselves to live because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

In a Tribulation context, hardening the heart could be fatal. In the Church Age, a man may reject the gospel several times but still eventually get saved. But what guarantee is there of such grace and longsuffering in the Tribulation? Does God deal with sinners in the same way in the Tribulation period as He does in the Church Age? Does the Tribulation sinner get only one chance to accept Christ, and if he rejects the witness (especially of the 144,000 Jews in Revelation 7), does he receive no other opportunities and is he damned? What about the believer in the Tribulation? God will deal with him about his faithfulness, maintaining his testimony and avoiding believing the lies of the Antichrist and his system. What if he does not take such divine admonitions seriously? He puts his soul in peril of losing his salvation if he is not careful to maintain his faithfulness.

A Hardened Heart, by H. T. Spence
God's own Son left the glory of heaven
Took on flesh and the nature of man
Then at Calvary His life's blood was given
I must hear it, again and again

CHORUS

Keep me, O God, from a hardened heart
May thy rich word, daily grace impart
Chastise my soul
Let pride and self depart
O God, keep me from a hardened heart

Brokenness is the spirit of Calvary
Daily hearing the word mixed with faith
Hardened heart, that's the danger before me
Grace must conquer through truth every day

Found in Him! What a wondrous salvation
But the cry of neglect is so real
Bitterness can destroy His redemption
O my deep heart! It must be revealed

"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts: as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me." God's grace always comes with dispatch; and if thou art drawn by God, thou wilt run after God, and not be talking about delays. To-morrow—it is not written in the almanack of time. Tomorrow—it is in Satan's calendar, and nowhere else. Tomorrow—it is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it; it is the wrecker's light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to destruction. To-morrow—it is the idiot's cup which he fableth to lie at the foot of the rainbow, but which none hath ever found. To-morrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond, which none hath ever seen. To-morrow—it is a dream. To-morrow—it is a delusion. To-morrow, ay, tomorrow you may lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments. Yonder clock saith "to-day;" everything crieth "to-day;" and the Holy Ghost is in union with these things, and saith, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."⁷¹

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

Referring to the mixed multitude that also came out with Israel, but their hearts were not with Israel. There will always be a "mixed multitude" in the ministry. They will follow you for the blessing, but their heart is not with you and will be the first to turn on you when hard times come.

3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

Unbelief, complaining, questioning and provoking always grieves God. He put up with Israel's whining and complaining for 40 years. God has more patience than we will ever have! Their reward for such an attitude was to die in the wilderness. This attitude never produces anything of any spiritual benefit.

3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

⁷¹ Charles Spurgeon, "Effectual Calling" in *New Park Street Pulpit*, sermon 73.

Those that “**believed not**” was an entire generation, between two and three million people.

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

Unbelief in the words of God is always the killer. We think sins like adultery and murder are bad, and they are, but it is unbelief in what God has said and recorded in the Bible is what brings eternal and final judgment.

God would take the elders of Israel back to their Egyptian captivity in Ezekiel 20 to show them that their rebellion and idolatry went back a long way in history. This idolatry in Egypt was not really mentioned by Moses. We had no indication that Israel had been influenced by Egyptian religion to this extent, but we should not be surprised. Israel had spent centuries in Egypt and try as they might, there was no way she could insulate herself totally from Egyptian idolatry and culture. We see this in Exodus 32 with the incident with the golden calf. Where did Israel learn that? In Egypt.

God made provision for Israel by providing them land in Canaan to settle. This was also necessary to try to separate them from the Egyptian influence that was corrupting them.

Israel brought their idolatry with them into the land. We don't see this in the days of Joshua as the people were too busy conquering the land and fighting the local tribes to practice their idolatry. When peace came in the book of Judges, the idolatry re-emerged among the people. This is why there were so many judgments sent by God in Judges and in 1 Samuel.

The Jews may have left Egypt physically but not religiously. God got Israel out of Egypt but it would take centuries to get Egypt out of Israel.

While in the wilderness, Israel worshipped:

1. The Golden Calf, Exodus 32, Acts 7:41.
2. The gods of Moab, Numbers 25.
3. Stephen mentions numerous instances of idolatry in Acts 7:
 - A. Worshipping the “host of heaven” in Acts 7:42.
 - B. They took up the “tabernacle of Moloch” in Acts 7:43.
 - C. They took up the star of their god Remphan in Acts 7:43.

The “mixed multitude” (Exodus 12:38) would have been the Hebrews that had succumbed to Egyptian idolatry while still outwardly and publicly worshipping Jehovah. I had always associated the “mixed multitude” with non-Hebrews that came out with Israel in the Exodus, but based on Ezekiel 20, I believe they were really Hebrews that had been infected with Egyptian idolatry, which they brought out with them and that would later cause so trouble for Israel. There could have been many Egyptian “converts” that went out with the Hebrews and if so, they would have only have contributed to the development and practice of Egyptian idolatry among the Hebrews. They were Israel but were not of Israel. A New Testament reference would be 1 John 2:19, **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

HEBREWS CHAPTER 4

Summary of 4:1-11

- A. There is a rest from works for salvation for God's people
 - 1. Christ already has done everything that needs to be done for our salvation
 - a. Jesus paid it all, as the hymn says
 - 2. We can add nothing to the work of Christ
 - a. We can destroy it or ruin it by carnality and disobedience, but we cannot improve upon it by our works or spirituality.
- B. There is no rest for the wicked
 - 1. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest- Isaiah 57:20
 - 2. They continually go from religion to religion, philosophy to philosophy, seeking some rest or answers, yet never finding them
 - a. The "gadding about" mentioned in Jeremiah 2:36
 - 3. The carnal professor is also like this, church-hopping, never being able to settle down

9. The Promised Rest 4:1-11

4:1 Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

"Let us" of Hebrews:

- 1. Let us fear- 4:1
- 2. Let us give diligence- 4:11
- 3. Let us hold fast- 4:14
- 4. Let us come with boldness- 4:16
- 5. Let us go on to perfection- 6:1
- 6. Let us draw nigh- 10:22
- 7. Let us consider one another- 10:24
- 8. Let us lay aside- 12:1
- 9. Let us run- 12:1
- 10. Let us have grace- 12:26
- 11. Let us go forth- 13:13
- 12. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise- 13:15

There is certainly something worth fearing in this chapter!

- 1. Losing out on the promised rest
- 2. Losing salvation
 - A. This is not Church Age doctrine but salvation can be lost in the Tribulation period. Eternal security is a Church Age doctrine, not a Tribulation one.
- 3. Unbelief and its curses

Many did come short of that rest in the wilderness as many of that generation that left Egypt never made it to the promised rest of Canaan because of their hardness of heart and unbelief. The warning is repeated here.

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

Who is the “us” and the “them”? Both are Jews but different classes of Jews, one type who believed and responded to the preached gospel, and the other who did not believe.

“not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”

1. This is why it did not profit them, because they heard but did not believe what they heard. You must hear but you must also listen.
2. Their fault was not in the message or in the preacher or God, but it was in the hearer and the unwillingness to believe the message that was faithfully and accurately preached unto him. To hear a sermon is a good thing, but to listen to it in a lazy, half-hearted manner does not profit the hearer. We must have active listening, intent listening, while praying the whole time for the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and our ears with enlightenment and understanding that we truly will both profit from the preached word and that we will actually believe and obey from what we have heard.
3. How many people in our churches sit in their pews week after week, with a glazed look on their faces, unresponsive, while the preacher preaches his heart out over a message he prepared for and prayed over all week, just to have his efforts wasted on a congregation that is thinking about chicken dinners, football or the latest television program they saw?
4. Maybe they are listening but have rebellion in their heart. They have absolutely no intention of doing anything that the preacher says and are fighting him tooth-and-nail on every point he makes. They sit in rebellion (open or secret) against the preached word of God. This kind of listening is not done in “faith” and this is also unprofitable to the hearer.
5. This is why so many who attend our churches get no profit from the preaching. Many others read the Scriptures privately and get nothing from their readings. Their devotions are also barren. Bible reading and going to church can degenerate into mere form and habit, with no heart-work involved.
6. This was Israel’s problem in Bible days. They heard the Scriptures and the Gospel preached, but their hearing was not mixed with faith, as they made up their minds beforehand that they were not going to consider the message seriously, so the preached word did them no good.
7. It is hard enough to hear the word today, even with the Holy Spirit in the world. How much harder will it be to generate interest in the word after He is taken out of the world in the rapture?

How do we mix faith with the hearing of the Scripture?

1. We believe that what we are hearing is from God
2. We believe that God means what He is saying from His word, both regarding the curses and the blessings
3. We believe that the Scripture we are hearing preached is relevant and applicable for our lives and situations. We can’t hear a sermon and think “this isn’t for me”
4. We cannot hear with faith if we have a rebellious, apostate heart, as Israel did in this historical context

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

We Christians who already believe the Gospel have already entered into our rest but there are a lot of people who have yet to because they have yet to believe in Christ.

See Psalm 95:11, **Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.**

4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

This is the Sabbath rest, that God observed in Genesis 2:4 and that Israel observed weekly on the seventh day, but that no Gentile nation ever observed and that the Church never was commanded to observe,⁷² showing again that the doctrinal thrust of Hebrews is not to the Church.

1. This is what rest is- a cessation from work. God rested from His creative active activities on that first Sabbath in Genesis 2:4, but not from His maintaining work of creation. But He did no creative work on that day that He had done on the previous six. When Israel observed their Sabbath, they did no work on that day, but rested from their labors.

2. Spiritually, we rest from our spiritual labors in salvation when we come to Christ for our salvation and allow Him to do all the work on our behalf to secure our salvation. All we do is believe, although belief is not classified as a work (Romans 4:5, **But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**). But Christ has done all the work necessary for salvation. There is really nothing we can do and nothing we have to do except to receive the benefits of the work that Christ has already completed. The work has already been done and there is nothing else for us to do. That is the rest we enjoy with regards to salvation.

3. The Millennium will be a thousand-year rest for this planet that had just endured 6,000 years of sin and conflict.

4:5 And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest.

This is again quoted from Psalm 95:11.

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

Every Jew knows this account, the hour of their greatest failure as a nation. This took place at Kadesh Barnea, in Numbers 14, where Israel refused to believe God but chose to believe the evil report of the ten spies and refused to go into the land but were willing instead to go back into Egypt. Thus, Israel forfeited rest promised to them by God because of their unbelief and were condemned to wander 40 years in the wilderness, with no home and no goal, awaiting the release of death. What blessings they could have had if they only believed the promises of God!

4:7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

This is another quote of Psalm 95:7-11.

⁷² The Seventh Day Adventists and other Sabbath-keeping groups are in gross error when they say the Sabbath is binding on the Church and Christians. They come to this error because of their unwillingness to rightly divide the Scripture dispensational.

4:8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

“Jesus” This is the New Testament version of “Joshua”. Obviously, Jesus is not meant here but Joshua, who led the invasion of Canaan, even if the names are similar. That similarity is intentional. Joshua led the conquest of that land and gave the people their inheritances and a measure of rest from the battles that consumed that generation, but there is a greater rest in view here, a spiritual, not a physical, one. Jesus will lead Israel into that Greater Rest after the Tribulation period. That spiritual rest and inheritance was something Joshua could not give.

4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

This is a rest that has not yet been realized, but that is promised. It is still waiting for us. Ultimately, it is a millennial rest, where God’s people can finally rest against the assaults and attacks of the world, the flesh (old sin nature) and the devil, all three of which will be rendered inoperative in the millennium and beyond. We are not there yet, but that time of rest is promised unto us and it is something that every child of God should be longing for.

1. Spiritually, this rest is a rest from our works in order to try to earn favor from God or to try to show how spiritual we are. When one comes into a correct understanding of the atonement and the grace of God, that person will stop trying to earn his favor or acceptance from God and will simply rest in the finished work by Christ on the cross. People tend to do this when they have little or no relationship with God. They have to try to rest on their works in order to earn the favor of God, instead of on the completed and finished an accepted work of Jesus.
2. Christ is the One Who ultimately gives us the rest that we desire and seek.
 - A. Matthew 11:28-30, **Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**
3. This rest remains only for the people of God. It’s interesting that the phrase **“people of God”** is used here. The Church and Christians are never referred to by this term in Paul’s epistles or in the Book of Acts, which leads us to believe that the doctrinal implication an interpretation of this passage is tribulation and is directed towards tribulation believers, not to modern day Christians. We can make any spiritual application that we want, but the doctrinal application is probably beyond the Church Age.

This rest is reserved for the **“people of God”**, for believers only. This rest is not promised to or provided to the world that is in rebellion against God. They have no peace and no rest (Isaiah 57:20,21, **But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.**). This is why this generation (and every generation before it) is so restless and unsatisfied, in stark contrast with God’s people.

4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

This only makes sense; else he wouldn’t be resting! He is resting in the fact that Christ has done all the works necessary for his salvation, so no more works need to be done, so why keep working to do work that has already been completed? It is now time to rest!

Pity the poor Roman Catholic. There is no rest for him as he does not have a finished and completed redemption. If he did, why does he find it necessary to recrucify the Lord every day in the mass? Over and over and over, it never ceases. Christ died once for sins (1 Peter 3:18, **For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.**⁷³). The Bible believer has no need for the mass as we have a finished and completed redemption that need not be repeated.

Revelation 14:13 says **“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”** Heaven is a place of our ultimate rest.

We can make a spiritual application about our rest and ceasing from our own works. Stop trying to earn your salvation and justification as Christ had completed all of that!

1. The doctrinal application is tribulational.
2. Spiritually, what about those Christians who work and work and work in the hopes of somehow earning God's favor? They then get discouraged when they cannot live up to the spiritual expectations that they make for themselves, and then quit on God. They will do one of two things;
 - A. Give up on God when they realize that cannot live up to the impossibly high standards that they set have set for themselves. The Christian life becomes a heavy burden rather than a joy.
 - i. People backslide and get discouraged because they are trying to live the Christian life on their own. Blessed is the day when one realizes, "I can't live this Christian life. Lord, you are going to have to live it though me." A Christian will know when this happens to him. Whatever load is put upon him, however great the persecution may be, the vision of Christ will never allow him to be burnt out.
 - B. They double-down and go into hyper-legalism.
3. Why do people rely on their works? They are questioning and doubting His provision, thus they lean toward my own works to keep me. They have nothing else.
 - A. The carnal Christian lives by his works. He is constantly looking to what he does and acknowledging what he does not do. He is constantly viewing the working out of his salvation as efficacious, trying to work his way to heaven or to earn the favor of God.
 - B. When he realizes that he fails in his expectations about his acceptance with God, he despairs and either quits on God altogether or becomes an ultra-legalist.
4. There are many passages of Scripture that speak of this truth, such as Galatians 2:20: **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**
 - A. It is not I but Christ that is living in me.
 - B. The purpose of the Book of Galatians makes clear that even the good side of the flesh must die. Having started out in the Spirit, by being born of the Spirit, the Galatians resorted to the flesh. If we are not careful, we could make the flesh religious. Even the religious side of the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8, **So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**). Our works cannot please Him, no matter how good they are. This does not mean that we should cease our ministries for they too are ordained of god. But we are not to base our

⁷³ The first “pope” (supposedly) attacked the mass!

relationship or standing with God on our works. Our relationship with God is founded on the cross and the blood of Christ, nothing else! We are not saved by works and we are not sanctified by works and we are not kept by works. There is no good side to the flesh! God will not accept any of the works I can accomplish by the flesh. Consequently, when we get to heaven, He must burn them all up. First Corinthians 1:29 declares, **"No flesh can glory in his presence."** The flesh is abhorred in the sight of God because it robs glory from Christ! Are we serving God in our own strength when we have ample provision to serve Him through His own strength? Only by service through His enabling, will we be able to shout in heaven, "To Christ be all the glory."

5. This rest from our labors is the work of sanctification. Hebrews 4 clarifies one aspect of sanctification: it brings a Christian to a rest about his works in the Christian life. He now truly sees that they are not his works, his own spirituality and his own morality anymore.

A. We are not seeking a rest from work or service; we must find His rest in our work or service. Matthew 11:28 declares, **"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

6. We must come to a rest about our Christian works and living the Christian life. We must come to despise trying to live the Christian life on our own, through the power of the flesh and the spiritual weariness that brings. People try and try and work and work, trying to earn God's favor by their own works and holiness, only to fail. They have good intentions, but they believe they must work and work instead of resting in the work Christ has done for them. Why try to earn that which is given to you freely?

7. This is not spiritual laziness. Many put the emphasis on works. They pray, go door-to-door and work on bus routes, busy themselves around the church, because they are told that work is the greatest thing a Christian can do. While we ought to labor for the Lord, it is not those works that sanctify. But many will use works as a substitute for sanctification. Since they have no walk with God and have no burden for a walk with God (probably because their pastors never taught them about this truth), they believe the only way they can earn the favor of God is by works and results. The more souls you win, the more God favors you. The larger your church is, the closer you are to God. But nothing could be further from the truth!

8. There are times we must cease from our work and rest. In Deuteronomy 24:5, we are told that a man who has just married a wife is free from his duties and obligations for one year so that he may establish his relationship with his new wife. His works and duties would interfere with developing that relationship.

9. How does a Christian enter into this divine rest?

A. By ceasing from his own works and then

B. By resting in faith on the finished work of Christ.

10. The big problem with works-based salvation systems is when do you know when you have done enough? When can you stop? Have you done enough works yet? Have your works been good enough to be accepted? How many masses do you need to say? How many "stations of the cross" do you have to do and for how long? What if your heart was not in it when you were doing these works. Do they count? But the man who trusts fully on the work of Christ for his salvation has no such concerns.

On that first Sabbath day in Genesis 2:2, when God rested from His creative activity.

4:11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

This is something of a play on words- labor to gain that rest! But the language is not that strange. One must work 40 years before he retires, if he can afford to do so. One must work all day before retiring for the day. So must a man “work” at the law, struggling with sin and self and the law, and with his own unbelief before he finally wins the victory over himself and enters into the rest of faith and belief of salvation in Christ.

This best example would be Numbers 14. In the tribulation, a man can fall when he stops believing and lose that rest that he is laboring for. This is not a Church-Age truth but it is a Tribulation truth.

Summary of 4:12,13

A. The Bible is the word of God

1. In spoken form

a. Preserved for us in English in the Authorized Version and kindred translations

2. In written form

B. It is living

C. It is powerful

D. It is a discerner

10. The Power of the Word of God 4:12,13

4:12 For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The narrative now takes a quick diversion to a classic discussion on the power of the Scripture.

“word of God”

1. This is a classic term for the Bible, the Scriptures, given as it came from God Himself, spoken by God Himself to holy men of old by inspiration, who then wrote it down.
2. Those words were then preserved by the Holy Spirit first by the nation of Israel and then by the Church in highly accurate copies of the original manuscripts. Those copies of the originals were then translated into various languages, such as into English, leading up to the King James Version and the other related versions in other languages.
3. Robert Murray McChesney disagrees that the “word of God” refers to the Bible but applies it instead to Jesus Christ in his sermon “The Word of God”.⁷⁴ He does this because of the human attributes given to the word of God and so he naturally applies them to the person of Christ instead of to the Bible. I don’t agree with this as much as I appreciate McChesney.

“quick”

1. Living. The Bible is a living book, just as much alive as you are, if not more so. Other books are dead, just ink and paper. Only the Word of God can said to be alive, vibrant, active, probing, eternal. Since the Scripture comes a living God, how can it be anything but alive?
2. “Quick” is also used in the phrase “**the quick and the dead**” in 1 Peter 4:5. We have also been “**quickened**” in Ephesians 2:1 from our sins at salvation.

⁷⁴ In *Sermons on Hebrews*, page 35

3. It is also alive in the sense that only the Scriptures can impart spiritual life to the dead sinner or the dead professing Christian. This is done through the preaching of the Scripture that will impart faith in the hearer. It is through the application of the received word in the heart by the Holy Spirit that starts the process of imparting life to the heart.

A. Romans 10:17 **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**)

4. It is called the **"word of life"** in Philippians 2:16.

5. Galatians 3:8 shows that the Bible has living and divine characteristics, **And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.**

6. Look in the next verse, verse 13, **Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.** The Bible is referred to in the masculine pronoun, as a person, with **"he"** and **"him"**. The Bible is not referred to as an **"it"** but as **"he"** and as **"him"**.

"powerful"

1. Since it is from God, how could it be otherwise? How could it be weak, seeing it is divine, with the full power and authority of heaven behind it?

2. Seeing the power of the scriptures to change hearts and lives, its power is clear. Any Christian can testify to that fact. I certainly can.

3. Simply reading it or hearing it preached can change a life as no other book can. There are other powerful books out there, but none can approach the life-changing power of the Word of God. No other religious book can match it. The Koran certainly cannot. No books of Hinduism or Buddhism can.

A. Evangelist Billy Kelly used to say the Bible is powerful enough to blow the beer right out of your refrigerator.

4. We know there is power in the gospel. It has power to convert the heart, prevent sin, change nations and bring a man into fellowship with God.

A. Romans 1:16, **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

3. The word is also likened to:

A. Fire

i. Jeremiah 5:14 **Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.**

ii. Jeremiah 20:9 **Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.**

iii. Jeremiah 23:29 **Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**

iv. Luke 24:32 **And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?**

B. A hammer

i. Jeremiah 23:29 **Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**

C. Spirit

i. John 6:63 **It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

D. Life

i. John 6:63 **It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

E. A sword

i. Ephesians 6:17 **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

“two-edged sword”

1. A two-edged sword cuts going in and coming out and does a lot of damage while in the victim. The Bible is sharper than that. It can bring conviction to the soul as nothing else can, which is how we know that it is living and active.
2. You read it or hear it preached and it will bring conviction of sin, failure and backsliding as nothing else can.
3. It literally cuts to the very inner soul of man and reaches where nothing else can.
4. “I had a professor in seminary who said to a group of us young preachers: “Remember when you preach the Word of God that it is quick and sharp, but it is a two-edged sword. It will cut toward the congregation, but the other side is going to cut toward you. Therefore, don’t preach anything that you are not preaching to yourself.” I have found many times in my ministry that I am preaching to myself. The sermon might not have been for anybody else, but it was for me.”⁷⁵

“dividing asunder of soul and spirit”

1. Showing a difference between the soul and spirit of man. Soul and spirit are not the same as they can be divided. Man is a trinity and is made up of three parts:
 - A. Body, the physical, visible part of man. This is the part of man that converses with his environment.
 - B. Soul, the will, emotion, intellect of man. This is really what man is. A man is what his soul is, a man is his soul. This is the part of man that defines what he is, how he thinks, how he feels. This is the part of man that converses with himself.
 - i. It is amazing how many sinners will deny they have a soul, as they see themselves as nothing but animals. They have a soul, but they cannot discern it because it is a dead soul, in the natural state.
 - C. Spirit, this is the God-consciousness of man, the part of man that worships God, that elevates him above the carnal and physical. This is the part of man that converses with God.
 - i. Higher animals may have a soul, but they do not have a spirit. You have never seen a dog, cat or a horse pray or seek after God or have communion with God in the way that man can. The soul of an animal is not as highly developed as that of a man.
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 also shows the tripartite nature of man: **“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**
 - A. You’d be surprised how many people, even professing Christians, deny that man is a trinity, or that he even has a soul. They think man is just an animal with a body and that’s it.
3. The Word of God deals with both the soul and spirit of man. It deals with his will, intellect and emotions, as well as his relationship with God. And it will also affect how a Christian uses his body, not as an instrument for fornication.

⁷⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*.

“is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”

1. This shows again the life and power of the Word of God, for a dead book can be no sort of judge of the thoughts and intents of a living man.
2. How can any book know my heart or know what I am thinking?
3. Only the living can judge the living.
4. Thus, no man is qualified to sit in judgment upon the Word of God because all the while, that same Word of God is sitting in judgment on us! We cannot judge our judge. A man thinks he will sit in judgment on the word of God, but in reality, the word is judging him, constantly and thoroughly, down to his very deepest thoughts and intentions.
 - A. This is why I never judge the KingJames Bible. I believe that to be the preserved and inspired Bible in English. I cannot sit in judgment on it for I am not qualified. But I will sit in judgment on pretender-translations, such as the so-called English Standard Version (a misnamed version) or the John MacArthur Version, otherwise known as the “Legacy Standard Bible”. These are not genuine English Bibles as they are corrupt, and the product of modern scholarship and I have little hesitation to judge that.
5. This is why unsaved men hate the Bible, because it is so plain, honest and candid with them and it does not lie about or sugar-coat the seriousness of their condition (James 1:23,24 **For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.**).
6. “I had an opportunity one time to listen to a very fine, brilliant, Shakespearean scholar. Many scholars are not humble, but this man was a very humble man. When he had finished his lecture he said, “Today I have attempted to give to you a critique of Shakespeare, but now I would like to say to you that I am in no position to sit in judgment on Shakespeare.” It took a humble man to say that. Nor can any man sit in judgment on the Bible, my friend. You really don’t know enough to sit in judgment on this Book. This Book surely sits in judgment on us. It is sin that keeps men from Christ today. It is not intellectual problems of the head, but it is problems in the heart which keep men from God.”⁷⁶

4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Notice the “**his**” and “**him**”. The Word of God is referred to in the masculine pronoun, not in a neuter pronoun. This is because the word is alive. It has personality. The word is not just an inanimate book, it is a living being. No man is able or competent to judge that Book! By context, the “his” here refers to the word of God, not God Himself.

“all things are naked and opened” In an absolute sense, by use of the perfect tense. It is absolutely impossible to hide either from the Word of God or from God Himself.

We have “**to do**” with Him every waking minute and, of course, ultimately, at whatever judgment we will find ourselves at. “The writer to the Hebrews describes the word of God in a series of great phrases. The word of God is instinct with life. Certain issues are as dead as the dodo; certain books and words have no living interest whatever. Plato was one of the world’s supreme thinkers, but it is unlikely that there would be any public for Daily Studies in Plato. The great fact about the word of God is that it is a living issue for all men of all times. Other things may pass

⁷⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*.

quietly into oblivion; other things may acquire an academic or antiquarian interest; but the word of God is something that every man must face, its offer something he must accept or reject.”⁷⁷

11. Bold Access Provided Through Our Great High Priest 4:14-16

4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

The Lord Jesus Christ. He is not just a priest, but:

1. Our

- A. He is our priest, we identify with Him and He identifies with us
- B. He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). When you're sick, He knows all about it; when you're tired and worn out or depressed and discouraged, it touches Him. He's not insensitive. He's touched with your griefs if you're His, for you're a part of His body. The Bible says if one member rejoices, all members rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:26, **And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.**), and if one member is in trouble all the members should be concerned

2. Great

- A. There were many high priests but only one “Great” one. Why is He “Great”?
 - i. He was sinless (Hebrews 4:15b)
 - ii. He was totally obedient to the will of the Father and accomplished it
 - iii. He secured our eternal salvation by the sacrifice of Himself
 - a. No other priest or high priest was ever called “Great” by God, not even Aaron
 - iv. He ascended after His death

3. High Priest

- A. A regular priest would intercede for the people by his ministry. The high priest would make intercession for the nation on the Day of Atonement
- B. He is a High Priest, not subordinate or inferior to anyone.

4. He is the Son of God, no other priest ever was

“passed into the heavens” After His resurrection and ascension in Acts 1:9,10, **And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.”**

“Jesus the Son of God” There it is, right out in the open, where the Jewish reader is confronted with the claim that this “Jesus” is not only the Messiah but that He is also the Son of God.

“let us hold fast our profession” In the face of the severe persecutions and trials of the tribulation period. It will not be easy for any believer to maintain such a pure profession in the tribulation period. To do so would mean almost certain martyrdom. But to abandon that profession and apostatize from it would mean a condemnation and loss of salvation for that person in the tribulation (see remarks under Hebrews 10:35-39).

⁷⁷ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*.

4:15 For we have present not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

We do, because this high priest was one of us. He was a man, who lived as a man among men for 33 years, and who was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, so He knows what it is like to live as a man and to deal with sin and to deal with the travails and temptations of life. Can any historical high priest make such a claim?

Every classification and category of sin that we deal with, Christ was hit with. Yet unlike us, Christ met every temptation victoriously, without submitting to any of them. He was sinless while on earth, the only man who could ever make such a claim. No Jewish high priest can be said to have been sinless because none of them were.

4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Approach boldly with confidence and assurance in prayer. We can come in such a fashion because of Christ's work on the cross, His shed blood and His high priestly work on our behalf. We come in His name, based on His work, not on our own merit and authority.

We may come boldly but not arrogantly or with presumption. We must always remember Who it is we are approaching in prayer- the King of Creation, the Infinitely Holy One. Boldness means that we come with confidence that we will be received and heard, but it does not give us a license to come with an irreverent or disrespectful attitude.

What we look for in prayer:

1. Mercy
 - A. In forgiveness of sins
 - B. In assisting us in meeting temptations
 - C. In providing strength in our weaknesses
2. Grace for help in our times of need

HEBREWS CHAPTER 5

Summary of 5:1-5

A. Characteristics of human high priests

1. They are ordained of men and by men.
 - a. Although it should be of God.
 - b. Human ordination is recognized as valid by God.
2. They are to offer sacrifices.
3. They are to be compassionate.

B. Christ was made a high priest

12. Christ, Our High Priest 5:1-5

5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

Jewish high priests had to have three qualifications:

1. Be taken from among men- Hebrews 5:1. He is not an angel for how can a sinless angel minister to sinful man? A high priest for man must be a man.
 - A. God did not appoint an angel to be a high priest. How could an angel fulfill such a ministry? They are not flesh and blood, don't have human infirmities, are not eligible for salvation and were not of the nation of Israel
 - B. People might have been intimidated by an angel as a high priest. But Aaron was one of them and there was no reason to be intimidated by him.
 - C. Jesus is a better high priest as He was not taken from among men but was appointed to his priesthood by God. His was not an Aaronic priest as Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, not Levi, so another priesthood is in view here.
2. Must have compassion- Hebrews 5:2. The best way to have compassion on sinners is to be a sinner yourself and to understand and sympathize what sinners go through in their continual spiritual struggles.
 - A. No angel could sympathize with or understand human sin.
3. Must be called of God- Hebrews 5:4. He is not self-appointed or chosen by man, as they were after the return from Babylon, when the office was more political than spiritual.
 - A. Aaron was of the nation of Israel. He had the same blood in his veins as those he ministered to.

"Only those whom God chose served in this office. These people were primarily Aaron and his successors. This ceased to be true after Israel lost her sovereignty as a nation, beginning with the Babylonian captivity. Then the high priesthood became a political appointment. However, the writer was speaking of Israel as a sovereign nation. Disaster befell those individuals who took it upon themselves to perform high priestly duties without divine authorization (Korah, Num. 16; Saul, 1 Sam. 13:8-14; Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26:16-21). The writer stressed the essential humility of the high priest who stood in his privileged position only by divine appointment. He was not stressing the dignity of his office or the grandeur of his call to his office."⁷⁸

Priests offer two things:

1. Gifts (also Hebrews 8:3 and 9:9)

⁷⁸ Thomas Constable, *Constables Study Notes on the Bible*.

A. These would be the freewill offerings and the “sweet savor” offerings (the burnt, meat and peace offerings, all of which were voluntary).

2. Sacrifices

A. They involve dealing with sins on the part of the offerer, such as the sin and trespass offerings.

B. Jesus, as a priest after the order of Melchizedek never offered any sort of sacrifices on earth. That was reserved for the Levitical priesthood.

The work of a priest is generally two-fold:

1. To represent man before God and God before man, intercession, usually by sacrifice or ritual.

A. He stands between the living and the dead, as Aaron did in Numbers 16:48.

B. Priests stand in the gap between God and man. Can you imagine the size of such a chasm? Between infinitely sinful man and an infinitely holy God? Men, try as they might, cannot sufficiently breach such a gap. It would take God Himself, in the person of Christ as our High Priest, to adequately stand between God and man,

2. To offer sacrifices on behalf of his congregation, usually for the sins of the people.

5:2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

“**compassion**” Strong’s #3356 metriopatheô; from a compound of metrios (Strong’s #3357) in due measure, moderately, exceedingly, and pathos (Strong’s #3806), emotion, passion; to be affected moderately or in due measure, to preserve moderation in the passions, esp. anger or grief, of one who is not unduly disturbed by the errors, faults, sins of others, but bears them gently. It is used only here in the New Testament.

Jesus, as a high priest, can do all of these things:

1. Have compassion on the ignorant.

2. Have compassion on them that are out of the way.

Jesus can do these things because although He is God, He was also a man and knew the weakness and infirmity of men.

Types of ignorance:

1. Total ignorance, as a baby, that knows nothing.

2. Partial ignorance, showing an inability to discern, probably through a limited experience. This can be remedied through a willingness to learn and a good teacher.

3. Willful ignorance, where the person has no desire to know. This is very serious, where you simply cannot deal with the person because he has no desire to be dealt with or to grow.

A. Accidental sins and sins of ignorance, which God has made provision for, as in Leviticus 4:2 and 5:17.

“that he himself also is compassed with infirmity”

1. This is because these priests also suffer from these same infirmities, so he knows how to deal with them and can sympathize with those who are undergoing these problems. Human priests were chosen by God to minister to fallen man because these priests would be able to sympathize with their congregations, since they are also struggling with sin and their own infirmities. Such priests are then is qualified to help:

- A. The ignorant, for at one time, every priest was ignorant about the things of God until he was instructed in the truth.
 - B. Those that are out of the way, who are backslidden, lost or who are in error.
2. A good priest must be able to effectively minister to both kinds of people.
 3. These are not sinful infirmities as Christ was sinless. These are physical infirmities that comes with being human, as Christ was.

"The reason why the Lord (back in the Old Testament) picked those human priests was because they had human problems like their congregation. The idea is that if you have problems then you ought to be able to sympathize with other folks who have problems. Paul states this in 2 Corinthians 1:1-4... If a fellow man is going wrong and stumbling along the path then a human priest should be able to understand his situation. For this reason one of the requirements of a pastor (not a priest) is to be married, for if he is single (as a Catholic priest), then he will not understand a thousand problems that come up that are connected with RAISING CHILDREN and taking care of a wife (see 1 Timothy 3:1-8). Catholic priests are not qualified to be "priests," let alone "pastors." Christ had to be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3) to be our high priest. The Old Testament priests were "compassed with infirmities"; that is, they were weak and sinful too. This is apparent from the death of Aaron's two sons for disobeying God, the death of Eli's two sons for disobeying God, the near death of Aaron himself for messing with a golden calf (see Deuteronomy 9:20), the backslidden priest who butchered his concubine (Judges 19), and a dozen other cases."⁷⁹

"An infirmity is not a sin; it is an "involuntary lack of power." This sense is expressed in 2 Corinthians 13:4: **"For though he [Jesus] was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God."** What is the weakness of God? First Corinthians 1:25 speaks of the "weakness of God:" First, it acknowledges His weakness is stronger than men. Secondly, it is a weakness from the perspective of man; man views God's ways at times as weakness. On the cross that (day, changed from "Friday" as Spence held to a Friday crucifixion while I hold to a Wednesday crucifixion- jc), hanging in open shame, Christ looked very weak; even the Devil for a time considered the apparent weakness of God. Yet Paul declares again in 2 Corinthians 13:4, **For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.** Why did Jesus allow Himself to appear weak? He did so because we also are weak. Even though we are in Him, we personally are still weak. Nonetheless, we shall live with Him by the power of God toward Him. Thus, we are told that He took weakness for us. He took infirmities for us. He was tempted for us, yea, for me! Yes, there are situations and circumstances in which God places Himself to appear to be weak in the sight of man."⁸⁰

"out of the way" They have wandered off the straight and narrow way of the truth. They may have backslidden from it and are going in reverse or have been knocked off that way through apostasy or some besetting sin. Christ is able to help the saint reset his spiritual bearings and get back on the right way for his Christian walk.

5:3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

This is because every priest is also a sinner, so he must offer sacrifices for himself as well as for his people. But Jesus did not need a sacrifice for Himself as He had no sin, something no earthly high priest could claim.

⁷⁹ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 97-98.

⁸⁰ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 97.

5:4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

“called of God”

1. Ideally although many men do try to take this call and honor upon themselves, since God never called them to such a ministry.
2. We have seen many men today who were obviously “self-called” into the ministry as they do not have the proper gifts, relation with God or heart to minister unto God’s people. There are far too many of these kind of men (and women!) in the church in all ages and they are responsible for a great deal of harm to those they “minister” to and to the Body of Christ at large.
3. Some men did try to take this ministry upon themselves, without a call of God, such as Korah and his company (Numbers 16) and Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16-23) and both were severely judged for it.
4. A high priest cannot be self-appointed or be appointed by man but must be appointed by God.

5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

“Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest”

1. This is because the Father called Him to that ministry. Christ took a priestly ministry not for His own glory but to fulfill the will of the Father on our behalf.
2. Christ did not use His divine appointment as a high priest to glorify Himself, as many men do.
 - A. The pope is notorious for this, styling himself as a “vicar of Christ”.
 - B. Many preachers also let a spiritual title or appointment go to their head, especially if they earn or are given a doctor’s degree.

“Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” This is quoted from Psalm 2:7. Jesus had a high honor as a high priest, but it was a higher honor to be the Son of God and to have been begotten by God, something no Jewish high priest could claim.

Christ is the **“only begotten”** of the Father (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18). This verse is also quoted in Acts 13:33. This phrase refers to physical birth of Christ, and this birth took place on a certain day in history at a certain hour in time, not in eternity. Without this Virgin Birth there would have been no “first begotten of the dead” or “only begotten.” “Begotten” is used for a physical birth in Scripture, although sometimes it is used in a spiritual or a figurative sense. But it always has the idea of “giving birth”.

1. Physical sense⁸¹

- A. Genesis 5:4, And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:
- B. Leviticus 18:11, The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
- C. Deuteronomy 23:8, The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.
- D. Judges, 8:30, And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

⁸¹ I am only using “begotten” and none of the other cognates, just to show the point.

E. Psalm 2:7, I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

F. Isaiah 49:21, Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

G. Hosea 5:7, They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.

H. John 1:14, And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

I. John 1:18, No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

J. John 3:16,18, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life....He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

K. Acts 13:33, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

L. Hebrews 1:5, For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

M. Hebrews 5:5, So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

N. Hebrews 11:17, By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

O. 1 Joh, 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

2. Spiritualized or figurative sense

A. Numbers 11:12, Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?

B. Job 38:28, Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

C. 1 Corinthians 4:15, For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

D. Philemon 10, I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

E. 1 Peter 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

F. 1 John 5:1,18, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him... We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God... keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

G. Revelation 1:5, And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

13. Christ, a Priest After the Order of Melchizedek 5:6-10

Summary of 5:6-10

1. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, 5:6,10
 - A. It is an eternal appointment, 5:6
2. Christ's ministry during the days of His flesh, 5:7
3. Jesus was the Son of God, 5:8
4. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, 5:8
5. Jesus was made perfect, 5:9
6. Jesus became the author of eternal salvation, 5:9
 - A. This is to those who obey Him.

5:6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

This is quoted from Psalm 110:4, which is also quoted in Hebrews 5:10; 6:20; 7:17,21.

Jesus could not be an Aaronic priest as he came from Judah, not Levi. If He is to be a priest, He needs another priesthood. The one of Melchizedek is actually a higher order of priesthood than Aaron's as we shall see.

1. This is another point of superiority of Christ's priesthood over Levi's. Not only did Christ never sin (Hebrews 4:15, making Him superior to any Levitical priest), but His priesthood predated Levi's.
2. Isn't it interesting that Christ's priesthood was named after a Gentile! This is a foreshadowing of Christ's ministry to the Gentiles in the New Testament dispensation, as the Church is made up largely of Gentiles.
3. The Father appointed Christ to this office. No man would have the authority to make such an appointment.

We will tolerate no discussion of the Mormon cult appropriating Melchizedek for their version of a priesthood that bears his name. A "Melchizedekian" priesthood based out of Salt Lake City is too funny for words, theologically. I've seen some Roman Catholic writings that also tried to apply this to the Roman Catholic priesthood.⁸²

A summary of Melchizedek

1. He is not Jesus Christ, for he was like Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:3).
2. He was a double king, connected with righteousness first and peace second (Hebrews 7:2).
3. He either had no human mother and father or had none listed by genealogy (Hebrews 7:3).
4. He was not a descendant of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob (Hebrews 7:4-6).
5. He is a Shemite or a Hamite (Hebrews 7:1).
6. He speaks and acts like a Shemite (Hebrews 7:1,2,5-12).
7. He anticipates the Lord's Supper (Genesis 14:18).
8. He had the power to bless (Genesis 14:19).
9. The term he uses for God⁸³ appears in the New Testament for the first time in Luke 1:76. It occurs in Daniel fourteen times.

⁸² Cults and heretical theological systems are always trying to steal something spiritually and apply it to themselves.

⁸³ El Elyon—The Most High.

10. His "order" had only two members that we know about, himself and Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:6).

11. His name is "King of Righteousness;" his place of government is king and priest of "Salem" or Jerusalem. This name bore the double-office of king and priest, again characterizes the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why does Melchizedek enter into the discussion?

1. To describe the priesthood of Jesus. He was a priest yet He could not be a Levitical or Aaronic priest since He was of the tribe of Judah.
2. Since the thrust is tribulation, is there some connection between Melchizedek and Israel in the Tribulation? His name is not associated with any prophecy dealing with the Tribulation nor is he mentioned in Revelation. But we realize that we do not have or do not understand all of the prophecies dealing with the Tribulation period. Some prophecy associating Melchizedek with Israel in the Tribulation may yet be unrevealed to us, or it could be recorded and we have all missed it.

"Throughout the history of the Old Testament, no prominent king-priest identity arises. King Saul was condemned by the prophet for projecting himself into the priestly office (1 Sam. 13:9), and King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for projecting himself into the priestly office (2. Chron. 26:16). Yet in Psalm 110, David prophesies of the coming of a king-priest. Although we find no king-priest in Israel's history, there was a man named Melchizedek (Genesis 14) who served an unusual priestly role. Only a very brief passage acknowledges him; he is not a prominent man in the canon of Scripture. As the king of Salem, he was also a "priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14: 18). After several centuries, suddenly this psalm of David declares this same Melchizedek had an eternal priestly order. Apart from this passage, we have known of only one order, the order of Levi beginning with Aaron."⁸⁴

5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

"in the days of his flesh" In the days of Christ's earthly ministry.

Jesus' prayers to the Father. Naturally, we do not have all the narratives of His earthly prayer life recorded for us in the gospels. John tells us that in John 21:25. What was Christ praying to be saved from? Not physical death, as that was ordained by the Father. But it was that "cup" of Matthew 26:39, the cup of suffering caused by the fact that Jesus would literally become sin incarnate on the cross. It was that prospect, of a Holy God becoming the sin bearer and having fellowship broken with the Father for those last three hours that horrified Christ more than any prospect of a mere physical death. The suffering in that cup that Christ endured are beyond human comprehension because we are sinners and are comfortable with sin. Christ, being sinless, would recoil at the mere thought or mention of sin as being so contrary to His divine nature. It was that prospect of having to, in a sense, become a sinner during those last three hours on the cross (in His redemption for sinners, as He took their sins and suffered the penalty for them) was what Jesus was praying for, seeking divine strength to undertake such a hideous task.

The "cup" had to be taken but He was saved from death. Some cross-references would include:

1. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death" (Acts 2:24).

⁸⁴ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 100.

2. "Because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (What? Acts 2:24).
3. "The snares of death" "prevented me" (Psalm 18:5).
4. "In my distress I called upon the Lord...and my cry came before him" (Psalm 18:6).
5. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever" (Psalm 21:4).
6. "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (Psalm 49:15).
7. "I am weary of my crying...mine eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Psalm 69:3).
8. "Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18).
9. Thus Christ prayed that He would not stay in the grave after He died. Why? Because God promised Him eternal life before Genesis 1:1.
10. Christ says to Peter, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). He did drink it; it did NOT pass from Him. He took the cup. "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it," (Jeremiah 25:15). "Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall..." (Jeremiah 25:27). What was in the cup? "For in the hand of the Lord there is a CUP, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the WICKED OF THE EARTH SHALL WRING THEM OUT, AN DRINK THEM" (Psalm 75:8). That is what Christ drank. He was made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13) and took God's wrath as a wicked man."⁸⁵

The "**strong crying and tears**" no doubt refers to Christ's passion in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before His arrest. His sacrifice was not simply another sacrifice as Christ was to be the sacrifice, not some animal. And the importance of this sacrifice was different- it involved the sins of every person ever born. It must be done properly and be accepted by the Father; else the human race could not be redeemed. And what Christ would face physically and spiritually in the hours leading up to His death were also staggering to contemplate. It is no wonder that He prayed as He did in Gethsemane!

"This shows the amazing stupidity and sottish insensitivity of you who are unconverted and unconcerned. When Jesus came to the brink of His sufferings, He was sore amazed. He feared He would sink and be lost under them. He cried 'Save me from the lion's mouth', and 'Let not the waterflood overflow me...let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.' He was God as well as man. He was filled with the Holy Ghost. He was infinitely dear to God. He was full of courage at all other times. Danger was nothing to Him. Yet now He lay on the ground. He sweated blood. He was in agony and prayed more earnestly. He had strong crying and tears.

"You are not God. You are not filled with the Holy Ghost. You are not in the love of God. You are not full of courage, but tremble at the shaking of a falling leaf. The same wrath is before you. You may be on the very brink, yet you do not fear. You do not lie down and sweat blood. You do not agonize in prayer. You do not cry with tears. Ah, my friends, how dreadful is it to be given over to a seared conscience, to an iron heart!

"How will your frail human body and soul bear the wrath of God? You are like the silly moth that flies round and round about the candle till it falls into the flame. Who has ever hardened himself against the Almighty and prospered?"⁸⁶

5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

⁸⁵ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, edited, pages 104-105.

⁸⁶ Robert Murray McCheyne, "Strong Crying and Tears", *Sermons on Hebrews*, pages 76-77.

“he were a son” Jesus was still the Son of God, even while He was on earth. He did not sacrifice sonship in His incarnation.

“learned he obedience by the things which he suffered”

1. Who can understand this? Jesus, very God Himself, needed to learn something? He needed to learn obedience? If He is God, how is it that He needed to learn something? There are some things that Jesus, as man on earth, needed to learn by experience. He knew all things by the fact of His divine nature. But it is one thing simply to know something intellectually, but it is quite something else to learn something by experience. You can read all about the military and become quite knowledgeable about it as a civilian. But until you take the oath and put on the uniform, you will never really “know” about the military until you’ve actually lived it.

2. No doubt Satan used such a line of attack on Christ. It might have gone something like this: “You’re unfair in your dealings with men! They struggle with sin and in trying to please you through the law and you sit there, all high and mighty in heaven, in a glorified state and know nothing of the sufferings and struggles of men! How can you be their judge when you’ve never been one of them!” Certainly, the plan of redemption and the incarnation were not caused by any such accusations by Satan, for they were always in the mind of the Father. But the incarnation and Christ’s earthly life certainly did put to end any further accusations along this line by Satan. Christ did live on earth, among the trials and tribulations and temptations of men for 33 years, and died as a man, so, through this practical and personal experience, Christ now knows practically that which He knew absolutely (but not practically and personally) before.

3. How does this relate to His learning obedience? Christ, as the Son of God on earth, was in subjection to the will of His Father. What the Father desired Christ to do, He did it. Christ was in a relationship with the Father while in His pre-incarnate form in heaven, but that was not a human father-son relationship. While on earth, Christ had to place Himself in subjection to His earthly parents, the Roman authorities (as a subject of the Empire) and to the will of the Father. These were human levels of obedience and subjection that Christ had to submit Himself to. Thus, He also had to obey the authorities placed over Him while on earth. In that case, He “learned” obedience. But we also suspect there is a much deeper interpretation than that which we have laid out, based on that relationship between Christ and the Father, that we cannot fully comprehend.

4. We can say that Christ’s obedience to the Father was theoretical until His incarnation. At His death, Christ’s obedience became fact. While Christ was perfect, even perfection must be tested. Christ’s obedience was tested for 33 years on earth among sinners, culminating on the cross. Adam’s human nature was perfect until it was tested in Genesis 3 and he failed. Christ’s human nature was also perfect but when it was tested, it stood the test and even that perfection was perfected. He learned experimentally what it was like to be a man. The Devil had a point back, which was “What do you know about temptation and suffering? You’ve never been under what you put those people down there under. Why, if you were down there like they are, how do you know what you’d do?” The Lord said, “Okay, we’ll find out.” And down He came and “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”

5. How many of us have yet to learn obedience to God! Certainly, the nation of Israel remains in their disobedience to this hour and will remain so through the Tribulation.

“In the Textus Receptus the definite article is used...giving (the Greek word) the significance of a special or completed obedience as distinguished from obedience in general...Our Blessed

Saviour acquired the actual experience of what it means to obey in circumstances of overwhelming distress.”⁸⁷

“We are told that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, therefore we who are sinful, and who are far from being perfect, must not wonder if we are called to pass through suffering too. Shall the head be crowned with thorns, and shall the other members of the body be rocked upon the dainty lap of ease? Must Christ pass through seas of his own blood to win the crown, and are we to walk to heaven dry-shod in silver slippers? No, our Master’s experience teaches us that suffering is necessary, and the true-born child of God must not, would not, escape it if he might.”⁸⁸

5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

“being made perfect”

1. This again shows that “perfect” is never used for “sinless” in Scripture as Christ was already sinless. His obedience did not make Him sinless or “more” sinless. It always has the idea of “mature” or “complete”. The idea of “completeness” is what is in view here. As a man, Christ now had the practical experiences of human life that He did not have before His incarnation. That experience that He lacked before His birth He now has, thus removing that lack. There is nothing wanting in the person, work or experience of Christ now.
2. But how can Christ, Who was perfect to begin with, be made perfect? How can you perfect perfection? It was through His acquisition of the experience of obedience through His suffering that He did not even possess in His pre-incarnation experience.

The New Testament uses three adjectives to describe “salvation”:

1. So great salvation- Hebrews 2:3
2. Eternal salvation- Hebrews 5:9
3. Common salvation- Jude 3

Men in all dispensations must “obey” Christ by obeying the Gospel (or whatever revelation of that dispensation’s plan of salvation is) in order to be saved. The dispensation involved is not important here as this requirement cuts across all dispensations. But obedience to Christ and whatever revelations He would give would be especially important in the Tribulation period.

5:10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

We only know of two members of this order, Melchizedek and Christ (no so-called Mormon “elders”!⁸⁹), and Christ was a high priest in this order. We don’t know if Melchizedek was a priest or a high priest of this order that was named after him.

14. A Rebuke For Spiritual Ignorance 5:11-14

Summary of 5:11-14

1. The writer had other things to say but his audience was dull of hearing, 5:11
2. A rebuke to his readers:

⁸⁷ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 103.

⁸⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, devotional for March 29 morning.

⁸⁹ Mormon “elders” may only be 18-20 years old!

- A. They should have been teachers but were still stuck at a rudimentary level of spiritual understanding, 5:12
- B. They were babes in spiritual understanding, 5:13
 - 1. They were stuck on the milk when they should have been eating meat, 5:14

5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

The writer had much more to say about Christ's priesthood but his readers were not ready for this "strong meat of the Word" because they were "dull of hearing", or unable to understand these spiritual truths and too lazy to apply themselves through prayer and study to understand them.

Characteristics of spiritual babes/immature Christians:

- 1. They are dull of hearing, Hebrews 5:11
 - A. They are lazy and slothful in their hearing and application of the Scripture
- 2. Inability to teach others, Hebrews 5:12
 - A. How can they when they know nothing of it themselves? They will not hear or learn or be taught.
- 3. Consume only (spiritual) milk instead of (spiritual) meat, Hebrews 5:12,13
 - A. Like a baby, they simply cannot digest the doctrinal meat of the Scripture
- 4. They are unskillful in the word, Hebrews 5:13
 - A. They are inexperienced in applying the Scripture practically to their own life
- 5. The Jews were certainly in no spiritual state to discuss these issues in their continued rejection of their Messiah.

"Have you ever said to your husband or wife after a Bible-teaching sermon, "I don't think the pastor was quite up to it today. I didn't feel his message was equal to what he is capable of giving."? Did you ever stop to think that the problem that day may have been with you? Are you dull of hearing? The problem may not be in the speaking, but the problem may be in the hearing. Ear trouble, today, is the big problem of believers. Christ as a priest after the order of Melchizedek is a difficult subject, and the writer is going to deal with it forthrightly. To understand the subject requires sharp spiritual perception. It requires folk to be spiritually alert and to have a knowledge of the Word of God and to be close to it. The Hebrew believers who are being addressed here had a low SQ, not an IQ, but an SQ—spiritual quotient. It was hard to teach them because it was difficult to make them understand. They were babies, as many of the saints are today, and they want baby talk even from the preacher. They don't want to hear anything that is difficult to understand."⁹⁰

"dull of hearing" This information about Melchizedek's ministry and its association with Jesus' high priesthood is difficult to explain to the readers. It is difficult not so much because these things are deep; it is because this audience had become "dull of hearing." They failed to grasp deeper meanings of truth. There are many people in our churches who could not grasp the deeper meanings of Scripture and apparently it was and is a problem in the synagogues as well. In the case of these Hebrews, the reason for their inability to grasp these concepts was not because they were stupid or ignorant, but because they had gone so long in not hearing. They were spiritually sluggish and lazy. This warning is addressed to believers, both Jewish and Christian, whose faculty of hearing and understanding was dulled through lack of attention.

⁹⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*.

"There is a sacred art to hearing the Word; it is the holy art of day-after-day hearing and responding that allows the Christian to grasp deeper truths. Sadly, many preachers have progressively become shallower in their preaching; as a result, congregations are unable to hear deeper preaching and therefore lack any depth in their walk with God. If the preaching of the Philadelphia Church Age had continued deep into our present church age, where would we be in our Christian walk? Christ would not be outside the church knocking on its door. Preaching and teaching we call deep today were the norm back in the Philadelphia Church Age. Instead, the church has adopted the spirit of apathy and indifference to God's Word... Pulpits continue to keep the church dumb, so the people will not be able to discern truth."⁹¹

5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

They had been saved long enough and had had enough preaching and teaching that they should have been ready not only to study this kind of doctrine, but also to be able to teach it to others. But despite their spiritual experience, they had not reached this level of understanding, through spiritual dullness or laziness in their studies. This situation was a rebuke to them. How many Christians, who have been saved any length of time, find themselves in a similar spiritual and intellectual situation- saved for 5, 10, 20 years, but still stuck on the milk of the Word instead of being ready for the meat? This was a strong rebuke and expressed the disappointment on behalf of the writer. They were hearing the same truths over and over again, but it was not sticking with them, and it apparently had not become a living spiritual reality in their lives. Many church members are like this. They hear Bible preaching for years, yet it appears to make little impact on them. One of the first symptoms of backsliding and carnality, is a dullness toward the Bible. Sunday School class is dull, the preaching is dull, anything spiritual is dull. The problem is usually not with the Sunday School teacher or the pastor, but with the believer himself. Meat requires maturity, a strong digestive system and strong teeth in order to eat. You do not feed beefsteak to a baby as his digestive system cannot handle it, nor does he have the teeth to chew it. You must also have a taste for meat. Many people don't like meat, preferring to be vegetarians. But the Bible has no encouragement for spiritual vegetarianism. Mature Christians have a taste for spiritual meat. Here is the duty of the pastor. While he may have spiritual babes in his congregation, he is primarily to feed his congregation and to deepen them in the things of God.

Milk ministries are okay if you have a congregation of new converts. But the goal of the pastorate is to wean them off of the milk and to get them on the meat. Milk can take one only to a certain stage of growth. Milk will not help him go deep into the Christian life. Therefore, at some time or place in one's Christian growth, he must change from the milk to the meat. I would be very worried if any of my children still preferred milk when they were 10 years old rather than a meal of meat and potatoes. The same is true of a Christian. Saved for 10 years and still on the milk! Your spiritual growth has been stunted and you are still a baby! Many Christians are in this spiritual state, shunning strong preaching and the deep things of God for any number of reasons.

Many pastors keep their congregations in this state of immaturity by refusing to preach meat messages, fearing that it may drive away his congregation or that someone may complain that the preaching is "too deep". Many times, that is simply an excuse on the part of the preacher not to pray, not to study, not to go deeper himself into the Word of God. It is easier to preach simply sermons or prefabricated outlines than to literally sweat over texts or agonize over spiritually deep sermons that will cost something of the preacher to preach. And the

⁹¹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 105,106.

congregation is just as guilty, not wanting to be challenged or confronted by these deeper truths, preferring the simple, milk truths, that requires little, if anything, out of them spiritually.

“ye have need that one teach you again...” The Jews was in this situation. They had all the advantages of having the covenants, oracles and prophets as laid out by Paul in Romans 2 and 3, and they failed to take advantage of it. They were to teach the Gentiles about God and they failed miserably because of the disobedience and apostasy.

“Generally speaking, it is in the air, most of these groups want Christianity to be very easy, simple, somewhat light and chaffy, without too much scholarship except as a rare tool, on a rare occasion, to exalt another particular English version of the Bible. The preacher who now comes along and speaks seriously for the Word of God will suffer the criticism ‘He is too deep’. It seems to be never considered, as a possibility, ‘Christianity has become too shallow.’ Rarely, any more, do you see a hunger in the modern congregation or the pulpit for anything deeper than that which has been said over and over for many years.”⁹²

The difference between milk and strong meat:

1. Milk- food for babes (1 Peter 2:2), the elementary and basic doctrines of the Word of God, suited for young converts. This is the spiritual condition of many Christians, who sit under weak or evangelistic preaching week after week, but never hear any sermons about going on with God or developing a deeper walk with God.
2. Strong meat- deeper doctrines of the Christian life for more mature, “adult” Christians. This is what older Christians need to grow. They need spiritually deep preaching that motivates them to go on and deeper with God. They don’t want or need the milk, yet unfortunately, far too many preachers feed their congregations nothing but milk sermons because the preachers themselves are not spiritually able to preach meat sermons. Many preachers have not gone on with God and have not gone deep in the doctrines of the Christian life and sanctification. How can these preachers serve up spiritual meat for men when they themselves are still on the bottle?

5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Basic doctrines, listed in Hebrews 6:1,2 as:

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. Baptism (probably both water and Spirit baptism, as the plural is used in Hebrews 6:2)
4. Laying on of hands
5. Resurrection of the dead

Even young Christians should have a good grasp of these milk, or basic doctrines.

“unskillful” Strong’s #552 *apeiros*; from a (Strong’s #1) (as a negative particle) and *peira* (Strong’s #3984) trial, experience; inexperienced in, without experience of. It is used only here in the New Testament.

Babes can’t do much, except crawl around and make babbling noises. So it is with immature, “milk” Christians. They cannot do much because they do not know much and their usefulness is limited until they start growing up.

⁹² O. Talmadge Spence, *The Human Spirit*, volume 1, page xiv.

"The baby needs MILK (1 Pet. 2:1–3). The baby is "new born"; therefore, new Christians do not need the pizza, pork chops, and watermelon passages. The way you spot a baby killer is simple. What does he try to teach a new convert first? If he starts with, "Where did the church begin?" or "What is the difference between the church of the one Body and the Acts church?" you know he is a killer. The church was said to be "A GREAT MYSTERY" (Eph. 5:32). No one would think of feeding a six-month-old baby barbecued pork chops. That is "strong meat." If someone comes into your house and starts to teach you Matthew 24, you know what they are: baby killers. Infanticide. Matthew 24 is one of the toughest portions in the whole Bible: it is raw beefsteak. If some nut starts out with this stuff about, "Which church did Christ found?" or "Which church is the true church?" or "What day should you go to church?" or "Do you have the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost?", you know what he is. He is a murderer. Babies don't feed on corn on the cob, jalapenos, nachos, and raw oysters. That stuff is for "them that are of full age" (vs. 14). The new convert should be trained in: 1. Confessing Christ openly. 2. Praying and maintaining communion with God. 3. Reading and memorizing his Bible. 4. Assembling with Bible believing people to hear the Book preached. 5. Daily judging and confessing of sins. His doctrinal teaching should deal with the death, burial, and resurrection and Second Coming of Christ (1 Thess. 1–4), proper living (Rom. 12–14; 1 Thess. 4–5; Gal. 5–6), and the two natures (Rom. 6–8).

"Milk" is always good, but don't make your whole ministry milk. "Milk ministries" are ministries like John R. Rice, Robert Sumner, Dallas Billington, Bill Gothard, Harry Ironside, Jack Hyles, Chuck Swindoll, John MacArthur, Bob Jones III, J. Vernon McGee, Oliver Greene, and Jack Wyrzten. There is nothing wrong with these ministries, as such. God uses them. People can always drink milk. We are not saying that God didn't use these men (or is not using them). We are saying that "strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age" (vs. 14) and the writer of Hebrews exhorts his listeners to go on to that meat and rebukes them for still being BABIES USING MILK (vs. 13). Such men are "unskilful in the word of righteousness" (vs. 13), for they are babies (vs. 13). God forbid that a Bible-believing teacher after twenty years in the ministry should still be a BABE. Dr. DeHaan never got much beyond that stage and neither did Oliver Greene, although they certainly were a vast improvement over such sucklings as Copeland, Kapps, Hagin, Gorman, and Swaggart."⁹³

"This verse declares the condition of modern-day evangelism. Preaching only evangelism produces an infant church. Apathy, indifference, and lukewarmness permeate today's churches. In a very shallow church, its pastor remains at first-principle truths, literally contributing to the continued immaturity of his flock. In verse 13, Paul calls our attention to this principle: "For every one that useth milk." Spiritually, milk is especially the diet of a newborn babe just entered into the kingdom. But this milk will produce deep problems if it becomes the exclusive diet of the Christian. Many Christians do not want to grow up, to mature in Christ. They do not want to leave their infant walk because they do not want any greater accountability to God."⁹⁴

5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

"strong meat" Strong, deeper doctrines that are harder to apply and understand.

"by reason of use" How does a Christian come to this diet of strong meat? The answer is found within this verse: **"even those who by reason of use."** It is by reason of long usage, or by

⁹³ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 111-112.

⁹⁴ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 107.

habitually using the Word of God in the daily living, that one comes to maturity in Christ. This involves daily prayer, reading, study, meditation and application of the Scriptures. The more you use it, the more skillful you become with it. This applies to secular knowledge and skills as well as spiritual.

“them that are of full age” Full grown or mature. Mature Christians have this level of spiritual discernment. Even Jews were supposed to be like this but were not.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 6

Laying out the structure of the verse part of Hebrews 6:

- “1. Whoever is being addressed is in the same boat as the writer: **“LET US GO ON....”**
2. He is being told to *leave* something on the grounds that it is MILK not meat: **“Therefore leaving the principles of....”**
3. He has laid a foundation and is being told NOT TO LAY IT AGAIN: **“not laying again the foundation....”**
4. He may be able to **“go on”** and he may NOT be able to go on: **“And this will we do, IF GOD PERMIT.”**
5. If he does NOT **“go on”** then something becomes an impossibility for him: **“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened....”**
6. If he does NOT then he cannot be “renewed” unto repentance and is rejected: **“WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED”** (vs. 8).”⁹⁵

15. Let Us Go On to Perfection 6:1-3

Summary of 6:1-3

1. Let us go on to perfect, 6:1
2. Let's go on from the elementary doctrines:
 - A. Repentance from dead works
 - B. Faith toward God
 - C. Doctrine of baptisms
 - D. Laying on of hands
 - E. The resurrection from the dead
 - F. Eternal judgment

6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

1. The Identification- Let us
 - A. The writer is exhorting fellow believers
 - B. This is for all believers. It is for you. Every Christian needs this and it is a call to you. No Christian is exempt from this call.
 - C. This is not for unbelievers. They need to be saved before they can go anywhere.
2. The Exhortation- Go on
 - A. Energy and diligence will be required. Sanctification, maturity and perfection do not come automatically.
 - B. Not for the spiritually lazy
 - C. Many people will not go on:
 1. They see no need to,

⁹⁵ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 116.

2. They have no desire to.
 3. They are comfortable in their Christianity. They come to church. They may tithe. They sit through the occasional sermon. That is good enough for them. They see no need to invest any more in their faith.
3. The Goal- to Perfection
- A. Not sinless perfection, as no such doctrine is taught in the Bible.
 - B. This is the New Testament counterpart to Abraham's call to perfection in Genesis 17.
 - C. **"Perfection"** always means maturity and completeness, not sinless perfection.⁹⁶
 1. The idea then is "let us go on to a full spiritual maturity and not remain in a state of immaturity".
 - a. This is the ultimate hope of the Christian life.
 2. The mature Christian has gone beyond the elementary "milk" doctrines of Scripture and has mastered the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and has gone on to the deeper spiritual truths of Scripture.
 3. We must not be afraid of this word "perfection". It is mentioned (in one or another of its cognates) 138 times in the Bible; in at least 50 instances, it refers to Christian character under the operation of the divine grace of God. This term must be regarded as more specific than the word "holiness".
 - a. "Holiness" is more general and comprehensive, referring to salvation from sin and the possession of the moral image of God.
 - b. The word perfection here means to come to maturity in this matter of being a Christian.
 - D. There are two stages of salvation:
 1. The initial act itself, the new birth experience where we are saved and our sins are forgiven. This gets us into the body of Christ.
 2. Sanctification, or going on to perfection.
 - a. Once we are saved, then what?
 - i. Do we just sit around and wait for either death or rapture?
 - ii. Do we live the way we want? Does God care how we live?
 - iii. Do we continue in sin and carnality? Do we have the idea that now that we are saved, it makes no matter how we live? Church attendance, prayer, witnessing, Bible study/reading are not really necessary since we "prayed a prayer" and we were pronounced to be "saved" by whoever was dealing with us?
 - a. This is how so many professing Christians view salvation, which is why public Christianity is so weak today.
 - b. If we are saved and going to heaven anyway, why put a lot of effort into the Christian life?
 3. Sin in the human being is twofold:
 - a. Man is born with the pollution of the sin principle within as inherited from Adam (called the old man).
 - i. Dealt with in the new birth, usually in a crises
 - ii. At this stage, they are spiritual babes.
 - b. Man from that sin principle personally commits acts of sin.
 - i. Dealt with in sanctification, which is more gradual.
 - ii. This leads to spiritual maturity.
 4. Since man is a double sinner, he must have the double cure.
 - a. But how many Christians only avail themselves of half the cure!

⁹⁶ Those who claim to have "attained" sinless perfection to be very proud and arrogant. The doctrine does not promote humility in its adherents.

b. Some medical conditions require a combination of medicines or treatments. Taking one without the other will provide only a partial relief at best. A Christian may avail himself of the new birth but not of sanctification and of going on to perfection. He will then result in being a weak Christian.

E. Why do so many not go unto perfection?

1. They approach the border of the promised land at Kadesh-Barnea but do not cross over (Numbers 13,14). They can see the land but are on the wrong side of the border. They are content to live in sight of Canaan while dwelling in the wilderness while bearing the name "Christian".

2. Many have a wrong belief concerning this doctrine of Scripture, falsely interpreting it to mean sinless perfection.⁹⁷

i. They either despair in thinking such a life is not possible since it has not been presented Biblically.

ii. In their misunderstanding, some get arrogant and proud, developing into self-righteousness, thus ending up where the doctrine was never designed to take them.

iii. The doctrine sounds too "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic" and it makes many Bible believing Christians uncomfortable.

3. Many are afraid to go on with God because they fear deeper accountability unto Him.

i. This is one reason why sinners will not investigate the gospel or go into a church or read gospel literature. They think if they stay ignorant and do not expose themselves to the gospel, then they can plead ignorance at the judgments. But Romans 1:20 (**For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.**) makes it clear that they are without excuse.

ii. These professors avoid Bible-preaching churches and preachers who preach along these lines. Their sermons are hard, demanding and challenging. So many professors want no such message. They only want to hear the "simple gospel" that will make no demands upon them, certainly not the demand of a changed life. They do not want to be challenged or pushed spiritually.

4. The incorrect view of eternal security has created a deceptive sense of security in many professing Christians; they see no need to go on with God. They believe that even with a backslidden life, everything will still be all right even if they die in that condition.

F. It is true that the new birth forgives our sin (nature) but the fact and act of sin still remains in the heart. We still sin. We still have bad attitudes. We do not have the right estimation of the Bible, prayer, giving, church attendance, holiness. These are dealt with after the new birth, to bring us into conformity into the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29).

G. **"Going onto perfection"** is a realization that man is a "double sinner", a sinner by both choice and practice, a sinner by thought and deed. The new birth takes care of our standing with God but sanctification (going unto perfection) attacks the deeds of our sin. Let us attack our sinful thoughts and acts and not simply be content to stop at the new birth.

H. The Bible has two main commandments:

1. Come unto Me- at salvation

a. Said to the sinner

⁹⁷ There is no sinless perfection or entire sanctification in this life.

2. Abide in Me- after salvation at sanctification. This is tied with "Christian perfection".

a. Said to the saint

b. This will eventually deal with the Master Sin of the saint.

"FURTHER THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

"It is the nature of the carnal man to question and even deny the hope that such a truth as Christian perfection can be known in this life. There are several reasons why this truth is questioned.

(1) Many have a wrong presupposition concerning this doctrine of Scripture, falsely interpreting it to mean sinless perfection. The Bible certainly does not teach a sinless perfection, and no Christian believing in biblical perfection will claim such an error.

(2) Many are afraid to go on with God because they fear deeper accountability unto Him.

(3) The false view of eternal security has created a deceptive sense of security in many professing Christians; they see no need to go on with God. They believe that even with a backslidden life, everything will still be all right even if they die in that condition.

Unlike this modern heresy, church history has spoken of the "perseverance of the saints." Perseverance is a test of whether a person truly is born again. True Christians will deeply desire to go on with God. They will long for revival, for holiness of heart, and to be as pure in heart and life as a child of God can be in this life through the provisions of Christ's great atonement.

"Sanctification has also been a misunderstood term that has caused many to conclude that the victory over the "old man" will not be known until we get to heaven. During the Evangelical revivals, men of different theological persuasions all believed that the ruling power and dominion of sin could be broken in a Christian's life, that the love for the world and the power of the flesh could be put to death through a work of the grace of Christ.'

Perhaps here we could make several clarifications about Christian perfection. The provision of sanctification that brings the believer to Christian perfection is subsequent to the new birth; it takes place after the new birth. This distinction is important because sin in the human being is twofold:

(1) man is born with the pollution of the sin principle within as inherited from Adam (called the old man); and

(2) man from that sin principle personally commits acts of sin.

Therefore, as "double sinners" we need from the Lord's great redemption a "double-cure." The new birth takes care of the acts of sin we commit; sanctification incapacitates the principle of sin, the old man that is the fountain of inbred sin.

"Although there are several points in Andrew Murray's theology we would differ with, there are many truths he calls the Christian to that certainly mark him as a deeper-life preacher. Murray did come to the recognition of the need of an experience beyond that of regeneration. Note his words: "I cannot with too much earnestness urge every Christian reader to learn well the two stages of the Christian. There are the carnal and there are the spiritual; there are those who remain babes, and those who are full-grown men. There are those who come up out of Egypt, but then remain in the wilderness of a worldly life; there are those who follow the Lord fully, and enter the life of rest and victory."⁹⁸ ⁹⁹

Examples of the elementary doctrines that new Christians need to master:

1. Repentance from dead works

A. Repentance that accompanies salvation is a heresy in the neo-fundamentalist movement and among the modern so-called Independent Fundamentalist

⁹⁸ Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All*, page 141.

⁹⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 115-116.

Baptists. They say requiring repentance at salvation is “adding works to grace” or is “Lordship Salvation”. They hate repentance because it cuts down on the number of converts one can claim and it takes salvation longer since you would be looking for fruit to be manifested that would validate that a salvation experience has taken place.

B. This is repentance from “dead works”. We know that “**faith without works is dead** (James 2:17)” and the Jews had a problem with this sort of formalism, relying on religious ritual and ethnicity for their salvation. But many modern Christians have the same issue in relying on their works to sanctify them. Modern Independent Fundamental Baptists/neo-Fundamentalists have this issue. They minimize the spiritual relationship with God and focus on the outward: soulwinning, church busses and attendance numbers. This is the mark of a spiritually immature Christian. The mature Christian who is going on to perfection has moved beyond the idea of trying to earn God’s favor through works and has learned to accept the rest from his own works and mentioned in Hebrews 4:10.

C. This would also include those who base their salvation on things like water baptism, speaking in tongues, church membership, etc.

2. Faith toward God

3. Doctrine of baptisms (Hebrews 6:2)

A. How many people continual harp on the doctrine of baptism! There are groups who think the gospel is Acts 2:38 and every sermon they preach ends on that text.¹⁰⁰

B. I wonder of the Baptists make too much emphasis on the mode of baptism sometimes.

C. Pentecostals often over-emphasize the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and tongues.

D. All of the above can be signs of spiritual immaturity.

4. Laying on of hands (Hebrews 6:2)

5. The resurrection (Hebrews 6:2)

6. Judgment (Hebrews 6:2)

7. There will be a thirst for real Bible teaching and preaching. One of the signs of apostasy in America has been the fact that the thousands of professing Christians half-baked have no desire to sit under a clear, hard, plain, straight presentation of the truth. Salvation produces a love of the truth and a thirst for truth that cannot be satisfied with humanistic relativists, rap sessions, pragmatic psychology, and motivational counsellors. People like Joel Osteen or the “California expositors” will not do.

8. There will be a desire to fellowship with other Christians and church services.

If this admonition is doctrinally placed in the Tribulation period, then yes, you can live for God, go on with God and go on to spiritual perfection and maturity even in the worst of times. The worst of times brings out the best in good men. As tough as it will be in the Tribulation, great deeds will be done (especially by the 144,000) and multitudes will be “saved” (dispensationally). Never use the excuse “you just can’t live for God today!” as an excuse. These Tribulation saints will do just that, even without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy in this dispensation.

“not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works” Why do we keep repenting over the same sins? We sin, repent, then sin the same again. This is a sign of immaturity. If this is our condition, we have never gained deliverance over these sins.

¹⁰⁰ Like the Church of Christ sect or some Pentecostal groups like “The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Apostolic Faith”, a black group in Philadelphia. These groups are unbalanced, theologically.

The Jews were used to doing works for salvation, as they held to a works-based salvation. Works are fine and good, but dead works accomplish nothing. Your works should be to glorify God and to help you on to God. But legalism had replaced spiritual works from the Lord's time onward and the Jews needed to abandon their legalism and move unto the spirit, and not just the letter of the law.

6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

This includes both water baptism and Spirit baptism. Carnal and unbalanced Christians are forever pushing their errors of baptismal regeneration and Acts 2:38 and condemn everyone (especially Baptists) who don't hold to the same errors as they do. Baptism is an important doctrine but that should be understood early in one's Christian life, and then move on to deeper doctrines.

6:3 And this will we do if God permit.

But we do not have the time now to go over these basic doctrines again. We still have a lot of deeper doctrines we need to discuss in this letter. Hopefully God will allow the writer to deal with these issues later. We wonder if he ever got that opportunity?

16. An Impossible Situation 6:4-8

Summary of 6:4-8:

1. Who cannot be renewed if they fall away?
 - A. Those who were:
 - i. Once enlightened
 - ii. Tasted of the heavenly gift
 - iii. Were made partakers of the Holy Ghost
 - iv. Who tasted the good word of God
 - v. Who tasted of the powers of the world to come
2. They cannot be renewed to repentance, 6:6
 - A. They fell away
 - B. They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh
 - C. They put the Son of God to an open shame
3. They are rejected, 6:7,8
 - A. Their end is to be burned, 6:8
 - B. They are cursed, 6:8

6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Verses 4-6 are among the most difficult verses in Scripture. The best way to interpret them is from a dispensational viewpoint, especially since we interpret Hebrews as being primarily a tribulational doctrinal treatise. If it won't fit into a church age context, the doctrinal application must lie elsewhere. Too many men try to fit a square theological peg into a round theological hole.

1. "This is an extraordinary troublesome passage for Christendom. Arminians apply this Jewish passage to a Christian who can fall from grace and lose his salvation, but they

also teach the said individual may get born again and again. You can lose your salvation, but you can get it back.¹⁰¹ The Pharisee of this position usually believes you can lose your salvation, but he cannot lose his.

2. The passage says it is impossible to renew a person to repentance. One brand of fundamentalist claims the person almost got saved as the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea almost entered the land of Canaan,¹⁰²

A. "The Scofield interpretation is that the man addressed is like the spies at Kadesh barnea (Num. 13–14) who went up to search out the land and turned back when "on the threshold of salvation." This was done by tying the chapter in with the discussion which went on in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The idea is they "had the grapes in their hands" and then "fell away" and could not be "renewed again unto repentance." Holes appear all over the exegesis: No spy at Kadesh barnea had been made "PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST" (see vs. 4), not one spy in the group had been grounded in "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" (vs. 1), they tasted of no "heavenly gift" whatsoever: if they had eaten the grapes (Num. 13), they would have "tasted" an earthly gift. Nowhere do you read in Numbers that they were BURNED (vs. 8) for not entering the land— NOT EVEN MOSES ENTERED THE LAND; and what is worse, most of them were not "nigh unto curs ing" whatever problems they may have had. Beyond this, it is absolutely incredible to think of lost Hebrews "partaking of the Holy Ghost," tasting of the "heavenly gift," plus the "good word of God," (plus the "powers of the world to come").¹⁰³

3. Another brand of Fundamentalism assumes this is a final rejection of salvation.

4. Another wing of Fundamentalism believes this is a burning of the works of a backslidden Christian.

5. Another brand makes the passage a hypothetical situation.¹⁰⁴

6. All of these above interpretations usually need to change the words of the Received English Text to make it match their beliefs.

7. The plain Biblical teaching of the passage says the recipient is a saved Hebrew who is in danger of losing his salvation if he does not endure to the end. He is a partaker of the Holy Ghost with the apostolic signs, but he must resist the mark of the beast by survival skills in Selah Petra or suffer martyrdom. If he endures to the end, he will be a partaker of Jesus Christ. If he draws back with an evil heart of unbelief, he will burn in the fires of hell and be forever lost (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; Revelation 14:11)."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ There is no verse that supports this idea but it is a popular one among Pentecostals, Charismatics and other Arminians. Look at Jimmy Swaggart, who "lost" his salvation in 1988 after getting caught with prostitutes in a motel on more than one occasion. He was defrocked by the Assemblies of God. Oral Roberts claimed to exorcise demons out of Swaggart after the incident. According to their doctrines, Swaggart lost his salvation. But several months later, he was right back in the ministry, where he continues until at least 2025. When did he get his salvation back? And how? What verses were used to justify it? It happened again in 1991.

¹⁰² C. I. Scofield's position.

¹⁰³ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 140-141.

¹⁰⁴ Oliver B. Greene did this in his commentary on Hebrews. He couldn't handle it because he was afraid of upsetting some of his Baptist "brethren" and knew he'd get into a lot of trouble if he followed the verse to its logical conclusion. He was a Scofield dispensationalist and that did not help him to properly apply the passage, so he just gave up on it and said it was hypothetical. Greene notices on page 224 on his commentary on Hebrew that there is no mention of the new birth in this passage, EXACTLY. Greene stumbles on to the truth without realizing it. There is no new birth in the Tribulation period.

¹⁰⁵ David Hoffman, *The Common Man's Reference Bible*, pages 1804-1805.

- A. The incident at Kadesh Barnea is not a picture of salvation but of sanctification, or a rejection of it. The exodus of Egypt is a type of salvation. The failure to enter Canaan in Numbers 13-14 is the failure to enter into the fulness of the Christian life. The failure at Kadesh Barnea then cannot represent Jewish believers coming up to the border of salvation and then turning back.¹⁰¹ This is the Scofield Bible interpretation and we do not agree with it.
8. Who are those who have been “enlightened” in Hebrews 6:4?
- A. Those would be Tribulation Jews who have come to faith in Christ.
- B. They have “tasted” of the good things of God and have been “partakers of the Holy Ghost”.
- i. This is a curious term. Church Age Christians are never said to be “partakers of the Holy Ghost” and He dwells in individual Christian believers. This would show that the Holy Ghost’s relationship to Tribulation believers will be different from what it is today. It will be more of an Old Testament relationship, where the Holy Spirit is not dwelling in the bodies of believers in the same way He is today.
9. The danger here is if they “fall away” in Hebrews 6:6.
- A. This would be to abandon the profession in Christ that they made. If they do fall away, it will be impossible to renew them. There is no eternal security in the Tribulation period. There certainly is in the Church Age but not beyond it. Apostasy is fatal, spiritually. To fall away from Christ and follow the Antichrist will mean damnation.
- B. They have despised Christ by forsaking Him and have put Him to an open shame by their public forsaking of Him (Hebrews 6:6). To the groups who oppose the doctrine of the security of believer, they have the right doctrine but the wrong dispensation!
10. It is “impossible” to renew these ones who have been exposed to the truth and have been enlightened by it, who then willingly turn from it. When it comes to this kind of spiritual movement, you will see a lot of people going from truth to error but very, very few going from truth to error and then back to truth.
- A. You will meet many former Bible believers in Kingdom Halls and in Mormon temples, but you will meet very few (if any) people who once were members of Bible preaching churches who left for the Kingdom Hall and then came back to a Bible preaching church. We have many in our churches who came to truth from error.
- B. I was born and raised in the Church of Rome but left that error. That is not what is being discussed here. You see many who started in error who came to truth, but very few who started in truth, who then went to error, and then came back again to the truth.
- C. The road to error is like the New Jersey Turnpike near New York City- 16 lanes wide. But the road back to truth from error is like a winding goat path up a mountain.

“If a man stranded on a desert island rejects the only possible means of transportation to the mainland, he would have no other means of escape. ...it is evident that repentance is impossible while one continues to crucify to himself the Saviour and while he still continues to denounce the name by which alone, he may be saved. Doubtless, in every habitual sin there is a continual hardening process that may finally bring one to a place where repentance is impossible. This text implies a judicial act of God, a condemnation of the apostate that permits

no return. There is a sin against the Holy Spirit which our Saviour said 'hath never forgiveness' and which culminates in total apostasy."¹⁰⁶

Consider again at Numbers 13 and 14 with the failure at Kadesh Barnea. The nation of Israel refused to obey God and go into the land. As a result, judgment was swift and irreversible. God judged them and turned them into the wilderness to die and gave them no opportunity to repent of that sin and offered them no second chance. No repentance was manifested by the people either. They wanted to go back to Egypt. There was no repentance offered by the nation as it would seem that God did not grant them repentance as their apostasy was total.

Christians are not made "**partakers**" of the Holy Ghost but have received Him in all His fullness and He indwells every Christian at their new birth, something that is not true of the Tribulation saint. This shows that doctrinally, this is not directed toward Church Age Christians.

6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

"**the world to come**" is Millennial, not any sort of reference to the Church Age. If Hebrews is a Tribulation epistle, then it would naturally anticipate the soon-to-be Millennium with its exaltation of the nation of Israel.

6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

"**fall away**" Strong's #3895 *parapiptô*; to fall beside a person or thing, to slip aside, to deviate from the right path, turn aside, wander

"**renew**" Strong's #340 *anakainizô*; to renew, renovate. It is used only here in the New Testament.

Apostasy is a fearful thing, more than we realize. To know the truth and to have once embraced it and held to it, only to later renounce it and abandon it is more a more serious sin than we generally consider it to be. We know the truth and then deliberately reject it is to call God a liar and to re-crucify Christ. This is not a man who is confused or deceived. This is a deliberate rejection of the truth in full knowledge where it was once held to and accepted and maybe even preached and promoted.

1. Apostasy, while a serious sin, is not the "unpardonable sin" in the Church Age. Yet it seems as though someone lost their salvation here because they went back on an earlier profession. If we have a truth that seems to contradict another truth (in this case, the security of the New Testament believer), then we must conclude that one of the "conflicting" truths must not be applicable to our dispensation. The security of the believer is a New Testament doctrine. If we have a verse (like Matthew 24:13) that teaches that a believer can lose his salvation, we must conclude that the "offending" passage must be applied doctrinally to another dispensation and to another group of people (not Christians). In this case, this is applied to a tribulation saint, not a Christian. Thus, only a dispensational approach to the issue will yield any meaningful interpretation and application.
2. If we reject Christ and His word and workings in our lives, we will eventually end up doing two things in our lives:

¹⁰⁶ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 121-122.

- A. We will crucify the Son of God in our declarations that we do not want Him.
- B. We will put Him to open shame in our rejections of Him.

If this referred to Christians losing their salvation, then verse 6 says it would be impossible to get your salvation back, or get “re-saved”. It would be impossible to renew this Church-Age apostate to repentance again.¹⁰⁷ Thus, anyone who lost their salvation (for any reason) cannot be saved again and is heading for hell with no remedy.

H. T. Spence has more of a New Testament interpretation on verse 6: “These verses do declare that if they fall away, they cannot repent if there are two conditions met in their lives: (r) if they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh and (2) if they are ever putting Him to open shame. Who are the ones who crucified Christ? His enemies crucified Him. Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, “Ye have crucified” (Acts 2:23). It was their hatred and then their rejection that moved their hearts to crucify Him. If I am crucifying Him constantly, it means that I am rejecting Him, and thus I am constantly putting him to open shame, to open embarrassment, to open ridicule. If this rejection has become my present-tense attitude of life, after all of these precious workings which Christ has done for me, I cannot and will not repent.”¹⁰⁸

6:7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

6:8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

This is the one who has “fallen away” from the faith in Hebrews 6:6. He has rejected Christ, despite his initial acceptance of Him, so Christ has rejected him. This is the principle of reciprocity- Christ treats us in the same manner that we treat Him with regards to salvation, especially in the tribulation period. But the encouragement in Hebrews 6:7 is that Christ will accept anyone who comes to Him and remains faithful to Him.

1. There is a warning of “**whose end is to be burned**” and who are cursed. That which is rejected, useless, unacceptable is good only for the fire. The Tribulation saint who goes back on God is viewed in this light by God. He will be rejected by God. “You were once with Me but have now abandoned me and have taken up with the Antichrist, despite everything I have done for you and all the warnings I gave you”. What are you going to do with someone who was once enlightened and had tasted of the good things of God who then commits spiritual adultery and treason? If the fruit produced by an individual or a nation is “thorns and briers”, well, no one wants those so into the fire they go.

2. Spiritually, no spiritual good will come from the saint who goes back on God, who refuses to enter into the Canaan Life, who resists the call to go on to perfection. Loss of salvation is not the danger here but there is a loss of fellowship, communion and God using him and dealing with him. There will be a lot of “burning” in that life (Hebrews 6:8) at the bema seat as that Christian will see his works burn (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).

A. There will be Christians who heard about the Christian life, communion with God and a walk with God. They heard it, liked it and responded well to it initially. They tasted this life and saw it was good. They tasted of the honey of Canaan and liked it. But something came up later. There was a refusal to go forward into Canaan. They became content to live on the border of the promised land. They

¹⁰⁷ I witnessed to a man who claimed he had been born again five times.

¹⁰⁸ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 120-121.

did not go forward. Technically, if they were not over the border of Canaan, they were still in the wilderness, but they were close enough to see it. For whatever reason, they refused to cross that border despite it being the will of God for them (1 Thessalonians 4:3, **For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.**). They went back and got to a point where they simply refused to go forward within the will of God. They were enlightened but the enlightening ultimately did not profit them in the end. The result is backsliding and a falling away. For those guilty of this, it is impossible to renew them back to that state of sanctification. The church-age saint in this situation does not lose his salvation but he has lost his sanctification and no amount of preaching is going to be able to push them across that border because of the judgment of God upon their rebellion. This ultimately leads to a rejection of Christ. It starts in the heart privately but will eventually manifest itself publicly. B. In the Tribulation, apostasy or “going back” results in a loss of salvation, judgment, cursing, and hell fire. This is not Church Age doctrine but it is Tribulation Age doctrine.

3. We have two classes of people here:

A. Those who receive a blessing from God- Hebrews 6:7

i. They are faithful believers in the Tribulation.

B. Those who are burned- Hebrews 6:8

i. They are the unfaithful ones in the Tribulation.

4. Keeping the theme of a tribulation judgment, Matthew 25 would play in here with the Judgment of the Nations. Those who supported Israel enter the Kingdom. Those who did not support Israel are cast away into the fire. The bema judgment would not be in view here as that applies to the Church and takes place right after the rapture (Revelation 4), maybe before the tribulation period even begins. There will be a judgment of tribulation saints at the second coming in Revelation 19, although the Bible does not tell us too much about it.

To summarize Hebrews 6:3-8

1. Doctrinally, this is not addressed to Christians.
2. It is addressed to Tribulation saints and Jews.
3. A spiritual application can always be made to Christians.
4. Apostasy is the “unpardonable sin” in the Tribulation.
5. This apostasy involves accepting the claims of the Antichrist after having heard the claims of Christ. It can also include having made a profession of Christ earlier in the Tribulation, only to later turn from that profession.
6. Once such an act of apostasy is made in the Tribulation, there is no more sacrifice for it and it is an eternal sin.
7. The writer He is in danger of losing his salvation if he doesn’t **“endure unto the end”** as in Matthew 24:13.
8. He is in danger of drawing back into “perdition” as Jews did who got into Canaan and then “apostatized” after they got into the land (the books of Judges, Jeremiah and Ezekiel as examples).
9. If that happens, he can lose salvation and not be able to get it back.
10. There is no eternal security in the Tribulation and salvation can be lost. This is a Church Age heresy but a Tribulation truth.
 - A. Many Church Age heresies taught today may actually be Tribulation doctrinal truths.

B. In the Tribulation, a Jew can lose salvation after he gets it, for he is not in Christ's Body: Christ's Body has gone after the rapture.

11. In the Tribulation, the believer (Jew or Gentile) can lose salvation after he gets it, for he is not in Christ's Body: Christ's Body, the Church, has gone in the rapture. In the Tribulation, you may get saved by faith, but you won't be kept without works. If you don't have the works you will go to hell. That's where the book of James came in: "**Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**" (James 2:24). In the Tribulation, a man has to resist the mark of the beast. This may be a Church Age heresy, but it is a Tribulation truth. This shouldn't surprise us as the Tribulation is not the Church Age but is a new and different dispensation, similar to the Old Testament and Acts 2-7.

A. In the Tribulation, a man has to resist the mark of the beast or he will be lost. He can take the mark or starve (Revelation 13:15-18), or if they catch him, he will be killed. The only way he will survive the Tribulation is as an undercover agent helping Jews (Matthew 25:40), or head for the bushes and mountains and practice "survival" till the "end" (Matthew 24:13).

12. Some of this doctrinal material can apply to any dispensation, including the Church Age. Spiritual applications can always be made with any verse. But we have to remember that the Bible is not just written for the Christian in the Church Age. It is written for all men in all ages, including dispensations that are still future. What about the tribulation saint? Does God have any word for him? It is arrogance to assume that God stops speaking after the rapture and that He only speaks to the Church (especially in the New Testament). There will be a multitude of converts in the tribulation who have little if any familiarity with Church Age doctrine. They are not in the Church Age anyway. A new dispensation needs fresh words and revelations from God fitted for that age. The Tribulation period is a different dispensation with different doctrines and plans of salvation. In the Tribulation, salvation is still by faith but there appears to be no eternal security. There also may be an element of works involved in tribulation salvation, as laid out in James 2. If all this is true, then God must have writings that apply spiritually to these people and that revelation is given in Acts 2-7 and in the "General" Epistles, Hebrews through Jude.

13. Those who "go back": or do not endure or who apostatize in the Tribulation lose salvation and go to hell when they did in Hebrews 6:8.

17. An Encouragement to "Keep On" 6:9-20

Summary of 6:9-20

1. God will not forget your labors, 6:9,10
2. Exhortation to faithfulness, 6:11,12
3. Abraham's faithfulness, 6:13-17
4. Two immutable things 6:18
 - A. God cannot lie
 - B. God is a refuge
5. The anchor of the soul, 6:19
6. Entering into the veil, 6:19
7. Christ the forerunner, 6:20

6:9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

The writer expressed his assurance and confidence that his readers would not abandon their profession of faith in Christ, as per the warnings in Hebrews 6:4-8. Those verses were rough, filled with warning about apostasy and fearful judgment. But the writer had higher hopes for his readers that they would not fall into that spiritual danger.

We don't have to backslide! We don't have to apostatize! If I see thorns and briars in my life and can smell the smoke from the burning, I can still be recovered from it by the grace and power of God.

There will be visible fruit that comes after salvation. A popular heresy among the neo-fundamentalist/Independent Fundamental Baptist groups today is that salvation is nothing more than a mere belief and verbal profession and that we have no business expecting any spiritual fruit from our converts. This allows the "soulwinner" to claim that their converts are truly converts regardless if they show any spiritual evidence of salvation at all. But we have verses like 2 Corinthians 5:17 (**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**) and the "fruit" passages of John 15:2-16 and the exhortations that works must accompany faith in James 2:14-26 are so important. There are numerous things that accompany salvation. What sort of things "accompany salvation?" We can think of several:

1. Perseverance, that we will not fall away from our profession. This would apply to anyone, in any dispensation.
2. Faith in God and in the Scripture
3. Sanctification, going on to perfection, after the initial salvation experience. This includes any attempt to abandon the old sins and ways of life and to go **"unto perfection"** (Hebrews 6:1-4).
4. Assurance of salvation. If you have been truly saved and have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, you know it!
 - A. 1 John 5:13, **These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**
5. A genuine desire and thirst for Biblical teaching and preaching and church attendance. This includes attendance at prayer meetings and Bible studies.
 - A. Hebrews 10:25, **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**
6. A desire to fellowship with other Christians (this includes church attendance).
7. A desire to witness and to be an ambassador for Christ.
 - A. Acts 1:8, **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**
 - B. 2 Corinthians 5:20, **Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**

6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

See 1 Thessalonians 1:3, **Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.** But here, spiritual work is involved, just as in James 2 (James is a similar book as Hebrews with its Tribulation applications). Even Paul constantly mentions “good works” in Titus.

Unlike man often does, God will not forget, overlook or ignore any work done for Him that was done in sincerity and with a good motivation.

6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

“unto the end” reminds us of a similar phrase in Matthew 24:13 **“but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”** Tribulation verses often have an exhortation to remain faithful “unto the end” since, as we have already noticed several times, there is no eternal security in the tribulation period. Apostasy or quitting on God during that dispensation results in a loss of salvation.

1. In a Christian context, “the end” is also the end of our lives. We must press forward in sanctification as long as we are on earth. We must live well and die well. The final season of our life is always crucial. We cannot expect to die well if we lived badly.

2. The Calvinistic idea of the “perseverance of the saints” (the “P” in the TULIP) would apply here. A true saint of God will go on. He will make it to the end. He will die well if he is in communion with God. The falls come when we get out of communion and fellowship and bring judgment upon our Christian lives. We may not die as well as we like but we will not renounce our salvation if we are truly saved. I have known of professing Christians who did renounce their salvation and then went off into gross and vile sin. They were not saved despite any profession they made since they did not persevere. A Christian will die as a Christian to varying degrees, some will die better than others, but we will all die maintaining our profession.

3. We must make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). We must work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12). We must do something with it, improve upon it and make sure that it is clear and obvious to all who know us in our public testimonies.

6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

An exhortation to spiritual vigor, in not being weary or discouraged in one’s following after God and in one’s faithfulness to God, even in the midst of a difficult situation, like being persecuted by the Antichrist in the tribulation. Use the example of others who have gone before you, who have also suffered greatly for the faith without wavering or compromising, as an example and inspiration for you! Judges 18:9 says, **And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.** True, this was not said by a good group of people in the context, but it certainly applies. How long will you linger on the border of Canaan? When will you stir yourself (Psalm 35:23) and go and invade your spiritual Canaan? If not now, when? What is holding you back? Why do you delay?

What are the promises? The covenant promises given to Israel, regarding the land, the seed and the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12. The Jews who make it through the Tribulation faithfully and without compromise will inherit the promises in the Millennium.

This faithfulness in the Tribulation is accomplished by two things:

1. Faith

A. The only way to make it through the Tribulation faithfully is with divine help and faith in the Scriptures and its promises. There is no other way in the light of the severity of the Tribulation period.

2. Patience

A. The Tribulation is only 7 years in length and the worst part of it only half that duration. It may seem like a long time if one is in the crucible of suffering, but in reality, the Tribulation saint may only have to endure for 42 months.

“patience” “Patience comes only through tribulation, and patience is born only over a process of time. Unlike the crisis experience of heart purity, we do not gain patience immediately. Patience necessitates tribulation. Our English word tribulation comes from the Latin word tribulum. During Paul’s day a tribulum was a threshing board with sharp teeth pulled or rolled over grain to separate mature seed from its chaff. Trials appointed by our heavenly Father are His tribulum for us. With a crushing trial, God is trying to separate something that is hurting our growth. The length of that trial depends on how long it takes the individual Christian to yield and gain its benefit. In this tribulum patience becomes that virtue, that spiritual energy that enables the life to endure, no matter how long it takes. Patience helps the Christian to remain under that tribulum for as long as God wants him there. The Christian life should never be a drudgery or burden to live. If a person in the will of God does not like his lot, the solution to his dilemma is not to forsake God’s will. What his soul needs is a revival in the will of God; only then will he come to love God’s lot for his life.

“Let us further consider the word Paul uses. The word for patience (Gr., hupomone) means “to remain under.” With every God-sent trial we must remain under its load with joy and contentment. Paul is not suggesting we pray for God to pour out tribulations on us. However, if such a tribulum is our appointed lot, God teaches the Christian to say, “It is well with my soul.” Dear reader, this is the key to our bearing up under trials. Faith must be for the whole life: trusting in God, believing in God, acting upon the truths of God, with patience. Patience is one virtue that will not be part of our existence in heaven; however, the fruit of patience will be clearly seen in the character of God’s people for all of eternity. It is through faith and patience that we will inherit the promises.

“Joshua and Caleb are two prime examples of men who through faith and patience inherited the promises of God. They waited thirty-eight long years to enter their promised inheritance. During these long years Israelites were dying all around them. Faith and patience kept them amidst all that was happening in the wilderness. Although it is evident that these men were already sanctified in heart, they had not physically entered the land. They believed, they trusted; and thus, for thirty-eight years, patience kept them in their daily living. Miriam died, Aaron died, and even Moses died; but death did not come nigh them. Through faith and patience they inherited God’s promise to them.”¹⁰⁹

6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

“when God made promise to Abraham” This references the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12, which shows the application is Jewish and not directed toward Gentiles or the Church.

Men swear by God, although they shouldn’t, because God is greater than man, and if you are going to swear by something, you always swear by a greater than yourself. If you break the

¹⁰⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 129-130).

oath, that greater one will see to the appropriate punishment, as he will have the means and authority to bring that broken vow into judgment. But who will God swear by? There is none greater than Him, so He can swear by Himself when giving the Abrahamic Covenant to Abraham. The validity of that covenant ought thus to satisfy anyone, as God calls Himself to witness to it! You can't do any better than that!

6:14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

This is a summary of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant was not fulfilled immediately and parts of it are still not fulfilled even today. But Abraham did see the land and the seed (in Isaac) part fulfilled in its initial stages, but even that, he had to be patient and await God's moving and God's timing to fulfill that covenant that He swore by Himself that He would fulfill. Abraham had to "keep the faith" and not grow tired of waiting for God to fulfill His word, as we all have to do.

6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Abraham eventually obtained the seed in Isaac but he had to wait for it. He did not receive the land or the blessing in his lifetime but he will in the Millennium, as will his descendants. The ultimate fulfillment of the covenant will be realized by Israel that survives the Tribulation period. Abraham is then a prime example of patience as he waited for Isaac to be born, and he is still waiting for the land he was promised!

6:16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

Men swear by God for God is the greater. But when God makes oaths, covenants and promises, who does He swear by? There is none greater than God, so God swears by Himself.

"an end of all strife" This would be Millennial, where Israel's history of suffering and persecution will finally come to an end and they can finally rest secure in their own land, unmolested by hostile Arabs or the United Nations.

6:17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

"impossible for God to lie" Hebrews 6:18

1. The unchangeableness of the Abrahamic Covenant. What God has proposed, and promise will come to pass and He will not change His mind about it.
2. Since God is Truth, therefore, there can be no lie or falsehood in Him. This is a primary attribute of God. He gave oaths, promises and covenants, and He will fulfill them to the letter and on time as He cannot lie, deny Himself or fail to fulfill His word.
3. This is one of the moral attributes of God.

During the centuries of their wanderings and persecution (especially during the holocaust), some of the rabbis may have publicly charged God with lying or deceiving the nation or in not keeping His covenant promises. Such an attitude would have been understandable. This attitude would no doubt resurface during the persecutions of the Tribulation period. Israel is assured that just as God did not forget Israel after centuries of their Egyptian slavery or the

millennia of their wanderings over the earth, God would not forget Israel in the midst of her Tribulation sufferings. God said it and gave promises. He will fulfill His word and will not lie nor be unfaithful.

6:18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

This consolation is the faith that believes that God has heard us and saved us. There are many false grounds of this hope:

Some rest in their convictions. They hope for heaven because they have been concerned, have wept for their souls, have prayed with fervor. Ah! That is a foundation of sand.

Some rest on their morality. They are like the young man who came to Christ and said of the commandments 'All these have I kept from my youth. What lack I yet?' 'Touching the righteousness that is in the law', they feel they are 'blameless'. Ah! that was Paul's ground, but it will not stand the light of the judgment day.

Some rest on their devotions. You have your regular times for prayer and reading of the Word. You are as a pillar in the house of God. You have sat at His table and you have a name as a Christian among men, And this is your hope. Sand! All sand! 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish...whose trust will be like a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand' (Job 8:13-15). What is the hope of the hypocrite then?

Others rely on amendment of life, like Herod who, when he heard John the Baptist did many things, or on the good opinion of others, or on past experiences. But none of these is Christ, the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof, even if there is in them some sort of gain for this life. 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' (Job 27:8)¹¹⁰

I could add those who put their trust and hope in the fact that they were raised in a Christian home, may have a preacher for a father, went to Christian schools, and may even be in the ministry. But if this is without Christ, then it is all for naught.

This "**strong consolation**" consists of three immutable things:

1. The Promise of God. He has promised it in the past in His word.
2. The Oath of God. He made covenants and promises with believers.
3. The Character of God. He cannot lie, He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

These three things lay the foundation of the believer's trust in his ultimate salvation. They also lay the foundation of the hope of the Tribulation saint that he is suffering for righteousness sake and that his faith and patience will be rewarded.

6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

These hopes, bound up in the Bible doctrines and promises listed above, will serve to settle and anchor the soul in times of trial and doubt. We certainly live in such times! What will anchor us when the storms arrive and what will keep us from either drifting away or being carried away?

1. Anchors keep ships from drifting away in times of calm. We tend to slowly drift away from the faith in times of calm, mainly due to carelessness. We get lazy and begin to wander away from where we ought to be in our relationship with God. Prosperity can also cause the soul to drift away from God. It also protects us from carelessness, in

¹¹⁰ Robert Murray McCheyne, *Sermons on Hebrews*, page 81.

allowing ourselves to “let slip” the necessary truths of the gospel (Hebrews 2:1). We must pay attention to the Word of God both in its preached and written forms.

A. This call to diligence regarding the Word of God is a common one in Scripture: (Deuteronomy 4:9, **Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;**)

2. Anchors ground the ship in times of storm. We tend to get desperate and abandon the faith in times of trouble and desperation, when we give into the temptation to rely upon ourselves or upon the short arm of man. When we run out of money or have to bury a loved one or have to rebuild after our house burns down, we are tempted to question the goodness and promises of God and we may very well abandon God in our spiritual shallowness and bitterness. But if these promises have a firm grasp on our hearts, we will be spiritually anchored so that we will not be blown away from the promises of God, the will of God and the love of God.

3. Anchors must be made sure and fast, else they will be unreliable. They are heavy, shaped to grasp firmly upon the sea bed, and are linked by very strong and thick ropes to the ship. If properly constructed and used, they can prevent even the largest of aircraft carriers from drifting or being blown away. The Word of God does the very same thing for the saint. When we are at calm, the anchor of the Word keeps us firm and settled when we might be careless and lazy. When the storm comes, the Word will also anchor us. How many times have we quoted memorized Scriptures and called out in prayer when it looked as though we were going under! Going to the Word in these seasons kept us up from being carried away with the storm.

4. They keep us from drifting into apostasy. False teachers are likened to “wandering stars” in Jude 13. They have wandered from the truth and a position of spiritual usefulness. They either had no anchor, did not deploy their anchor or had an unreliable one. Many people cast their anchor in false teachers, false theological systems and false teachers. The results are what you would expect.

A. We may drift at times but if we have a solid anchor, we will only drift so far and the anchor will pull us back to a place of theological security and safety.

5. The character of God also provides us the anchor, knowing He has never gone back on His word, has never failed to fulfill a promise, has never lied to His people. We can have absolute trust and confidence in such a God as this.

6. We notice that our anchor is God Himself, His word, His promises, His character. It is not found in manmade creeds or theological systems. Our anchor is not the writings of the Church Fathers, the teachings of the Church of Rome, Augustine’s *City of God*, Calvin’s *Institutes*, the Westminster Confession, the *Sword of the Lord*, what your denomination teaches or any other uninspired writing or teaching of man. These writings, as useful as they may be, will not sustain you in the hour of your deepest trial or when you are in a night season of the soul, struggling with doubt or trying to discern the will of God. Only the Bible and the promises of God can do that.

a. To put one’s hope and trust in such documents is to be guilty of the folly described in 1 Kings 18:21, **Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.**

7. Without this anchor, you will make your faith and life shipwreck- as in 1 Timothy 1:19, **Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:**

8. The only other portion of Scripture where we see anchors is in Acts 27:29,30,40.

9. This hope in the covenants and promises of God is what will anchor the Tribulation saint in his persecutions. What would make someone endure such sufferings? Ask any

martyr and they will tell you that it was their faith and hope in the word of God. This is what will allow the Tribulation saint to endure what he must endure and do so faithfully.

What are some of these anchors?

1. Faith in God
2. Prayer
3. A walk with God
4. Heart purity
5. Scriptures
6. Hope in the promises and covenants of God

“This world is as a sea; the church in it, and so every believer, is as a ship; the port that is bound unto is heaven; Christ is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is cast on a bottom, out of sight; and when the ship is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the shore; but is of no service without a cable: and when cast aright, keeps the ship steady: so hope is cast on Christ; whence he is often called hope itself, because he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at present unseen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope without the cable of faith is of little service; but being cast aright on Christ, keeps the soul steady and immovable: in some things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not of so much use in tempests as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor be useless, but so it cannot be with faith and hope; when the ship is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not so with the soul, when hope is in exercise; the anchor of hope is not cast on anything below, but above; and here it is called the anchor of the soul, to distinguish it from any other, and to show the peculiar benefit of it to the soul.”¹¹¹

Since we are talking in nautical terms, what else do we need for the voyage over the sea of life?

1. A sturdy ship
2. A destination
3. A map
4. An experienced captain

“Anchor-making is very important work. The anchor-smith has a very responsible business, for if he makes his anchor badly, or of weak material, woe to the shipmaster when the storm comes! Anchors are not made of cast iron, not of every kind of metal that comes to hand, but they are made of worked iron, strongly welded and of tough, compact material which will bear all the strain that is likely to come upon it at the worst of times. If anything in this world should be strong, it should be an anchor, for upon its safety and life often depend.”¹¹²

This looks ahead to Hebrews 6:20 and to Hebrews 9 and 10, as it is Christ Who gave us these promises and doctrines that serve as our spiritual anchor. He is the one, in His ministry as our great High Priest, Who has gone within the veil in the tabernacle, where God dwelt over the ark.

“within the veil”

1. A reference to the veil in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later in the temple that separated the holy place from the most holy place. Any Jew would be familiar with this language.
2. Only the High Priest could go behind that veil on the Day of Atonement, and not without blood (Hebrews 9:7), as he made the yearly atonement for the sins of the people.

¹¹¹ John Gill,

¹¹² Charles Spurgeon, “The Anchor” in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon 1264.

3. The reference of the veil here hints at the fuller development of this concept in Hebrews 9.
4. We have another instance of one of the “better” things of Hebrews. In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could go behind that veil, only once a year, for a brief time. No one else was permitted to do so. When Christ died, that veil was rent (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38), exposing the Holy of Holies and the ark for all to see. Now anyone could go in and anyone could see the very presence of God.
5. There are three spiritual geographies associated with the tabernacle:
 - A. The outer court
 - i. Most people live here, within the camp, in sight of the tabernacle, but nowhere near the presence of God and they enjoy no communion with God.
 - ii. “Perhaps the reason so many have not entered into this Holiest of Holies in Christ is that they continue to preserve some idol of the heart or some bodily habit which has not been brought under the sprinkling of the blood. Perhaps we have not yet fully realized how our manner of living, our dress, our music, our daily duties, our seasons of recreation and our conduct affect our spiritual lives.”¹¹³
 - B. In the holy place
 - i. This is within the tabernacle tent itself. They are closer to God and do some good service with God and enjoy some communion. Generally, only the priest would enter this area and spiritually, only a few Christians ever make it this far.
 - D. Within the veil
 - i. The place of full communion and fellowship with God.
 - ii. Still entered into by just a few.
 - lii. Entering through this rent veil into the Holiness is the full Christian life, made possible through the rent veil and the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).

“Oh the blessedness of a life in the Holiest! Here the Father's face is seen and His love tasted. Here His holiness is revealed, and the soul made partaker of it. Here the sacrifice of love and worship and adoration, the incense of prayer and supplication, is offered in power. Here the outpouring of the Spirit is known as an ever-streaming, overflowing river, from under the throne of God and the Lamb. Here the soul, in God's presence, grows into more complete oneness with Christ, and more entire conformity to His likeness. Here, in union with Christ, in His unceasing intercession, we are emboldened to take our place as intercessors, who can have power with God and prevail. Here the soul mounts up as on eagle's wings, the strength is renewed, and the blessing and the power and the love are imparted with which God's priests can go out to bless a dying world. Here each day we may experience the fresh anointing, in virtue of which we can go out to be the bearers, and witnesses, and channels of God's salvation to men, the living instruments through whom our blessed King works out His full and final triumph.”¹¹⁴

Hebrews 10:19-22 exhorts us to enter into the holiest boldly through the blood of Jesus. In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and then only once a year and not without blood. But through the blood of Jesus the Messiah, all believers have this privilege that at one time was only restricted to one man. I have even greater access to God in the Holy of Holies than any High Priest ever had.

¹¹³ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 210.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Murray, *Holiest of All*, pages 355-356.

6:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus is given another title, the Forerunner, Who has first gone into spiritual places that we also may enter. He was the first to go behind the veil to have direct communion with God. So may we, for we are bidden to do so, but only because Christ went first.

This theme is further developed in chapter 7. Christ was a priest, but He could not have been a Levitical priest as He was from the tribe of Judah, which had no priesthood. So Christ must be of another, yea, a higher order of priesthood, which is identified as the Order of Melchizedek.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 7

We can summarize the ways that the Priestly Order of Melchizedek was superior in priesthood to that of Levi:

A. Melchizedek was a king and a priest. No Levitical priesthood was.

1. King of Salem (or Jerusalem)- Hebrews 7:2.

B. The Levitical priesthood was limited to the tribe of Levi, but that of Melchizedek was not limited to a single tribe- Hebrews 7:14.

C. The order of Melchizedek predated Levi, as Melchizedek shows up in Genesis 14, long before Levi was born or before his priesthood was established.

D. The order of Melchizedek is eternal (Hebrews 7:3,16,17). Levi's priesthood ended at the cross when Christ fulfilled the law (Romans 10:4, **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**) and the sacrifices for sin became unnecessary.

E. Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham, thus acknowledging Melchizedek to be superior- Hebrews 7:4-6,9.

1. Levitical priesthood collected tithes from the people but Levi, through Abraham, tithed to Melchizedek.

2. This made the Melchizedekian priesthood superior to the Levitical one.

F. The order of Melchizedek included Christ, but not so Levi

G. Sinners made up Levi's order. Melchizedek was more honorable and the sinless Christ was a member of this order

H. The defects in the Levitical priesthood are resolved in Melchizedek- Hebrews 7:11.

I. He was a Gentile as there were no Hebrews yet except for Abraham and Sarah.

J. Melchizedek is mentioned three times in Scripture: in history (Genesis 14); in prophecy (Psalm 110); and in doctrine (Hebrews 7),

K. The Mormons try to steal this priesthood and apply it to men in their cult but that is nothing more than spiritual robbery of the worst sort.

L. His ministry seems to be geared more toward Gentiles. He dealt with Abram before his circumcision. He was probably a Gentile as well since he was not descended from Abram.

M. There are no successors to Christ's priesthood after this order.

18. Melchizedek 7:1-10

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

Summary of 7:1-10

1. Melchizedek

A. King of Salem, 7:1,2

i. King of Peace

B. Priest of the most high God, 7:1

i. Abides a priest continually, 7:3

C. Abraham tithed to him, 7:2,4

D. King of righteousness, 7:2

E. Without father, 7:3

- F. Without mother, 7:3
- G. Without descent, 7:3,6
- H. Having to beginning of days, 7:3
- I. Having no end of life, 7:3
- J. Made like unto the Son of God, 7:3
- K. Was a great man, 7:4

2. His priesthood was not Levitical or Aaronic, 7:5,9

“Melchizedek” is from two Hebrew words; one meaning a King (melech) and the other meaning Righteousness (tsedek).

Jerusalem, before it became the Holy City and the capital of Israel. But there was something special about that city before David captured it and made it his capital. All the way back to Abraham’s day, it had a special, spiritual notoriety.

“It is one of the ironies of history that this “City of Peace” has been the most fought over piece of ground on the face of this earth (with the Rhineland being the only close competitor). David fought against it in 2 Samuel 5:6–9. Pharaoh Necho came up against it in 607 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it in 586 B.C. Cyrus rebuilt it in 536 B.C., only for it to be torn up in the Maccabean revolts (70 B.C.). It was rebuilt by Herod (30 B.C.) and destroyed again by Titus, the Roman, in A.D. 70, to be rebuilt again by Hadrian in A.D. 100. The town was then sacked by Omar in A.D. 637. The crusaders restored it in 1099, only to have it wrecked again by Saladin in A.D. 1187. Since Allenby’s “liberation” in 1918, it has been at war with the Arabs (1920–1930), Egypt (1960–1968), the Lebanese, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (1980–1983). In view of this, one wonders why the place was given a name that connected it with peace.”¹¹⁵

Showing there was a functioning priesthood on earth before the nation of Israel was born and the Levitical priesthood was created.

7:2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

There was tithing before the Law. This shows that Abraham recognized how special Melchizedek was in his priesthood, and that he was a true and direct representative of God.

Three titles for Melchizedek here:

- 1. King of Righteousness
 - A. This is a divine title, usually reserved for God.
- 2. King of Salem
 - A. An early name for Jerusalem.
- 3. King of Peace.
 - A. “Jerusalem” is the “city of peace”. But we would expect such a title to be given to Christ.

7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

¹¹⁵ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 138-139.

“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;”

1. This can mean two things:

A. He had no recorded genealogy. No one knew what his family background was. If so, this would prevent any possibility that Melchizedek was Shem (as has been suggested) as everyone would have known that his father was Noah. But if we apply this to Christ in His incarnation, we are in trouble since Christ had a mother. So did Shem, who had both a father and a mother. About the only way to handle the matter is to say that the Bible contain no statement about his father, mother, or descent with regards to the priesthood. His lineage and parentage was not important in relation to his priesthood, unlike the Levitical priesthood.

B. He had no human parentage at all. If Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ, this would fit as He, at that time, had no human parents and would not until His virgin birth, when He would have gained a human mother.

2. If you make him the Angel of the Lord, you have an Angel who “abideth a priest continually,” which no angel does. Christ was not even a priest while on this earth.

3. David Hoffman¹¹⁶ suggests he may have been a physical incarnation of the Holy Spirit.

4. The best interpretation is to make him Shem, who is still alive at this time and is the survivor of the flood. It was said of him, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem” (Genesis 9:26), and Abraham would not have been out of place offering tithes to him. Shem would be the reigning patriarch of the Hebrew race from Eber (Genesis 10:24). His father was priest for his family (Genesis 8:20), and there is no reason why Shem would not be the chief priest for the Shemites. But I realize that this position will not satisfy all and still may not be correct.

“nor end of life” This could only apply to Christ as we assume that if Christ was not Melchizedek, then he was a moral man who lived and died as do all other men. The only man to escape that was Enoch but there is no indication that Melchizedek could have been Enoch returned from the dead (as we know his genealogy). Or does this apply to the duration of his priesthood?

“made like unto the Son of God”

1. This would discount the possibility that Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. The wording here would make no sense if this is Christ- Christ/Melchizedek was made like unto the Son of God? Christ made like unto Himself? Christ would be His own type?

2. I believe that Melchizedek was a literal man, by that name, who had an unknown or unrecorded genealogy. He may have been Shem, as Shem was probably alive by this time. Genesis 9:26 “Blessed be the LORD God of Shem” is also interesting in this context. But even so, we cannot be dogmatic regardless of which position we take.

Another indication of an immortal priest? This could only be Christ.

7:4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

So great that Abraham, the Friend of God, honored him so. Abraham honored and recognized no other man like this. And Abraham tithed to him, an action usually reserved to God.

¹¹⁶ *Common Man's Reference Bible*

7:5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

Melchizedek would not come from the loins of Abraham like Aaron and Levi since he apparently was older than Abraham and it is clear that Abraham was not his father.

7:6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

“whose descent is not counted” “He reckoned no genealogy from them, from the genealogies of the priests (Heb 7:5). This was considered essential for a priest by the Jews. On the other hand, since they recognized Melchizedek as a true priest of God and greater than Abraham, they had to recognize that genealogy was not the essential thing for a priest and that on these grounds Jesus Christ could be a priest after the order of Melchizedek to fulfill Psalm 110.”¹¹⁷

While the Levitical priests had the authority to receive tithes from the people, that did not start with them, but rather with Melchizedek. And the Levitical priests received tithes from the people but Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham, showing a two-fold superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood over Levi's.

7:7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

Abraham, great as he was, was the “lesser” when compared to Melchizedek. It doesn't mean much when a “lesser” blesses a “greater” but when you are blessed by a great man, that usually has more importance.

7:8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

7:9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes¹¹⁸ in Abraham.

This is because Levi was still in the loins of his father Abraham, so as Abraham payed tithes to Melchizedek, by extension, so did Levi, so Levi, through Abraham, acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

It's interesting that the perfect tense of the various Greek verbs are used when dealing with this idea of paying tithes to Melchizedek, showing that this paying of tithes was an absolute act that could not be amended, altered or improved upon.

7:10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

Levi and Abraham.

¹¹⁷ J. Finis Dake, *The Dake Study Bible*.

¹¹⁸ Tithes seemed to be “paid” not given, implying they are an obligation, like the paying of taxes.

19. The Melchizedek Priesthood Superior to the Levitical Priesthood 7:11-28

Summary of 7:11-28

1. Limitation of the Levitical priesthood, 7:11-16, 18-21
2. Christ, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, 7:17,23-25,28
3. Jesus, the surety of a better testament, 7:22
4. Christ is:
 - A. Able to save unto the uttermost, 7:25
 - B. Holy
 - C. Harmless
 - D. undefiled
 - E. Separate from sinners
 - F. Made higher than the heavens
5. Did not need to offer up daily sacrifices, 7:27

7:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

The fact that Jesus had to come and assume a new priestly order, distinct from that of Aaron, shows that there was a weakness in the Levitical priesthood. It was an outgrowth of the Law and the Law could make nothing perfect. It could only condemn, not save. It could not minister very well to the spiritual needs of the saints. It had its limitations. When used properly, the Law is good, but the problems with it come when it was being used improperly, like being used as a means or method of salvation. This is a use for which the law was not designed and was never intended.

1. When Jesus came in the incarnation, He had to assume a different order of priesthood if He was going to function as a High Priest. Priests must be "ordained" to some order of priesthood. The Aaronic/Levitical order was limited. Besides, Christ could not be such a priest as He was from Judah. The only other order available was that of Melchizedek, which did not rely upon genealogy.
2. Why the necessity of a revival of the Melchizedekian priesthood, that had been in suspense for 3,000 years? Because the Levitical priesthood was inferior and had its limitations. Christ's priesthood must be unlimited and perfect, hence the need for this revival.

7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

Christ was the end of the Law as He fulfilled it by His death (Romans 10:4). If the Law was ended, then its priesthood also came to a halt, as there was no longer any need for animal sacrifices. Thus, the Levitical priesthood is no longer operational. It was temporary and dispensational, limited to Israel. When the temple was destroyed by the Romans in A. D. 70, sacrifices could no longer be offered, thus putting the priesthood "out of business" until the temple could be rebuilt and the sacrificial system resumed.

7:13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

The person in question here is, of course, Christ, of the tribe of Judah, which tribe had no priestly ministry at the altar.

7:14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

Moses only spoke of priesthood as connected with the tribe of Levi. No other tribe was given this ministry, including Judah, the Lord's tribe. If Jesus was going to be any kind of priest, it could not have been a Levitical priesthood as He was from the tribe of Judah.

7:15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,

Another priest would have to arise because:

1. Christ must function as a priest, yet He cannot be a Levitical priest as He was from the tribe of Judah.
2. Because of the limitations and shortcomings of the Levitical priesthood. As mentioned in Hebrews 7:16, that priesthood was based on "the law of a carnal commandment" and its priests were all sinners. If Christ was to be a priest, it could not be with such an order with these limitations.
3. The Levitical priesthood was not eternal, ending by being fulfilled at the death of Christ on the cross. There needs to be a priesthood that is effective after the cross.

7:16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

The law was added because of transgressions (Galatians 3:19). Thus, it was a necessity to deal with man's sins, which is not exactly a positive reason to justify its existence. Nor could that law save, since by the deeds of the law, no flesh would be justified (Romans 3:20). Since the law had these limitations, any priesthood based on that law would also share these limitations, which was one of the problems with the Levitical priesthood. The Son of God could not be a member of such an order since He was perfect, sinless and had no limitations or weaknesses, nor could His ministry.

"the power of an endless life." This was something else that could not be bestowed by the law or its priesthood. The law itself was not eternal, since it was fulfilled by Christ on the cross. And its priests died since they were sinners. Yet the order of Melchizedek did not suffer from such limitations. And Jesus being God, would have an endless life.

7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

This is the Father, speaking to the Son. Jesus was granted this priesthood by the Father, which was a greater and better priesthood than that of Levi and Aaron. If the Jews revered Levi and Aaron, they should reverence Jesus more.

"Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"

1. This is quoted from Psalm 110:4. This is repeated in Hebrews 7:21.
2. No Levitical priest is ever said to be a priest "forever" in their order. When they died, their priestly ministry ended. And the order of Levi was not eternal, since it was fulfilled by Christ on the cross. Did Melchizedek himself live forever? If he was Enoch, he could

have, but that would make Enoch coming back to earth after he was translated, which there is no record of him doing.

3. If Melchizedek had no “end of life” (Hebrews 7:3), did he go right on living and was he still alive when the writer of Hebrews wrote? Well, he wasn’t if he was Shem, for Shem’s life ended after 600 years. The only option is that the reference is directly to Christ.

7:18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

“**disannulling**” from the Latin “dis”, “utterly apart” and the Middle English word “annul” (which comes from the Latin “ad”, “to” and “nullus” “none or nothing”). Thus, “disannul” means “the action of utterly reducing something into nothing” (as in “to put out of existence”).”¹¹⁹

“Although the dis- prefix usually signifies negation, in this case, it is intensive. Thus, “disannul” means to cancel, abolish, annul, abolish, void or nullify”.¹²⁰

The law could not save, could not bring salvation, could not bring a man closer to God, so it was replaced, just as the priesthood of that same law was replaced by a better one. But Jesus’ priesthood would have no such limitations.

7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

“**For the law made nothing perfect**” This is because the law was not designed to do this. When men misunderstand the nature of the law, they also misunderstand its uses and end up abusing it. It was never designed to bring men to perfection. It was never designed to save a man. It was “added because of transgressions” to show man the holiness of God and the spiritual helplessness of men. That it did very well, but it made nothing else “perfect” as it was not designed to.

“**but the bringing in of a better hope did**” By the new covenant of the New Testament and the new and better priesthood of Melchizedek. There was something better than the law and that was ministered by Jesus.

Christ’s priesthood gives us a basis and a hope for real fellowship and communion with God. The law could not do that. All the law did was condemn us. It kept us from God because it demanded the payment for our sins, which payment we could not afford. But the new covenant of Christ and His priesthood after the order of Melchizedek does give us a basis to draw nigh to God and to establish fellowship and communion with Him.

7:20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

7:21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:)

“**For those priests were made without an oath**” Referring to the Levitical priests. They were selected mainly by their membership in the tribe of Levi and some other considerations. But

¹¹⁹ Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, pages 338-339.

¹²⁰ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 101.

God did not directly choose any of them- except Aaron. Even with Aaron, God never directly swore any sort of an oath to him or entered into any sort of a special covenant with him. The Levitical priests were priests by virtue of their being born into the tribe of Levi. But Christ became a priest by virtue of an oath made by the Father.

“this with an oath by him that said unto him” God did do with Christ in relation to His priesthood what He did not do with Aaron- base the priesthood on an oath.

7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

“surety” Strong’s #1450 *egguos*; a guarantee, a sponsor, something or someone pledged. Used only here in the New Testament. The word “surety” thus has the idea of “A pledge or formal promise made to secure against loss, damage, or default; a security.” Jesus is the pledge, or the guarantee, of a better covenant. He sponsors it, defends it, promotes it, defends it and embodies it. This new testament is based on the person and work of Jesus on the cross in fulfilling the law of Moses (Romans 10:4) and in paying for the sins of mankind. Jesus makes this new testament possible.

“What does the writer to the Hebrews mean by saying that Jesus is the surety (*egguos*) of this new covenant? An *egguos* is one who gives security. It is used, for instance, of a person who guarantees someone else's overdraft at a bank; he is surety that the money will be paid. It is used for someone who goes bail for a prisoner; he guarantees that the prisoner will appear at the trial. The *egguos* is one who guarantees that some undertaking will be honoured.

“So, then, what the writer to the Hebrews means is this. Someone might say: “How do you know that the old covenant is no longer operative? How do you know that access to God now depends, not on man's achievement of obedience but simply on the welcoming love of God?” The answer is: “Jesus Christ guarantees that it is so. He is the surety who promises that God's love will be forthcoming, if only we take him at his word.”¹²¹

The **“better testament”** is the New Testament and the priesthood associated with it (that of Melchizedek), which has been shown to be better than the Old Testament and its Levitical priesthood. How it must have annoyed the Jews when they were told that this Gentile priest and his priesthood was superior to that of Levi!

A **“testament”** is a will or a legacy, a document left behind by a dead person that either distributes his estate or makes some sort of declaration of the dead person's thoughts, wishes, desires. He may also make some statement or declare some manifesto in a testament. This is what the New Testament is, the wishes and declarations of Jesus Christ, as His giving of gifts from His estate that would go into effect at His death.

In the Tribulation, will God give an even better word, one fitted especially for Tribulation saints and faithful Jews, to help them through the Tribulation? We often talk about the canon of Scripture being closed, and it is for us, but what about for future saints in future dispensations? Even into the Millennium? Will God give a Bible fitted for that unique period of the Millennium and beyond? We have what we need for the Church Age, but what will future saints in future dispensations need? Every age, every dispensation, needs a word from God, fitted for their unique times and needs.

7:23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

¹²¹ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*.

Every one of the Levitical priests died, even the best ones. The priesthood was not eternal and neither were its priests. Every Levitical priest was a sinner who was condemned by the very Law that he ministered under. Christ's priesthood is superior because He will not die and will never need to be replaced. How very much like the Roman Catholic priesthood! Its priests die. Even if it was a valid New Testament priesthood which it is not), it would still be vastly inferior to the priesthood of Christ because the head priest of Rome, the pope, is also a sinner and popes die constantly, necessitating a continual change at the top. Few popes rule more than 10-20 years or so, which means that the Roman Catholic priesthood is very unstable, with the constant death of its priests and with its constant influx of new, and temporary, priests.¹²²

7:24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

By context, this is Jesus, not Melchizedek.

Jesus' priesthood is unchangeable because its priest is immortal and shall never die as He is God. His priesthood shall continue as long as He does. Unlike every other priest and priesthood, Christ has no successors. The Levitical priesthood was not eternal, so it was inferior to Christ's priesthood. As His priesthood is eternal, and there is no need to replace Him. His office is perpetual; it can never pass unto another. Every human office must have its "head" replaced every so often because men die, including the Jewish priesthood and even the Romanist papacy.

7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

From the guttermost to the uttermost. There are none beyond the reach of the grace of God. If a man is not saved, it is not because of some fault of God or some defect in the reach of His grace. It is because that sinner refused the call to salvation. He accepts all and turns none away.

The sinner must come to the Father through the Son.

"make intercession"

1. The ministry of a priest is to intercede on behalf of the sinner to the Father for salvation. He stands between the living and the dead (Numbers 16:48, **And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.**). The Levitical priests were not really able to do this as they were sinners themselves. They did intercede for the people but that intercession did not result in the salvation of the people. It merely resulted in a temporary "quick fix" to their sin problem from year to year (referencing the work of the high priest on the Day of Atonement). Besides, a sinner cannot save a sinner and the intercession of a sinner on behalf of another sinner will save neither sinner. It simply was a plea for God to be merciful to the sinner and consider them as they prayed and sought God for forgiveness. But Christ's intercession was so much more powerful. He was God, not man, and thus, He was sinless. The Son of God/Man

¹²² The constant parade of popes causes much instability in the Church of Rome. Popes often contradict each other in terms of teachings and policy, "Pope" Benedict XVI promoted the Latin mass. "Pope" Francis I suppressed it. What one pope gave, the next one took away. It remains to be seen at the time of this writing what current "Pope" Leo XIV will do.

was able to intercede in a much more powerful way before the Father that actually resulted in the salvation of the sinner being interceded for.

2. The phrase *εντυγχανειν τιμι*, to make intercession for a person, has a considerable latitude of meaning. It signifies,

- A. To come to or meet a person on any cause whatever.
- B. To intercede, pray for, or entreat in the behalf of, another.
- C. To defend or vindicate a person.
- D. To commend.
- E. To furnish any kind of assistance or help.
- F. And, with the preposition *κατα*, against, to accuse, or act against another in a judicial way.¹²³

3. Christ as Intercessor

A. Isaiah 53:12 **Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

B. Isaiah 59:16, **And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.**

C. Romans 8:27, **And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

D. Romans 8:34, **Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**

E. Romans 11:2, **God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,**

F. Christ is our Advocate, 1 John 2:1, **My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**

i. He answers all charges set before us by the Accuser.

ii. **“advocate”** Strong’s #3875 *parakletos*; summoned, called to one’s side, called to one’s aid, one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate, one who pleads another’s cause with one, an intercessor, of Christ in his exaltation at God’s right hand, pleading with God the Father for the pardon of our sins, in the widest sense, a helper, assistant, of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom.

iii. Our advocate with the Father is Jesus Christ, not any earthly priest, such as the Roman Catholic Church insists upon. This verse is then a rebuke against the priestcraft of Rome as well as Mary worship, as Rome elevates her to a position of Co-Mediatrix, or another Mediator between man and God. All this is theological error. No human priest is our advocate, nor is Mary- only Jesus!

iv. No unsaved has an advocate to handle his sins, which is why he is in the mess he is in. He has to handle his own sin problem himself, without

¹²³ Adam Clarke.

any help. It is like a man on trial for first degree murder and he has to serve as his own lawyer against the prosecutor who is Perry Mason, a lawyer who has never lost a case. As they say in the legal profession, "A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client." The sinner who tries to pay for or handle his own sin problem is the biggest fool in the universe. Why not just let Jesus handle it for you, for free?

4. Why do we need the intercession of Christ?

- A. We are sinners.
- B. We are weak and frail and we cannot save ourselves.
- C. We have an enemy, an adversary, who seeks to ruin our souls.
- D. We also have the world system and our own fallen nature out to cause us misery.

"Many years ago, when the "Little Flower" (Mayor LaGuardia of New York) was a probate judge in New York City, he had a fella brought into court who was to be tried for stealing a loaf of bread (Prov. 6:30). They found the "thief" guilty. LaGuardia (the judge) fined him \$10.00 and then paid the felon's fine out of his own billfold. Then he fined the courtroom \$50.00 for living in a town where any man had to steal bread to keep from starving. Then he took up a collection for the poor "criminal" and sent him "packing" out of the courtroom with \$47.50 in his pocket. Now, brother, when you have a probate judge like THAT, you've got you "an advocate." I've got an Advocate...My Advocate found me guilty on all counts and sentenced me to hell. Then He went through it for me while forgiving all my sins. Then heaping mercy on mercy, He gave me eternal life as a free gift and furnished me with a perfect guide Book. If that were not enough, He sent me out of court with an infallible, inerrant, living "Comforter" to take me on my way."¹²⁴

If Christ as not in Heaven, living and interceding for us, we all would be in continual "hot water" with God. The Lord makes continual intercession for us before the Father, so that God does not look at our sin and put it to our account. He keeps bringing up the blood and reminding the Father that the price has been paid.

The verse says that Christ will save all those who come unto Him. This involves a volitional decision and act on the part of the sinner. Nothing is mentioned about any sort of unconditional election. We believe in election but not according to the standard Calvinistic interpretation of it. There is a divine election but the sinner must also respond to the convicting and drawing work of the Holy spirit and that sinner is responsible for coming to Christ for salvation.¹²⁵

7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

This High Priest became as one of us, as God became man at the incarnation.

Characteristics of this High Priest:

1. **He is holy.**

A. Since Jesus is God, He must also be holy.

2. **He is harmless.**

A. Jesus is an innocent person, who does not deceive, does not double-deal, does not misrepresent. He is honest, open, candid and above-board in all that He says and does.

¹²⁴ Peter Ruckman, *The Books of the General Epistles* volume 2 page 33.

¹²⁵ Every Christian believes in election in some form. We simply disagree on some of the details.

B. Isaiah 42:3, **A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.**

3. He is undefiled.

A. Jesus has no sin nature by virtue of His virgin birth. Since He had no human father, He did not inherit the fallen Adamic nature (and hence the need for the virgin birth, else Jesus would have inherited a sin nature).

B. He is literally unstained with sin, either by nature or by practice.

4. He is separate from sinners.

A. He is a man but not a sinner. Jesus does not have a fallen sin nature but He does have a perfect human nature, the same one Adam was created with before he fell. He is one of us in all areas except in sin.

5. He is made higher than the heavens.

A. He already was in this position before the incarnation by the fact that Jesus is God,¹²⁶ but due to His obedience to the will of the Father and His purchasing salvation for the entire human race, His already elevated and exalted state is elevated and exalted even higher because of His successful work of redemption.

6. Also!

A. Our High Priest lives forever. (Hebrews 7:25)

B. Our High Priest makes intercession for us continually (Hebrews 7:25).

C. Our High Priest offered up Himself once for our sins (Hebrews 7:27).

D. Our High Priest never loses His consecration.

i. Jesus is eternal so He will not die and give up His priesthood through death.

ii. Jesus cannot sin so He will not disqualify Himself

iii. Jesus is God so He will not fail in nor cease His priestly duties.

E. Our High Priest has no infirmities (Hebrews 7:28).

7. What Levitical priest could make any of these claims? Certainly, no Mormon "priest" after their so-called order of Melchizedek could.¹²⁷ No Roman Catholic priest could either, for his is not a Church Age priesthood.

7:27 Who needeth not daily, a those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

This is because Jesus had no sins of His own that needed an offering, unlike every Levitical priest, who was a sinner. The Levites had their own sins to worry about, as well as the sins of the people. Jesus had no such problem, as He was sinless. This makes Jesus better than any and all Levitical priests.

The Levitical priests had to offer up daily sacrifices on behalf of the people because the power of their offerings was limited. The priests were sinners, operating under a priesthood and a law that could not take away sins, as those offerings were based on the blood of bulls and goats. Thus, as soon as one sin or trespass offering was made, more sins were committed, and additional offerings had to be made. Even the work on the Day of Atonement had to be repeated yearly. But the power of the priesthood of Christ was so strong that only one offering was required to atone for all sins, past and future. No additional offerings had to be offered by

¹²⁶ We hold to the eternal Godhead and Sonship of Christ. He did not become God at His incarnation nor did He become the Son of God at His incarnation.

¹²⁷ Neither the Mormons nor the Romanists have a valid, functioning, New Testament priesthood.

Christ. This again shows the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of the Levitical priesthood. When God makes an offering, it is good for eternity.

1. Other priests offered up animals for their sacrifices, but Christ offered up Himself as the Lamb of God for our sins. What priest offers himself as a sacrifice for sin? But Jesus was both offerer and offeree.

2. This also shows the impotence of the so-called Roman Catholic priesthood and their "mass". As with the (Biblical) Levitical priesthood, the Roman "priests" have to offer up their "sacrifice of the mass" daily, since it never seems to "stick" or "take". The Roman priests re-crucify Jesus daily, in thousands of Romanist churches worldwide, since their "mass" is invalid and not strong enough to do much of anything spiritually for more than five minutes. The Romanist mass has no power to do anything about sin, nor can it bring anyone closer to God, since the Bible knows nothing about this Babylonian ceremony. The death and sacrifice of Jesus was so powerful that it need not be repeated. One time is enough. The Roman "mass" is exceedingly weak if it must be repeated daily.

7:28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

"For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity"

1. This is because the law calls sinners to the Levitical priesthood and every sinner- without fail or exception- has infirmity. They were human priests, so they all were encompassed with the infirmity of sin

2. Christ had no such infirmity as the Levitical priests had since He was not a sinner.

Jesus is "**consecrated**", which means to be set apart, usually for a holy task or office. The Greek word for consecrated (teteleimenon) is a perfect passive participle of teleioo, meaning "has been perfected, and still continues to be perfect." This perfection was not attained by the Levitical priesthood or any human institution or ordination, but by the will of the Father.

Jesus is consecrated "**for evermore**", showing that His "ordination" to the priest is eternal, as is His priesthood and His very self.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 8

20. Christ, Our High Priest 8:1-5

Summary of 8:1-5

1. We have a high priest
 - A. This is Christ, 8:1
 - B. He is set on the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens, 8:1.
 - C. He is a minister of the sanctuary, 8:2
 - D. He has something to offer, 8:3
 - i. Gifts
 - ii. Sacrifices
2. There is a true tabernacle that God pitched and not man, 8:2,5
3. Christ could not be a priest while on earth, 8:4

8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

“this is the sum” Chapter 8 starts with a summary of Hebrews up to the point. Much has been said and many “difficult” doctrines and truths have been put forth, so it is good to catch our breath for a review.

Christ’s current position in glory.

1. Verse 1 also serves as a summary of the priesthood of Christ.
2. The “right hand” signifies His position of honor and strength.

“such a high priest”. “We can picture, a man from Moab visiting the camp of Israel on the annual Day of Atonement. He sees a man in gorgeous vestments wearing a mitre on his head and a priceless, gem-studded breastplate on his heart. His rich robes sweep down to the ground and are hemmed with bells and pomegranates. The man from Moab speaks to a nearby Hebrew “Who’s that?” he says.

“That is Aaron,” he is told. “He is our high priest, brother of Moses. When we were redeemed from bondage in Egypt, Aaron was Moses’ prophet before the throne of Pharaoh; now he is our priest before the throne of God.”

The Moabite is impressed. He looks at the crowds. It seems as though every man, woman, and child in the vast camp is present. “Is this some special kind of a day?” he asks.

“Yes,” he is told, “this is the annual Day of Atonement. On this day of the year, by divine decree, we are ceremonially cleansed from our sins as a people.”

The Moabite looks around. “I see some animals tethered over there,” he says. “There is a bullock and a couple of goats, as well as some rams. I suppose these are going to be sacrificed.”

His informant enlightens him. “On this day and only on this day in the whole year, our high priest will be permitted to go into the Tabernacle yonder. He will go in through that curtained doorway, pass through the Holy Place, pass an inner curtain we call the veil, usually kept closely drawn, and stand in the Holy of Holies, in the immediate presence of God. Do you see that fiery, cloudy pillar yonder? It is called the Shekinah. It is the visible token that the living God is in residence. It rests upon the mercy seat, between the cherubim, upon the sacred ark, inside the veil.

"The high priest will go in there. Then he will come out and he will take those two goats. He will slay one of them and go back into the Holy of Holies with its blood, which he will sprinkle on and before the mercy seat. Then he will come back out again and take the remaining goat. He will confess all our sins over the head of that goat. Then it will be given into the hand of a ritually clean man who will lead it out into the desert, bearing our sins, there to be left to die abandoned and alone. Thus, our sins are cleansed and carried away for another year."

"That's very interesting," says the Moabite, "but what's that big bullock for? He seems like a fine animal. It's the biggest bullock I have ever seen."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you about that. The bullock is for the priest. Before he can do anything about our sin, he has to do something about his own. That's what the bullock is for."

The Moabite looks astonished. "Two small goats to take care of all the sins of this vast crowd," he says, "and a great big bullock for the sins of the priest! Why is that?"

"Well, you see," says his friend, "sin in us is bad enough, but sin in him is far more serious. His sin looms larger in God's sight than all of ours."

Israel had such a high priest. It was all very disappointing. We want something better than that. We want a priest who is holy. We want a priest who is sinless, spotless, and undefiled, one who is separate from sinners. One who is as good as God is good, absolutely good. We want such a high priest, One who is holy. And we have "such an high priest."

Another man chimes in. "That's all very well," he says, "but there is something very cold about goodness in the abstract. To be perfectly honest, the thought of someone who is absolutely holy is rather a frightening one to me. Someone who is always right, never wrong; well, I find that rather formidable."

"What kind of a priest do you want, then?" says the man from Moab.

"Well, of course, I would like my priest to be holy, but I do wish he could also be human, one who is touched, so to speak, with the feelings of our infirmities. I don't want a sinful priest—God forbid! But I should like to have a sympathetic priest, one who is human enough to know our frame."

"I see what you mean," says the Moabite.

"Yes," continues the newcomer, "I want a priest who knows what it is like to live in this sinful world, who knows what it's like to be tempted and tried."

He warms to his theme. "I want a priest who lives in a home like mine, with a crowd of relatives, some of whom aren't very nice, a poor home where life is a struggle. Anyone who is going to be a priest ought to have to know what it's like to get up at five o'clock in the morning, to sweat at hard manual labor on starvation wages. He ought to have to rub shoulders with the world, get into the main-stream of life where men curse and tell lies, where things can be brutal and ugly. He needs to know what it's like to be crowded, misunderstood, contradicted, slandered, cheated, betrayed. He should have to face cruelty, be hurt, know what it is to suffer, to have a body wracked with pain. He should know what it's like to be isolated, vulnerable, hated by those able to do injury. This is a mean world we live in. He ought to experience what it's like. I want such an high priest. One who is human as well as holy."

The man from Moab has become thoughtful. "You know," he says, "I agree. But I want something even more. I would like to have a priest who is helpful—not just good and kind and very human. You know, in my country we have gods who are made of wood and stone. I have often prayed to them, but it doesn't help very much. They can't see, they can't hear, they can't speak, or know, or feel. It's really, very silly. A human priest, if he was just a human priest, would be rather like that."

"What do you mean?" asks the Israelite.

"It's hard to explain," says the man from Moab, "but you see all these people? Suppose they all began to ask questions and make requests of that high priest of yours. How many could he hear at once? How many could he help? Think of it—three million people all asking him for something at once. All he would hear would be a babel of noise."

"I see what you're getting at," says one of the Hebrews. "You want a priest who is God as well as man, and who has the attributes of Deity—omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence—One who can hear you and me and Isaac here and all these people and all your people. Good point!"

"Yes," says the Moabite, "give me a priest who is helpful, who is able to help because he controls all the factors of space and time."

And that is what we want—"such an high priest." We want One who can represent us truly at the throne of God, where the action is, where ultimately all accounts will have to be settled. We want a priest Who is holy, human, helpful. We want a priest Who can satisfy every demand of the law, every righteous claim of God, One who can silence Satan and solve problems. We want such an high priest. And, blessed be God! We have One!"¹²⁸

"who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" Jesus is a better, yea, even the best High Priest, because no other Jewish High Priest is at the righthand of the Father in the heavens.

8:2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

There is a heavenly tabernacle, of which the one on earth was a replica.

1. Exodus 25:9, **According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.**
2. Man may have built it on earth in the book of Exodus, but the tabernacle was designed by God and the heavenly tabernacle was pitched by God.
3. The "true" tabernacle is the heavenly one, which the earthly one Moses built is but a type and shadow.

It's interesting that the author is mentioning the tabernacle and not the temple. The tabernacle is a temporary structure while temple was more permanent. If the Tribulation is in view, and since it only lasts for seven years, the workings and dealing of God with Israel in the Tribulation will be temporary and dispensational. He will not deal with Israel as He does in the tribulation forever, only for seven years.

Also remember that God ordered the tabernacle to be built in Exodus 25. He never ordered the temple to be built, especially in 2 Samuel 7:5,7. God was perfectly content to dwell in a tent but man, in his religion, has to build a grand and impressive structure for his worship that appeals to the flesh. A temple simply was not a priority with God. What man wants is often not the same as what God wants. The building is not as important as what goes on inside the building. Sometimes we are embarrassed at our small, humble church buildings or the smallness of our congregations. There is no reason for this. God could give us a magnificent church building or an attendance of thousands next Sunday if He wanted, but He does not see things as man sees them. Man wants impressive buildings and great crowds in his religion. God wants worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:2). Man looks on the externals in religion while God focuses on the internals.

There is a contrast between what I call Tabernacle Christianity and Temple Christianity

Tabernacle Christianity	Temple Christianity
The tabernacle was commanded by God (Exodus 25)	Allowed but not commanded by God

¹²⁸ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, pages 84-86.

Portable, designed to be moved.	Permanent
Designed for a pilgrim people	Designed for a settled people
God gave detailed and specific details on design and materials	God never told Solomon how to build the temple. It was from the heart of David and Solomon
Outwardly unimpressive	Outwardly impressive
Final fate uncertain	Was destroyed numerous times

8:3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

Priests do two things:

1. They mediate between God and man.
2. They offer sacrifices to God on the behalf of man.
 - A. The priest needs something to offer. The Levitical priest would offer animals that would stand in for the sinner as a substitute.
 - B. The problem is that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin (Hebrews 9:13 and 10:4). They can provide a temporary band-aid approach, which is why the High Priest had to go in the Holy of Holies every year to repeat the application of the blood. This is why the Roman Catholic Church repeats the mass every day. They have no final sacrifice for sin so they must repeat the crucifixion of Christ every day, with no end in sight.

8:4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

As Jesus was not a Levite and was not part of the priesthood of Aaron. Jesus did no priestly work on earth, unless you count His High Priestly Prayer in John 17. His death was a sacrifice and He did offer Himself, so that would also count as priestly work.

8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

“See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” as in Exodus 25:40.

21. A Better Covenant 8:6-9

8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Outline of Hebrews 8:6-13 from John Phillips¹²⁹

- A. It Is an Improved Covenant- 8:6
- B. It Is an Imperative Covenant- 8:7,8
- C. It is an Important Covenant- 8:9-12
 1. Mindful- 8:9

¹²⁹ *Exploring Hebrews:*

- 2. Meaningful- 8:10
- 3. Memorable- 8:11
- 4. Merciful- 8:12

D. It Is an Implemented Covenant 8:13

The book of Hebrews often deals with the better or the greater things. Chapter 2 introduced us to the great salvation. This great salvation demands a greater high priest. It demands a greater sacrifice. It demands a greater sanctuary. All earthly priests, sacrifices and sanctuaries are not sufficient for our great Saviour. A greater sanctuary for the greater High Priest giving the greater sacrifice is needed to perform His ministry.¹³⁰

Jesus's priestly ministry is greater than any Levitical priestly ministry because:

- 1. His priesthood is better
- 2. His person is better
- 3. His offerings are better

"better promises" I counted over 13,000 promises in Scripture once when I read through the entire Bible. Of course, not all of these promises were given in a New Testament context and not all of them applied to Christians. Many were dispensational, extending to Israel only or to Israel in the Tribulation period. The promises of the Old Covenant were great in themselves, but the promises of the New Covenant are even better.

8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

The limitations of the Levitical priesthood made the establishment of the priesthood of Jesus a necessity.

8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

The fault was with the people and the priests, not the priesthood itself or the law. This is why the Levitical priesthood needed to be replaced with something better.

- 1. This covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It is not made with any Gentile people, any Gentile nation or the Church. Nor is it made with any sort of "spiritual Jews".
- 2. The house of Israel and the house of Judah are literal Jews, showing that God never cast away His people (Romans 11:1, **I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.**)¹³¹. Also see fuller notes under Hebrews 8:10-13 that follows.

8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

¹³⁰ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 160-161.

¹³¹ This one verse destroys the heresy of Replacement Theology, which teaches that the Church has replaced Israel.

The covenant in Exodus was dependent on Israel's obedience. When they refused to obey and hold up their end of the covenant (as they expressed in Exodus 19), the covenant and its associated priesthood simply could not function as it was intended to.

22. A New Covenant 8:10-13

8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to the me a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Summary of 8:10-13

1. The New Covenant

- A. God makes it with the house of Israel, 8:10.
- B. It is made "after those days", 8:10.
- C. God will put His laws into their mind, 8:10.
- D. God will write His laws in their heart, 8:10.
- E. God will be their God, 8:10.
- F. Israel will be His people, 8:10.
- G. They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest, 8:11.
- H. God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, 8:12.
- I. God will remember their sins and their iniquities no more, 8:12.

2. This New Covenant will replace the old one, which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away, 8:13.

The House of Judah is not mentioned as it was in Jeremiah 31:31, **Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**

- 1. In terms of a new, or better covenant God will make with Israel, this is the best covenant of all.
- 2. Previous covenants God made with Israel:
 - A. Abrahamic¹³²- Genesis 12, 15, 17
 - B. Levitical- Exodus 19, 20
 - C. Davidic¹³³- 2 Samuel 7
 - D. Palestinian¹³⁴- Deuteronomy 29,30
- 3. The New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8 is a summation and fulfillment of these earlier covenants. It involves:
 - A. God will put His laws into their minds.
 - B. God will write His laws into their hearts.
 - C. God will be their God.
 - D. Israel will be His people.

The New Covenant (Millennial) is unconditional and its fulfillment is not dependent upon Israel's obedience. God will fulfill the millennial covenant regardless of what Israel does or doesn't do.

This New Covenant is made with Israel, not to the Church or to any Gentile nation.

¹³² This involves the promises of the land, seed and blessing to Israel through Abraham.

¹³³ This teaches that as long as there is an active throne in Israel, a descendant of David will sit on it.

¹³⁴ These covenants cover the land, seed and blessing promises to Abraham and Israel.

“after those days” is a reference to after the Tribulation, moving into the Millennium and the kingdom.

8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

This does not apply to the Church as we are told to **“teach all nations”** in Matthew 28:19. This also supposes the ignorance of the people under the Old Covenant, where teaching priests were needed to instruct the people. No such need will exist under the New Covenant.

The quote here is from Jeremiah 31:34 (**And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**) and it is Millennial. Everyone living in the Millennium, including Jews, saved Gentiles and unsaved Gentiles. The knowledge of God will be universal, and no one will have any excuse for ignorance.

8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Elements of the New Covenant, which will be fulfilled in the Millennium to Israel:

1. Made with the house of Israel- Hebrews 8:10 (and the House of Judah- Jeremiah 31:31, **Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**).

A. It was not made with the Church or any Gentile nation or people.

2. He will put His laws in their mind- Hebrews 8:10.

A. This will apply to the entire nation.

3. He will write His laws in their hearts- Hebrews 8:10

4. He will be a God to them- Hebrews 8:10

5. Israel will be a people to Him- Hebrews 8:10

6. They will all know the Lord, no need for a teacher- Hebrews 8:11

A. Habakkuk 2:14, **For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**

B. There will be no need for teaching prophets, preachers and teachers in the millennium as all will know the Lord. If a prophet does try to prophesy, he will identify himself as a false prophet.

i. Jeremiah 31:34, **And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**

ii. Zechariah 13:3,4, **And it shall come to pass, [that] when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his**

vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive.¹³⁵

7. God will be merciful to their unrighteousness- Hebrews 8:12

8. God will no longer remember the sins and iniquities of Israel- Hebrews 8:12.

A. This takes place at the Second Advent, not the First Advent.

8:13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The law had already passed away for the Christian at the cross but not for the unbelieving Jew. It is ready to vanish away but has not done so yet.

1. This is a Tribulation passage, where Israel goes back under the law for those 7 years (the Tribulation is an Old Testament type of dispensation). In the millennium, the Old Covenant will vanish for good, replaced by the New Covenant.

¹³⁵ False prophets today usually wear \$500 suits, wear Rolex watches and live in mansions as they deceive.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 9

Hebrews 9 is the Great Atonement Chapter of the New Testament. It does not deal with the furniture or activities in the outer court of the tabernacle but on the services and furniture of the inner tabernacle and in the Holy of Holies.

23. A Better Tabernacle 9:1-10

9:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

The first covenant, the one made at Sinai, with the Levitical priesthood, the earthly tabernacle and the sacrifices.

9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

“The tabernacle was a peculiar object. It was a combination of both beauty and barrenness, of preciousness and worthlessness...Beautiful golden furniture sat on a barren, sterile earth. The pieces were a mixture of gold and silver with common acacia wood. All of these contrasting elements exemplify the unique paradox of the heavenly Son, Jesus Christ, taking on the worthlessness, fruitfulness, barrenness and wilderness of man.”¹³⁶

Observations about the tabernacle

1. The tabernacle was deliberately designed to offend the natural man. Man likes his religion to be impressive to the eye but the tabernacle was anything but impressive on the outside.
2. It was small. We can even say that it was intimate. The court measured 150 feet by 75 feet. The tent itself measured only 15 feet wide, 15 feet high and 30 feet long. The Holy of Holies compartment was 15 feet cubic.
 - A. The small size of the tent encouraged a sense of intimate with God. God was close by, only a few feet away, behind the veil. You could get lost in Solomon's Temple, but Moses' Tabernacle encouraged intimacy and communion with God.
3. The tent was covered with animal skins, with a flap for a door, with the Holy of Holies sectioned off by a curtain.
4. The only furniture was a golden candlestick, a table of shewbread, a small golden altar of incense and the ark.
 - A. The golden altar of incense is not mentioned. It may have actually been the most important piece of furniture although it was the smallest, as it typified prayer.
5. There were no windows and the holy place was only large enough to accommodate a few priests.
6. The courtyard was a “bloody mess” with altars and the blood of innumerable sacrifices.
7. The tabernacle was in a howling and waste desert, far from the “respectable” part of town. Many Bible-preaching churches are in locations that are not “respectable”, such as storefronts, conference rooms in hotels, funeral homes, rooms above the fire-station

¹³⁶ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 168.

or meeting in private homes. If they do have their own building, those tend to be small and humble.¹³⁷

8. This description “embarrassed” David in 2 Samuel 7. David had been in neighboring countries and saw the impressive temples dedicated to false gods. Yet the true God dwelt in a tent! David wanted to “upgrade” the worship of God by upgrading the tabernacle into a temple. God allowed it but He never commanded it as He was content to dwell within curtains (2 Samuel 7:6,7).

Observations about the worship of God

1. True worship is in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). It is not outwardly impressive to the natural eye although the spirit can appreciate it.
2. Biblical worship is simple and straightforward. No missal or prayer book is required.
3. Acts 20 shows us a worship service in the early church- prayer, preaching, singing (probably) and fellowship.
 - A. Man has to overdo his worship with fancy buildings and elaborate liturgy. He likes the steeple and the organ and the stained glass. He has to try to impress God with his worship.¹³⁸ But God is just as content to be worshipped by 25 people in a storefront with people sitting on folding chairs and singing to a portable keyboard.
4. The natural man likes Temple Christianity but is offended by the plainness and the “ugliness” and plainness of Tabernacle Christianity. But the man with the spiritual eye is just the opposite!¹³⁹
5. The simpler a form of worship is, the more Biblical it is. To try to follow all the elements in the Church of Rome or many “high” Protestant churches nearly requires a Ph.D. degree. The more apostate a system is, the more convoluted and complex its worship is.
6. Do we have to upgrade our worship to attract the natural man? Do we need to help out the Holy Spirit by trying to improve on the worship that God has ordained? If a man will only go to the stately church yet is offended by tabernacle Christianity, what, if anything, can we do for such a naturally minded man?
7. Why do men try to embellish the simple worship of God?
 - A. It is not impressive. It is just unhewn stone. It is rough and rustic, not suitable for the refined sensibilities of fallen but religious man.
 - B. It is embarrassing. Human religions tend to be outwardly impressive, but the worship of God is usually quite plain and outwardly unimpressive. This can embarrass the saint. David was like this in 2 Samuel 7. David had been in the neighboring countries and saw the impressive temples dedicated to false gods. Yet the true God dwelt in a tent! David wanted to “upgrade” the worship of God by upgrading the tabernacle into a temple. God allowed it but He never commanded it as He was content to dwell within curtains (2 Samuel 7:6,7).
 - C. To make it more attractive to the carnal man. The truth of the gospel and the person of Jesus Christ isn’t good enough. We need programs, fellowships,

¹³⁷ Compare this with cathedrals, which tend to be very impressive respectable.

¹³⁸ They make a “fair shew in the flesh” (Galatians 6:12). The resurgence of the Latin Mass qualifies. It is a very beautiful activity, but it is empty and void of spiritual power as God does not recognize or accept a Romanist mass. The mass is still the mass no matter how “beautiful” it is. It is still an abomination before God. But people still like to attend because it is “beautiful” and “traditional;” Never mind if it is Biblical.

¹³⁹ The first time I attended a Baptist church was in 1985. I was two years removed from leaving the Church of Rome. I was struck by the “plainness” of the sanctuary. My aunt, who has been a staunch Roman Catholic all of her life, had the same reaction when she visited that same Baptist Church for my Bible College graduation. Her first reaction was “Where are all the statues?”

concerts, stained-glass and lots of entertainment to get sinners to visit the church. But the Bible believer understands that what you win them with, you win them to. If Christ can't attract the carnal man to salvation, then what will? D. However, all the embellishments of man only result in the pollution of the worship of God, as in Exodus 20:25 (**And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.**).

The writer is focusing on the furniture and the Holy of Holies, not the outer courtyard. The Christ ought to be living in the Holy Place and with the veil, not in the outer courtyard.

9:3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Not the holy of holies, where the ark was, but the inner court, within the tent of the tabernacle, the ark that was behind the veil. The first veil separated the inner court from the outer court of the tabernacle. The second veil separated the inner court from the Holy of Holies. It was the holiest place in the tabernacle, hence the name "Holiest of All" or "Holy of Holies".

9:4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

The golden altar of incense (Exodus 30) is not mentioned or dealt with here. That is because we are dealing with the work of Christ in the tabernacle, not so much the priestly or prayer life of the saint. The laver and brazen altar are also not dealt with as they were located in the outer courtyard.

"But what do these sacred objects represent to the Christian? These sacred objects represent three things every true Christian desires- all provided in Christ...(1) The golden pot of manna represents the desired in the Christian for an abundant life. For this provision we have the hidden manna. (2) The rod of Aaron that blossomed represents the Christian desire for fruitfulness. For this hope we have the power of the Spirit that caused Aaron's rod to blossom and bear fruit in a single night (the "fruit of the Spirit"). (3) The two tables of the Law represent the Christian's desire to live a life of inward holiness with the outworking of righteousness. God has written the law in our hearts and minds, so that, by this new redeemed nature, we delight to do the will of God."¹⁴⁰

9:5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

The writer is under some sort of restraint regarding to the revelation about the Holy of Holies. Either the writer knows something about the third heaven that he cannot write down, or else he has been denied some kind of a revelation at the time of his writing or he simply wasn't able to devote any time to this material at the time of this writing. It is like Daniel being told to "seal the book" in Daniel 12, to be opened at a later time.

Was Hebrews written in haste? The author says he would like to develop this though further but was not able to at the time of this writing. He says something similar in Hebrews 11:32 when he

¹⁴⁰ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 172-173.

says he would have liked to talk about the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samuel, David and others, but was not able to at that time.

“Cherubim”. The word in the Hebrew is “cherub”. The –im ending is the plural form in Hebrew, so we should refer to the plural as “cherubim” but that is not proper English grammar. Cherubim in Biblical theology:

1. They defended the Garden of Eden from fallen man- Genesis 3:24
2. Two cherubim, made out of gold, adorned the lid on the ark of the covenant- Exodus 25:18-20; 37:7-9
3. God would “meet” with Moses from “between the cherubim” on the mercy seat- Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89
4. Cherubim appeared on the curtains of the tabernacle- Exodus 26:1; 36:8,35
5. Cherubim were on the vail that covered the holy of holies- Exodus 26:31; 36:35
6. God “dwelt” between the cherubim on the ark- 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 37:16
7. Cherubim were also used in the temple- 1 Kings 6:23-35; 7:29,36; 8:6,7
8. God “sits” or “dwells” between the cherubim- Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16
9. There were cherubim in Ezekiel’s vision in Ezekiel 10 and 11
10. Cherubim are seen in the vision of the Millennial temple in Ezekiel 41:18-25
11. The only New Testament reference to cherubim is in Hebrews 9:5, where the Old Testament tabernacle is being discussed
12. God rides on a cherub- 2 Samuel 22:11; Psalm 18:10
13. Lucifer was an “anointed” cherub before his fall- Ezekiel 28:11-17. After the Trinity, he may have been the most power being in heaven.
14. The rabbis referred to them as “angels of destruction”.

9:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

The priests would daily administer the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick and the altar of burnt incense.

9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

This deals with the High Priest and his unique ministry that the common priests could not do.

The High Priest MUST have blood on the Day of Atonement when he goes into the holy of holies. There is no option as there is nothing else, he has that can take care of the sins of the people. Without the blood, there is no reason for him to go into the holy of holies. He would be wasting his time and be unfaithful to his calling.

The High Priest needed the blood to deal with the sins of the people he was representing as well as his own sins since he was a sinner as well. Christ did not need to make any sacrifice or offering for His own sins as He had none. Every High Priest in the Old Testament was a sinner who needed a blood atonement. Our Great High Priest is greater than any and all of the Jewish high priests as He had no sin and needed no blood atonement. He could focus His work 100% on the people as He needed to sacrifice, atonement of blood application for Himself.

These “errors” were the “sins of ignorance” or the “accidental sins” of the people. They must also be forgiven by an offering,

9:8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

The Holy Ghost by giving the instructions found in Exodus and Leviticus signified what? “...that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing”. There is more to the tabernacle than meets the eye and it still hasn’t been all revealed. The Old Testament could see all the trappings of the tabernacle but there was nothing revealed about how to get within that veil. Only the High Priest could go and only once a year and not without blood. That was all well and good but how could the individual Jew get within that same veil and direct communion with God? Moses said nothing about that. The way to get past the veil and into the Holy of Holies was not yet made manifest.

The work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement was more symbolic than effectual, as the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away human sin. But his work was a type and a shadow of the work that Christ would do when He would go into the heavenly Holy of Holies and apply His own blood on that mercy seat.

9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

“The high priest comes out of the holy of holies after completing the required sacrifice, and in less than a month, his conscience is defiled. He knows he is guilty, and he “sweats it out” until the Day of Atonement when he goes through the whole thing again. The congregation outside the tabernacle went through the same traumatic experience. No one had assurance of salvation any longer than their abstinence from sin: once a sin was committed, the conscience goes to work, and the doubts flood in. It is the same thing today, as the twentieth-century Catholic (and anyone else in a works-based salvation, like a Mormon or Jehovah Witness) sweats out one more mass or one more confessional and then “hopes” he is in a “state of grace” until he can get back to the host and the mass. Was the wafer enough to give him eternal life? Could he lose eternal life? “Am I safe? How long am I safe?” Millions live like that—in mortal terror.”¹⁴¹

There was no power to save or forgive sins in the tabernacle itself, the shewbread, the incense, the olive oil, in the priesthood or in the blood of the animals. It is only found in the one final sacrifice of the Lamb of God (John 1:29) and the blood He shed and applied on the heavenly mercy seat.

“pertaining to the conscience” The types and shadows of the tabernacle and the tabernacle service did what it was designed to do- help the conscience of the Israelite in dealing with his sin and his relation to God. He knew he was a sinner, and something needed to be done about his sin. God told him to bring offerings to the tabernacle and later, to the temple, and that would be “good enough” until Christ came to make His sacrifice. If the Israelite obeyed, he would have a good conscience toward God in that he did what he was told to do in the best way he knew how.

¹⁴¹ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, page 164.

“Conscience” is from two Latin words “con”, with and “science”, knowledge. It is the build-in, internal knowledge or right and wrong that all people have. It is knowledge of God that is left over from the Fall. It is the internal witness of our hearts and of the Holy Spirit that lets us know if we have sinned or are living poorly or are in the wrong concerning an issue. The word “conscience” only appears in the New Testament and is used 31 times. Below is a presentation of “conscience” using Biblical theology:

A. Older people seem to be affected by it more than younger people

1. John 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

B. You can live in good conscience and have a good conscience.

1. Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2. 1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

3. 1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

4. Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

5. 1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

6. 1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

C. You can have a conscience “void of offence”

1. Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

D. Conscience bears witness, either good or bad.

1. Romans 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

E. The Holy Spirit is associated with the conscience.

1. Romans 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

F. We are to do certain things for the sake of our conscience.

1. Romans 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

G. Weak consciences can be defiled

1. 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,12 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

2. Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

H. Should we be judged according to another man's conscience?

1. 1 Corinthians 10:25, 27-29 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake...If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness

thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

I. We commend ourselves to every man's conscience.

1. 2 Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

J. You can have a pure conscience.

1. 1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2. 2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

K. The conscience can be seared.

1. 1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

L. A perfect conscience

1. Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

M. The conscience can be purged from dead works.

1. Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

2. Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

N. An evil conscience

1. Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

O. Conscience toward God

1. 1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

9:10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The Levitical system, though ordained by God, was powerless to take away sin. It served as providing instructional types of the final provision provided in the death of Christ and the application of His blood on the heavenly mercy seat. Nothing in the tabernacle itself could save and not a single animal offering made in the tabernacle and later in the temple took away a single sin. They were "emergency measures" (in a sense in the urgency of the sacrifices and in the duration of the Mosaic system) designed to handle the sins of men until the final sacrifice of Christ could be made that would take care of the problem of human sin once and for all.

"The time of reformation" This references the advent of Christ (per Hebrews 9:11), as the true High Priest, when He fulfilled the law through His death (Romans 10:4, **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**).

24. Christ- the Mediator of the New Testament 9:11-28

Summary of 9:11-28

1. Christ is a better High Priest, 9:11

2. There is a greater and more perfect tabernacle, 9:11

3. Christ's blood is better than that of bulls and goats, 9:12
 - A. Christ used His own blood to purchase our redemption, not the blood of bulls and goats.
4. The blood of Christ can purge from dead works so that we may serve God, 9:14.
5. Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, 9:15
 - A. The testator must die in order for the testament to take effect, 9:16,17
6. Blood
 - A. Used to dedicate the New Testament, 9:18-21
 - B. Used to purge "all things", 9:22
 - C. There is no remission without the shedding of blood, 9:22-25
7. Christ sacrificed Himself and suffered, 9:26
8. Men must die and then be judged, 9:27
9. Christ was offered to bear the sins of many, 9:28
10. He will come again, 9:28

9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

There is a heavenly tabernacle like the one that Moses built (Exodus 25:9,40). That tabernacle, the service of it and the Priest Who ministers in it are all greater than the earthly tabernacle. When Jesus came, He brought with Him a better priesthood, tabernacle and worship.

9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

This animal blood was used by the Old Testament priests, but the blood of animals cannot take away the sins of man, A man must die for a man to deal with the sins of man. All the animal blood could do was provide a temporary "fix" that needed to be reapplied year after year. Hebrews 10:4 makes it clear that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. Jesus brought something better than animal blood to deal with sin, as He brought His own sinless blood.

The Old Testament priest could not take his own blood into the tabernacle as it was sinful blood. It would do no good and would be powerless to take care of his own sin problem, much less the sins of anyone else. Christ took His own blood, shed on the cross, into the heavenly tabernacle and made the application. His own blood was sinless and divine, so it had the power to take care of the sins of all humanity. His blood was God's blood (Acts 20:28) and thus was eternal and sinless blood.

ONCE, ONCE, ONCE. Christ went in **ONCE** to make the application of His own blood on the heavenly mercy seat. There was no need to repeat it. To repeat the sacrifice is to admit your belief that the blood of Christ was sinful and impotent, and the death of Christ did not accomplish final and eternal redemption. This is the position of the Roman Catholic Church as they re-crucify Christ daily in the mass. In so doing, they admit they do not believe the death of Christ was strong enough to take care of the sins of mankind in one application.¹⁴² It needs to

¹⁴² It is no wonder why Jesus needs Mary's help to obtain our salvation in Romanism! The death of Christ and the blood of Christ aren't strong enough so Mary needs to be the co-redemtrix in salvation, to help the very Son of God! Jesus can't purchase our salvation Himself. What kind of a pagan theology is this?

be repeated daily, just like the sinful Jewish priest had to do with his animal blood. What a weak “Savior” where He needs to die daily, usually several times a day and has to have His mother help him!

A. B. Simpson gave 7 presentations of the blood of Christ:

1. The blood on the doorposts was redeeming blood.
2. The blood on the altar was atoning blood.
3. The blood on the leper was cleansing blood.
4. The blood on the book was covenant blood.
5. The blood on the priests was consecrating blood.
6. The blood on the mercy seat was pleading blood.
7. The blood of Christ is living blood.
8. Our whole life must be redeemed, atoned, cleansed, covenanted, consecrated and plead for, ever granting us the life of Christ. Blood has both white and red corpuscles. Whereas the white corpuscles fight infection in the body, the red corpuscles give the life.¹⁴³

9:13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

This deals with the red heifer ordinance (Numbers 19). An entire book could be written about this very important ordinance. It is beyond the scope of this commentary.¹⁴⁴

9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

This is one of the most precious Biblical promises regarding personal victory over sins of the mind and the imagination (2 Corinthians 10:4,5, **For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**). The believer can “plead” the blood for old thoughts and old imaginations and that he can apply that blood to his inner man so that it burns out (“purges”) the conscience and rids the man of wicked or sinful things that have to do with “dead works” (Romans 6:23). The blood of Christ is the greatest weapon for spiritual warfare found in the Bible, where the warfare is inner in the old nature of the believer. It also applies in dealing with sinners. I was talking to a woman who was obviously devil possessed.¹⁴⁵ She was belligerent and insulting as I dealt with her. She had the TV tuned to TBN, a Bible open before her with an open bottle of vodka. She demanded I pray for her. When I did, I was careful to mention the blood of Christ and when I mentioned the blood, she groaned an unearthly groan that I have never heard before. It was frightening. The devil(s) possessing her did not like to hear the blood mentioned!¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 182-183.

¹⁴⁴ For one of the best treatments of this ordinance, I recommend *The Quest For Christian Purity* by O. Talmadge Spence, pages 264-286 and *The Foundations Bible Commentary: The Pentateuch*, pages 515-518 by the same author.

¹⁴⁵ Notice I don’t say “demon possessed.” “Devil” is the more accurate term.

¹⁴⁶ This was one of the most upsetting experiences of my life. I do not recommend such a ministry if you can avoid it.

"In the Old Testament when an animal was offered as a sacrifice, there were several things that were first required. (1) The offerer made a formal presentation of the animal, (2) the animal was killed, and (3) the animal's body was prepared to be consumed by the fire. The animal did not 'feel' this preparation, for it was dead. No spirit of the animal was involved. Because the life had already been taken, the animal was offered up to God lifeless. Other than the initial knife to the neck, no suffering was experienced by this animal. However, this was not true concerning Jesus. He fully experienced all three stages without being dead. He had to remain alive until the redemptive sacrifice was resolved before the Father- only then could He die. This was the consummation of the sacrifice. John 19:28-30 clearly declares this burden (**After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**) ."¹⁴⁷

Without the blood:

1. Salvation is impossible.
 - A. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission- Hebrews 9:22
 - B. The blood of Christ is the currency of salvation. Heaven accepts no other payment than the blood of Christ for sin. To bring religion, morality, good works or "reason" to pay for sins is trying to pay with a currency that is not accepted. When you go to Canada, you pay in Canadian currency. American money is not accepted,
 - C. Propitiation through His blood
 - i. Romans 3:25 "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"
2. Sanctification is impossible
 - A. Sanctification involves the forgiveness of sins committed by Christians, so the blood is also needed to forgive those sins
 - B. Ephesians 2:13, But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
3. A victorious Christian life is impossible
 - A. No life with God without His blood
 - i. John 6:53 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

"purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" This is what happens at salvation. We stop working for salvation and stop trying to "earn it". We let the shed and applied blood of Christ do the work it was designed to do in order to cleanse our sin. Our dead religious and moral works are purged from our conscience. The man who works for his salvation never has a clear conscience with God as he never knows if he has done enough or if the works he has done are good enough to be accepted by God. But when you adopt salvation by grace and justification through the blood of Christ, the conscience can be cleansed and purged, and you can stand without offense before God for the first time in your life.

The Old Testament Jew relied on the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law to handle his sin problem, but in reality, it couldn't. At best, through the work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, the sins of the nation were only covered for a year and the process had to be

¹⁴⁷ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 181.

repeated the year after that. But through the sacrifice and priest of Jesus Christ, the sin problem has been settled once and for all, again showing the Jew that the person, work, sacrifice and priesthood of Jesus Christ was far superior than anything in Judaism.

Hebrews 9:14-13:25 are missing in Codex Vaticanus, which is one of the corrupt, yet darling Greek manuscripts of the apostate scholars.

9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Christ died for all sinners under all covenants and who lived or will live in all dispensations. That extends from Abel to the last sinner who will ever be born in human history. The death of Christ and the applied blood of Christ are both so powerful that all may be saved by it, no matter when they lived.

“under the first testament” Under the Old Testament. The transgressors under the Old Testament didn't really have a permanent solution or answer for their sin problem since the sacrifices under the Mosaic system were temporary fixes. But through the person, work and priesthood of Christ, all men, including the Jews, now have a hope of redemption.

9:16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Testaments and wills only become effective upon the death of the testator. The testator is the one who draws up the will. As long as he is alive, the testament is not in effect. I have a will but it does not become effective until I die. When Jesus died, His last will and testament, the New Testament, was activated.

9:17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

It is nice to look at a will of a living person, but the will is powerless until the owner of that will dies. Then the power of that becomes evident. It had no power until the death of the testator. After his death, it carries the full power of his intentions and wishes.

9:18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

The seal of the New Testament is the blood of Christ. We might look at a notary seal or some other form of raised seal to certify a document today. The Old Testament covenants were sealed with the blood of a sacrifice, although it was inferior animal blood compared to the sinless blood of Christ which sealed the second testament.

9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

9:20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

The covenant at Sinai, made in Exodus 19, was ratified with animal blood. The New Covenant will be superior as it will be ratified with the superior blood of Jesus Christ.

9:21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

Again, that was with inferior animal blood. The furniture pieces in the heavenly tabernacle are sanctified by the blood of Christ.

9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Applied blood purges sin and corruption, not the waters of baptism.

Some Old Testament ordinances and sacrifices did not the blood of an animal, such as red heifer ordinance. A bloodless sacrifice or ordinance was not able to take away sin,

This is the classic verse of the necessity of the blood of Christ. No sin can be forgiven without the application of the blood of an acceptable sacrifice.

The blood of Christ is an absolute fundamental of the faith. It is required for salvation. Without the shedding of the blood of Christ on the cross and its application on the heavenly mercy seat, our salvation would be impossible.

“**remission**” Strong’s #859 ῥεσις aphesis, release from bondage or imprisonment, forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty.

9:23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

A better tabernacle with a better location, administered by a better priest and priesthood, with better blood, offering better sacrifices.

Why should the heavenly patterns be purified? If it is in heaven and if there is no sin in heaven, why the need for the purification? The patterns given that are reflected by things on earth and imperfect priests, blood and sacrifices may, in some form, translate to the heavenly manifestations. If so, purification of what is in heaven may be required since the types and shadows are associated with sinful and imperfect things on earth. We would assume the blood of Christ would be sufficient for this heavenly cleansing.

“**necessary**” is strongly emphatic in the Greek.

9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

In His physical body, Jesus never entered the earthly tabernacle nor the Holy of Holies in the temple, since He was not a priest after the order of Levi and Aaron.

9:25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

The High Priest could not sacrifice himself or apply his own blood because it was tainted blood, contaminated by sin.

9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

“sacrifice of Himself”

1. Christ is better than any bull or goat when it comes to sacrifice and atonement.
2. 9:25 The High Priest had to go into the Holy of Holies at the appointed time, only once a year. He had to go in with animal blood that had been sacrificed and sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat.
 - A. Animal blood, though not contaminated with human sin, is still inferior to human blood because humans are above animals in the creation.
 - B. The High priest was using inferior blood since it was only the blood of an animal, which is why it could only provide a temporary covering for the sin of man, but not a permanent solution.

Christ's sacrifice was better because:

1. He used His own sinless blood, not the blood of an animal.
2. He sacrificed Himself, not an animal.
3. His blood was sinless, unlike the blood of the High Priest.
4. Christ's priesthood was better than that of the High Priest.
5. Christ ministered before the heavenly mercy seat. The High Priest could only minister around the earthly mercy seat.
6. Christ's sacrifice and offering did not to be repeated, unlike that of the High Priest who had to do it yearly.

“end of the world” or “end of the age” (“aion” in Greek), the end of the world system. He sacrificed Himself at Calvary but is that the “end of the world?” It was the end of the Old Testament age. The Church Age is parenthetical so that shows that in God's reckoning, the death of Christ marked the end of the age before the Tribulation and Millennium periods. Yet we have the 2,000-year parentheses of the Church Age when God turns to the Gentiles before returning His attention to Israel. In this understanding, the Church Age would not be a dispensation since it is outside of God's dealings with Israel. This is one reason why John Nelson Darby did not regard the Church Age as a dispensation but rather, as an Age. The Church Age is a period of definite work, period of time and purpose by God and it does fit into His overall program of the ages. It ends at the rapture and God's dispensational dealings with Israel resume.¹⁴⁸

First Corinthians 10:11 has a similar idea, **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world**

¹⁴⁸ This would fit into the “second offer of the kingdom” teaching of Acts 3:20,21 that I deal with in my *Pilgrim Way Commentary on Acts*. It would not totally fit in with the Darbyite understanding of dispensations and ages but it is similar.

are come. The context is Old Testament and “the ends of the world” is mentioned (plural here, singular in Hebrews 9:26 but I don’t really think that is significant). The death of Christ was the “end” of that world, or Old Testament age. There was nothing stopping the Tribulation period and the Millennium to have started in the time of the book of Acts. But with the rejection of Jesus by Israel, God turned to the Gentiles to call out a bride for His Son and to have a body He could work through, the Church, while Israel was in her blindness.

9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

It is a good verse to use in evangelistic preaching to stress to the sinner that death will come upon all men eventually. But this is not a dogmatic case against people being resurrected, although it can be used against the false teaching of reincarnation. The cases for bodily raisings of dead people in Scripture are far too numerous to list. But the point is, they all died again. You may be raised from the dead, but you will die again. In the rapture, that resurrection is a final one and those who are raised from the dead will never die again.

1. But one eternal law is that when death finally comes, everyone will stand for judgment. For the Christian, this judgment will be at the Bema Seat (Romans 14). For the unsaved man, this judgment will be at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20).
2. Death does not “end all”. There is a judgment after death. Then there is spending eternity in either heaven or hell. Death does not end all. It is rather the beginning of eternity.

Also, this is not a dogmatic doctrinal statement as well, as there are numerous cases of people dying, and then were raised from the dead, only to die again. These people died twice. Enoch will never die, nor will that generation that goes up in the rapture. Hebrews 9:2 is just a general observation about the universality of death and the judgment that follows.

Christ was also ordained “once to die”. So why then does the Church of Rome insist on killing (re-crucifying) Him daily in the mass? Wasn’t once enough? Wasn’t the death of Christ on the cross powerful enough to secure salvation for all mankind once? Or was it so weak that it must be repeated daily?

9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

“bear the sins of many”

1. The extent of the atonement is universal but that does not mean all men will be saved. The atonement of Christ is only effective for those who believe. The “many” does not refer to the extent of the atonement but rather the results of it.
2. We are not universalists in saying that all men may be saved. This does not mean all men will be saved, but that all men may be saved.
3. We do not limit the atonement either, in holding to some form of Calvinistic teaching of “limited atonement”. We can hold to a form of “limited atonement” in saying that the practical extent of the atonement is limited only to those who believe but the potential extent of the atonement is for all men.

“unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

1. This refers to the Second Coming, not the First Coming or the rapture. Since this verse does not deal with the rapture, no sort of “partial rapture” can be taught here.

2. At the first coming, Christ came without sin. He will also come without sin the Second time in Revelation 19.

3. In the tribulation, who is looking for Christ? Not the followers of the Antichrist. The faithful remnant will be looking for Him at the second coming to deliver them from the persecutions of the Antichrist. The passage must be interpreted in a tribulation context since Hebrews is directed towards Jews in the tribulation. There will be the faithful remnant who will be looking for the Second Coming for deliverance from their persecution. His Second Coming will benefit them with salvation and deliverance, but it will mean judgment and condemnation to the rest of the world that was not looking for the Second Coming.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 10

25. A Better Offering 10:1-14

Summary of 10:1-14

1. The Law was a shadow of good things to come, 10:1
2. Weaknesses of the Law, 10:2-8
 - A. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin, 10:4
 - B. Burnt offerings and sacrifices cannot take away sin, 10:5,6
3. Christ came to do the will of the Father to take care of the sin problem, 10:7,9
4. We are sanctified through the offering of Christ, 10:10

10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The law was not perfect in the sense that it could not offer that one-for-all sacrifice for sin. This is because the blood used was imperfect animal blood and not the perfect blood of Christ. If the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, then why did Christ need to sacrifice Himself?

1. The law was a shadow, or a type.
2. Good, or even better things were to come after the law. The law was good, but something better was coming.
3. The sacrifices under the law were limited and could only do so much. Something better was needed.

“Since the law was but a shadow, the writer sums up his argument with five conclusions.

1. Its services and sacrifices could never ‘make the comers thereunto perfect’, or bring them to the goal that God intended for His people (Hebrews 10:1b).
2. Had these sacrifices brought the people to perfection, ‘then would they not ceased to be offered?’ (Hebrews 10:2a)
3. Had the worshippers been actually purged, would they not then be no longer conscious of sin? (Hebrews 10:2b)
4. Instead, did not the sacrifices made every year bring again a remembrance of sins? (10:3)
5. Then comes the final pronouncement in brief but strong and authoritative terms: ‘For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins’ (Hebrews 10:4).”¹⁴⁹

10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

Salvation and the forgiveness of sins clears the conscience of the saint. We know our sins are forgiven and they no longer bother us. I have assurance that my sins, past, present and future are forgiven and are under the blood and since I believe the Book, I know that I will not face them again. If you are saved and have trusted in the blood atonement of the Lord for sin, then you don’t have to have a bad conscience about the sins you have committed. You may regret that you committed them, and you may have to reap the consequences of having committed them. You may be sorry that you committed them, but you don’t have to have a typical “bad

¹⁴⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 192.

conscience". "How could I ever fix that sin up? I have to get that thing fixed!" It has already been "fixed" at Calvary.

1. My current sins do bother me, and I try to confess them as soon as I realize I have sinned, but once confessed, I must trust in the forgiveness of God.

2. People in works-based religious systems never get to this point. When the Old Testament believer offered his sacrifices and did everything he was supposed to do, it still left him empty, unsatisfied, and searching, never knowing of he has done enough or of he has done it well enough.

10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

The very fact that the Day of Atonement had to be repeated every year and that animal sacrifices had to be continually offered showed that the sacrifices under the Mosaic system could never take away sin. This is why the Roman Catholic mass needs to be repeated daily; their mass is flawed and powerless to take away the sins of those who attend the mass.

"For example, a businessman approaches his banker and requests a loan to finance a business venture. He explains why he wants the money, what profit he expects to make, how he hopes to repay the debt. A wealthy friend agrees to endorse the note and repay the debt should the venture fail. So the loan is made, the promissory note drawn up, the rate of interest agreed upon, and the date of repayment set for a year's time. The businessman signs the note, and his friend endorses it.

The year passes, but the businessman's expectations have not materialized. He goes back to the bank and asks for further credit and for an extension of time on his expired loan. On the same terms of adequate endorsement, the banker agrees. He draws up a new promissory note, adding the new indebtedness to the old, staples the old note to the back of the new one, and carries forward the accumulated debt for another year.

Thus, it goes on and on, the loans getting larger and larger every year, and the businessman getting deeper and deeper into debt. And each year there is a remembrance made of his former indebtedness and of his new liabilities. The only thing that keeps him afloat is the endorsement of his friend.

That is exactly what happened in the Old Testament. The animal sacrifices were so many promissory notes. By bringing them to the altar, the Hebrews acknowledged their accumulating debt of sin. Each sacrifice carried with it the endorsement of the Son of God, who guaranteed that He would fully repay all the liabilities thus acknowledged by the sinner. The time came, of course, when those notes had to be discharged, which is exactly what the Lord Jesus did when He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. "For it is not possible," says the writer of Hebrews, "that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Where sins are not removed by the blood of Christ, their guilt and liability remain as the sinner's personal responsibility. By rejecting Christ, the Hebrew repudiated the Endorser of His note, so to speak. What folly to go back to the shadows of Judaism when, in Christ, the substance that cast those shadows is to be found."¹⁵⁰

The animals in the Old Testament had no will in the same way that men had. They had no choice when they were (unwillingly) sacrificed. But Christ willingly offered Himself to fulfill the will of the Father. Animal sacrifices could allow God to remit sins (Hebrews 9:19-22), and He could have mercy on that basis but when it came to "clearing the guilty" (Exodus 34:7) and "taking away sins," it is "nothing but the blood of Jesus" that can do that.

¹⁵⁰ John Philipps, *Exploring Hebrews*, pages 122-123.

1. Animal blood cannot take away human sin.
2. Animals have no consciousness of sins, so that blood cannot take away the reality and penalty of human sin.

10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

As above:

1. Animal blood cannot take away human sin.
2. Animals have no consciousness of sins, so that blood cannot take away the reality and penalty of human sin. Animals have a soul and some self-awareness but not on the same level as men do. They seem to have no spirit, and thus, no real God-consciousness.
3. It would take the blood of a man to take away the sins of man. An animal cannot die for a man to take away his sin. The best an animal can do is to provide a temporary "patch" for man's sin, but the death of the animal cannot take care of the sin problem.
4. It would take a sinless man with sinless blood to take away the sins of sinful men.
5. Animals have no true will of their own as they were involuntary sacrifices. No animal chooses to sacrifice itself on an altar to be a substitute for a sinful man. But Christ did, volitionally.

10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world"

1. In the incarnation, when Christ took on a human body.
2. To die for man, Christ must be born a man, in the **"likeness of sinful flesh"** (Romans 8:3). Only a man could die for a man's sins.
3. This demands the full humanity of Christ, in balance with His full deity, in the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures in Christ.

Why did Jesus have a physical body? Two reasons are given:

1. To bear the sins of the world- Hebrews 10:5.
2. To do the will of God- Hebrews 10:7.

10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

The sacrifice of animals was not able to please or satisfy God when it came to the final sacrifice for sins. God commanded these in the Old Testament but when it comes to providing the final sacrifice for sin, they could not provide it. God did accept the faith and the heart of the offerer as we seen in the sacrifices of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 (also Hebrews 11:4), but not the physical sacrifice itself.

10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

This is quoted from Psalm 40:6-8. This **"will"** was for Christ to become a man to die as a man for the sin of man on the cross. Christ always delighted to do the will of the Father and He delighted in it, even if it meant the death of the cross.

10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

“Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein” God refused to accept those Old Testament sacrifices as final. Something was needed. There is only one sacrifice that is going to “do the job” and that is in the incarnation in Hebrews 10:5, **“a body hast thou prepared me”**. God the Son was given a human body to offer as a sacrifice

10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

The Lord came into the world, fulfilled the law by His death on the cross (Romans 10:4, **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**) and established the way to have the sin of man totally dealt with to the eternal satisfaction of the Father. This is not a direct quote from any Old Testament reference, but is probably just a “general quote” of the principle involved.

Christ came to take away “the first” (the Mosaic system) so that He could establish the “the second” (the completed system of sacrifices). They could not co-exist.

10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The burnt offering sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, **The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**) sanctifies the believer. We are sanctified by His death and the sacrifice He offered on the cross.

10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

The sacrifices of the priests, offered multiple times a day, was never able to take away sin. The best they could do was offer a type of a “band-aid” approach.

1. This also shows the weakness of the Roman Catholic priesthood. They offer their mass (the unbloody sacrifice of Jesus) multiple times a day every day of the year for over 1,600 years. Has anything been accomplished by it? What event needs to take place for the priests to stop offering the mass?
2. No priest ministering anything can take away anyone’s sins. No religion, rite or ritual can take away sin. Certainly not the Romanist mass. That can only be done by the blood of Christ.

10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

This “man” is Christ, Who was better than any Levitical priest. He was able to do through His death on the cross that which 2,000 of Levitical offerings was unable to do- settle the sin issue once and for all, never to be repeated. Thus, He could “sit down” because that work was done.

This shows another error of the Roman Catholic mass. They do not believe Hebrews 10:12. Why do they keep offering the mass over and over and over again? Because they have no final sacrifice for sins. Roman Catholics use crucifixes, which is a cross with a dead Christ still nailed to it. Why don't they ever take Christ off the cross? Christ is not dead on the cross. He is alive in heaven today! The Romanist priest never "sits down" as he is never finished since the mass he is "offering" is so impotent and powerless.

Christ's one sacrifice was an eternal sacrifice, and it was so complete (John 19:30, **When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**) that He sat down when He was finished. It only had to be offered once, not having to be repeated. No priest in the Old Testament could sit down anywhere in the tabernacle as it had no chairs. Nothing was "finished" under the Old Testament, so no priest could rest from his works.

10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

This is quoted from Psalm 110:1. There are those who oppose His redemption, the shedding and application of His blood and the salvation He offers. These opposers will one day be forced to acknowledge Him as Lord and the great work He did, even if they will not benefit from it.

10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

ONE OFFERING! No other offerings are needed because His one offering was perfect!

"If you live under the Old Testament, you live under a Catholic Charismatic set up. You never know where you're "at." The old Catholic goes back every Sunday morning to the Baalite mass and thinks, "I hope. I hope. I hope."

"Say, Bing(o) Crosby, are you saved?"

"Oh, yes, I'm saved."

"How long have you been saved?"

"Oh, I was *raised* Catholic."

"Well, when did you receive the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Oh, I receive Jesus Christ every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. "

"What happens to Him during the week?"

"Eh? What's that?"

"What happens to Him *during the week* that you have to go back next Sunday and get Him again?"

"I WAS BORN CATHOLIC AND RAISED CATHOLIC AND WILL BE A CATHOLIC UNTIL I DIE!"

That is exactly what Adolph Hitler said (Toland, Adolph Hitler).

If you were "once purged," you wouldn't be going back next Sunday to get purged again."¹⁵¹

Satan wants you to try to do something to get saved and to stay saved. Christ already did both (John 19:30) so why try to re-invent the wheel? How are you planning to improve on the work of Christ? Do you think you or your church can "help out God"? No one or no church can do anything to add to His work or to improve upon His work. Salvation is not a loan, where Christ made the down-payment and you have to keep up the payments. That is because Christ made

¹⁵¹ Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 198.

all of the payments. After you pay off your mortgage, why would you keep sending in payments every month?

“he hath perfected for ever” “The word used here for ‘perfected’ is *teteleioken* (the perfect active indicative of *teleioo*), meaning that He has absolutely perfected and continues to keep perfect what He has done...We must ever remember that the work of sanctification in the heart of the believer is maintained by Christ Himself and the perfection of His offering.”¹⁵²

26. The Better Covenant 10:15-21

Summary of 10:15-21

1. The New Covenant mentioned again, 10:16,17
2. Full assurance
 - A. The sin question is settled, 10:18
 - B. Boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Christ, 10:19
 - C. A new and living way, 10:20

10:15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

Two witnesses are required to verify something.

10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

This is speaking of the New Covenant again, see Hebrews 8:9-13 and Jeremiah 31:31-33. This will be fulfilled in the Millennium. It was made with Israel but all of mankind will enjoy its benefits.

10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Regarding Israel in the New Covenant and into the Millennium. Israel had a multitude of sins and iniquities to be remembered but God will totally and completely wipe that slate clean and He will dismiss them from out of His mind. Complete and total forgiveness! Israel will experience it as a nation in the Millennium and the saved and sanctified believer can experience it now. Since sin must be dealt with and paid for, God could not “forget” sins under the Old Testament since there was no final sacrifice for them. That would not come until the death and sacrifice of Jesus. The death and sacrifice of Jesus did what all of those centuries of Levitical sacrifices and ordinances could not do.

10:18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Where sin is forgiven, there is no more need of any additional sacrifices for it. It is like continuing to make payments on a mortgage that has already been satisfied, or staying in prison once the sentence has been served.

¹⁵² H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 199.

10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

We have both access and may have boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies. This was a privilege in the Old Testament that was restricted only to the High Priest and he could only go in once a year for a short duration of time to make atonement for the people. He did not linger nor dwell there- he was in and out. No ordinary Jew could go into the holy place and even the High Priest had no boldness or even confidence that God would accept the offering. But what a greater and better privilege that even the “lowest” New Testament believer has! We can go in anytime as we have access by His blood. And we may enter in boldly, with confidence, knowing that we will be received and that we will not be killed for some breach of divine protocol. The rent veil is our invitation.

1. This is not to an earthly Holy Place but the heavenly one, where God Himself literally dwells.
2. This “boldness” is not cockiness or arrogance but rather assurance of acceptance by God. I may arrogantly try to force my way into the White House to see the president, but I would have no confidence that I would make it since I have not been bidden. But I have full confidence and assurance that if I make approach to the very throne room of God, I would be received and accepted.
3. 10:20 The veil has been rent at the death of Christ (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38 and Luke 23:45) so this is the “new way” through the “flesh” of Christ to approach God, which was totally unknown in the Old Testament.
 - A. Remember, Christ said He was The Way in John 14:6.

10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

“By a new and living way” as compared with the old and imperfect way of the Mosaic system. This new and living way was made possible through His physical death on the cross. At the death of Christ, the veil in the temple was rent, exposing the Holy of Holies (Matthew 27:51). As anyone could then look into and enter the Holy of Holies, with the rending of His flesh at death, anyone can now go not only into a full salvation in Christ but also unto sanctification and communion.

“Oh, the blessedness of a life in the Holiest! Here the Father’s face is seen and His love tasted. Here His holiness is revealed and the soul made a partaker of it. Here the sacrifice of love and worship and adoration, the incense of prayer and supplication, is offered in power. Here the outpouring of the Spirit is known as an ever-streaming, over-flowing river, from under the throne of God and the Lamb. Here the soul, in God’s presence, grows into more complete oneness with Christ, and more entire conformity to His likeness. Here, in union with Christ, in His unceasing intercession, we are emboldened to take our place as intercessors, who can have power with God and prevail. Here the soul mounts up as on eagle’s wings, the strength is renewed, and the blessing and the power and the love are imparted with which God’s priests can go out to bless a dying world. Here each day we may experience the fresh anointing, in virtue of which we can go out to be the bearers, and witnesses, and channels of God’s salvation to men, the living instruments through whom our blessed King works out His full and final triumph.”¹⁵³

10:21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

¹⁵³ Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All*, pages 355-356.

Hebrews 3:6 says we are the house of God as well, so He is our personal High Priest.

27. “Let Us...” 10:22-24

“Let us” is found three times in the passage:

1. “Let us draw near...” (Hebrews 10:22)
 - A. In communion and fellowship.
 - B. We can do this now since the way into the Holiest is now made available in Hebrews 10:20.
 - C. We can do this with boldness and confidence.
2. “Let us hold fast...” (Hebrews 10:23)
 - A. Faithfulness is our profession.
 - B. Again, the tribulation saint had no “eternal security” as we are not in the Church Age doctrinally here. The tribulation saint must hold on to his profession without wavering and “endure to the end” against the Antichrist (Matthew 24:13), lest he would lose his salvation.
 - C. Even in the Church Age, apostasy is a fearful sin, with judgments detailed in Hebrews 10:26-31.
3. “Let us consider...” (Hebrews 10:24)
 - A. Mutual encouragement in the midst of severe testings and trials of the tribulation period.
 - B. This is why the exhortation to not neglect the assembling of ourselves together comes in Hebrews 10:25. There will be some form of church services in the tribulation, although the Church has been raptured out. But the saints will still need to meet together somehow, even in secret, to encourage each other. In “closed countries”, this has always been the case.

10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Fellowship and closeness to God are both exhorted here. What is the basis of this “drawing near?”

1. The existence of our Great High Priest
2. The work of this Great High Priest

The Old Testament believer could never really “draw near” to God. He could come *this close* but no closer, as his sins were not fully dealt with. Some communion and fellowship was possible but not on the same level that every New Testament saint can enjoy. The believing Jew and Gentile in this Church Age has it better than even the greatest Old Testament saint, like Abraham or Moses.

The “sprinkling is by the blood and the ‘washing’ is by the word in Titus 3:5.

The requirements for us to “draw near” are:

1. Having a true heart
 - A. A true heart of sincerity without hypocrisy, being candid with God
2. Having a full assurance of faith
 - A. Full faith in Christ without an evil heart of unbelief
3. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience
4. Having our bodies washed with pure water

A. The washing and sprinkling were two functions of the Old Testament priest. In some of the sacrifices, the various parts of the animal were washed. The priests also washed continually to maintain their ceremonial purity. The blood would also be sprinkled on the mercy seat.

10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

If the tribulation saint does not do this, he loses his salvation. He must endure faithfully unto the end of the tribulation, to the second coming of Christ in Revelation 19.

10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Good works makes their appearance, as they also do in Hebrews 13:21. The Tribulation believer is to seek encouragement in other believers and he is to encourage other believers to stay strong and faithful. They will need all the encouragement they can get, and then some.

28. Assembling Ourselves Together 10:25

10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

A. Not forsaking

1, We can forsake our attendance at services for numerous reasons ("as the manner of some is"):

A. Apathy

i. Backslidings

ii. One of the first signs of a backslidden heart is failure to be regular in the church

iii. Laziness and worldliness

B. Apostasy

C. Discouragement

B. Assembling...together

1. These are the regular services of the church

A. We are never told how many times a week to meet or the times of such meetings. That is not as important as the fact that we are meeting, sometime, somewhere.

2. "Great diligence is required of us in a due attendance unto the assemblies of the church for the ends of them, as they are instituted and appointed by Jesus Christ. — The benefit we receive by them, the danger of their neglect, sense of the authority of Christ, concernment of his glory in them, with the vanity of the pretenses for their neglect, call aloud for this diligence (John Owen, *Commentary on Hebrews*)."

3. This does not preclude the need for private worship and family worship. But there is something to be said for corporate worship.

C. Why assemble in a local congregation?

1. To exhort one another

A. We will find no encouragement from the world so we must find it among the brethren.

B. See notes under Hebrews 10:24.

C. It is hard to be encouraged and edified when you deliberately skip a congregational service. Some will say "I watch a big-name preacher from out of town and I don't need a local church". But when you are down and discouraged, you call that big-name preacher and see if he will come and visit you. Faithful attendance is a local congregation of believers means you have a local pastor and a local group of believers who can minister to you and any time.

D. Do you encourage others in a church service? Are you a blessing? It is hard to bless someone if you never see them or have any face-to-face fellowship with them.

2. To strengthen us

A. "That day" is approaching

i. The day of trouble- are we spiritually prepared for it?

ii. Ezekiel 22:14, **Can thine heart endure or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?**

3. Instruction and edification

4. Orderly, public, evangelical worship, corporate prayer, singing of psalms and hymns, and the administration of the ordinances.

5. The day is coming where it may be impossible to gather together. This would happen when "that day" that is currently approaching finally arrives.

A. Lack of nearby churches

B. Persecution

C. The government may make it illegal, as in Islamic countries.

"As a matter of fact, the time is long past (1950), when three services a week would sustain the moral strength and spiritual life of the American Christian. With the pressure in the schools and the influence of TV and the newspapers, no Christian in this land could stay spiritual with three services a week, unless God had placed him where that was all that he could get (or less).

Taped sermons and taped Bible studies will have to augment the life of an American Christian who attends church less than three times a week. As "the day" approaches, "worldliness" will double in pressure; the assembly times should be doubled.... I can't imagine a Sunday without being with a bunch of Christians. I can't imagine it. I've only been out of church three Sundays in thirty-six years: once after a train wreck, once when I had the flu, and once when I nearly got my right eye knocked out in a hockey game. I don't believe in "forsaking the assembling of yourselves together." I will find an assembly somewhere that can be a blessing to me (and vice versa) if I have to drive 200 miles."¹⁵⁴

There are three types of worship:

1. Individual worship, when we have our devotions with God.

2. Family worship.

3. Corporate worship, which is being encouraged here.

"In these days when necessity places us in constant contact with those things that have nothing to do with God, we need to greatly value being with God's people. We must come to see this need early in our lives. Pastors must press their people to attend such meetings. We need to do so in order to cultivate this matter of provoking unto love and good works. Although it is one thing to live for God and worship alone, there is something deeply precious and edifying about joining others in singing, praying, and listening to God's Word... There may come a day when we will be scattered to the ends of the earth, unable to worship publicly together in a biblical

¹⁵⁴ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 219.

church. There is already communist and Muslim countries where such worship is prohibited; this restrictive spirit is coming to America in the near future.”¹⁵⁵

During the Covid-19 Flu Scare of 2020, many preachers used this verse as justification to keep their churches open when they were asked to shut down to limit the spread of the virus. These preachers misapplied this verse to say that if they shut their churches down, then that would somehow be a violation of this verse. But this was sloppy theology. The idea is of individual Christians not forsaking the assembly and its services due to coldness, apostasy or backsliding. It has nothing to do with temporarily shutting down public services during times of national emergencies. We have had to occasionally cancel Sunday services due to weather and road conditions. Is that also a violation of Hebrews 10:25? These preachers took a Tribulation verse and dogmatically applied it to the Church Age.

This is a Tribulation passage and the reason why this exhortation is given is described in Hebrews 10:24. The primary interpretation is tribulational although we certainly make the Church Age application. There will be gatherings in the Tribulation, similar to our modern church services, but obviously not the same. With the Holy Spirit taken out of the world, the change in dispensation, the spirit of that age and the persecutions of the Antichrist, these Tribulation church services will be very different than what we are familiar with today. But they will take place as believers will always gather. The activities of the Church in the Communist and Islamic countries, or in North Korea will be a good example of these Tribulation gatherings.

29. Wilful Sin 10:26-31

Summary of 10:26-31

1. Wilful sin after having received the knowledge of the truth brings:
 - A. No more sacrifice for sins, 10:26
 - B. Judgments, 10:27
 - C. Firey indignation, 10:27
 - D. Even more punishment, 10:29
 - i. They tread the blood of Christ under foot
 - ii. They counted the blood of the covenant to be an unclean thing.
 - iii. Did despite to the Spirit of grace.

10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

This is one of the verses in Hebrews that trips up the commentators who try to interpret it in a New Testament context. It obviously is NOT a Church Age verse. If you hit a verse like this where it contradicts other clear New Testament verses and teachings, you have to realize that it doesn't teach a Church Age truth but rather has an application to another dispensation, in this case, the Tribulation. This is the trap most commentators fall into:

1. They are not dispensational in their thinking. It is impossible to accurately interpret a dispensational book like Hebrews in a non-dispensational manner.
2. Even most dispensationalists abandon their dispensationalism because of the obvious implications- Tribulation truths differ from Church Age truths, including the plan of salvation. If they teach that Tribulation salvation is different from Church Age salvation, they will be severely attacked by “the brethren” for teaching “salvation by works”.

¹⁵⁵ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 212.

We certainly cannot claim ignorance in this situation, as the believer sins with full knowledge when he does sin.

1. This could be a reference to a sin of apostasy, leaving the truth after we have received it. This is a major challenge for the Tribulation saint. Once he has received a knowledge of the identity of the Antichrist and then apostasies from it willfully (usually to save his own skin), he loses whatever salvation he had “as there is no New Testament-type security of the believer in the Tribulation) and sets himself up for a very severe judgment.
2. This Tribulation sin of apostasy is fatal and unforgivable. There is no sacrifice for it. There is no atonement for it. It is not unforgivable in the Church Age, but the doctrinal application here is in the Tribulation.

What is a Tribulation truth is often a Church Age heresy. It may not be true today but it will be true later.

10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

This is what awaits the unfaithful Tribulation saint who abandons his profession, judgment and wrath. It is no picnic for the Christian (if he is a genuine Christian) who does this, as he will have to deal with that at the Bema Judgment, but his judgment will be nothing like the judgment of the Tribulation saint who “goes back”. This is described as a “fiery indignation”, going beyond “ordinary” judgment.

10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

This is a reference to Deuteronomy 17:2-7. There will be no mercy for the Tribulation saint who abandons his profession of Christ.

10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Treading something “**underfoot**” is usually done in contempt of whatever is being trampled upon. To trod underfoot the blood of Christ is to despise the blood of Christ and all that it represents.

These are the sins of the unfaithful Tribulation saint:

1. He is worthy of these sore punishments.
2. He trod the Son of God under foot.
3. He counted the blood of the covenant to be an unholy thing.
4. He has done despite to the Spirit of grace.

This shows that apostasy is a serious heart and spirit problem. It festers in the heart like a cancer before it publicly manifests itself in open apostasy.

“**Spirit of grace**” is another term for the Holy Spirit.

10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

The penalty for apostasy, in any age, is fearful, but is especially fearful in the Tribulation.

“Vengeance is mine” see Deuteronomy 32:25; Psalm 94:1; Romans 12:19 (where we are not to take vengeance ourselves but to leave that to the Lord).

1. The Tribulation saint is not to try to take any vengeance of the Antichrist or his followers as they persecute them. It is tempting to try to lash out at those who are causing you all your pain and suffering, but the saint is to leave those matters to God. Revelation 19 and 20 assure the Tribulation sufferer that God will take vengeance on those who persecuted His people. He will do it better than any man could possibly hope to do.

“The Lord shall judge his people” The Jews are still the covenant people of God in the Tribulation.

1. See Deuteronomy 32:36; Psalm 50:4; 96:13; 98:9; 135:14; Ezekiel 18:30.
2. “His people” are Jews and this refers to the judgments and dealings God will do with Israel in the Tribulation period.

10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The judgments of God can be so terrifying that they cannot be comprehended, and that doesn't even involve hell and the Lake of Fire. They can occur in this life while the sinner is still alive. No one would want to willingly undergo such judgments, either today in the Church Age or in the Tribulation. Even a casual reading of the Tribulation judgments in the Book of Revelation shows how fearful those judgments can be (especially in Revelation 9!). Remember, this warning about falling into the hands of the living God is addressed to believers, not unbelievers.

30. Cast Not Away Your Confidence 10:32-37

Summary of 10:32-37

1. Remember the former days, 10:32-34
 - A. You were illuminated
 - B. You endured a great fight of affliction
 - C. You were made a gazingstock
2. Cast not away your confidence, 10:35
3. You need patience so you might receive the promise, 10:36
4. Christ will come, 10:37

10:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Tribulation saints will undergo tremendous afflictions by the Antichrist and His followers.

“the former days” What days are these? The Old Testament? It might be more recent than that as the second half of the verse mentions **“after ye were illuminated”**, which would be more recent. Then is mentioned **“ye endured a great fight of afflictions”** which is past tense. Is this verse set in the Millennium?

Notice the similarity between Hebrews 10:32 and 33 with 11:36-38 regarding the sufferings and persecutions inflicted by the world upon those who choose God, rejected the world and who lived by faith.

10:33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

“gazingstock” is the Greek word from where we get our English word “theatre” (Strong’s #2301, θεατρίζω theatrizō, to bring upon the stage, to set forth as a spectacle, expose to contempt). They were literally put on stage to be gazed at and mocked by the audience. Israel was set “on high” in the Tribulation to be mocked and ridiculed by the whole world in the Tribulation. It was like throwing Christians into the arena to be eaten by lions. There were crowds who would watch and enjoy the spectacle. It is possible that there will be some sort of broadcast of the sufferings of the Tribulation Jews to provide entertainment (and to serve as a warning and as an example) for a blood-thirsty world, craving this sort of savage entertainment.

This is in the past tense again, showing that this verse may be set in the Millennium and it may be referencing back to their Tribulation sufferings.

10:34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds” The author and the readers obviously knew each other personally. The readers had compassion upon the writer when he was in prison and had helped and encouraged him. If the writer was Paul, it would be rather easy to put this verse into a good context.

“the spoiling of your goods” As part of their sufferings and persecutions, these readers had their properties stolen by the religious and secular powers of their day. This will happen again in the tribulation by the Antichrist. Their goods were spoiled, meaning that the Tribulation saints were stripped almost down to nothing in their persecutions. Their money, lands, resources and good were seized so that there was no way they could fend for themselves or defend themselves in an earthly manner. They were reduced to nothing and thus had to rely entirely on the help and provision of God.

10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

Do not sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the temporary. Apostates often do this. To abandon the faith usually brings a promise of some temporal reward but that is nothing in the light of eternity.

1. In the Tribulation, the believer will be persecuted unto death (Hebrews 10:32,33). If he will simply renounce his faith in Christ and take the mark of the beast, he can obtain food and safety and he will not be killed. He will be tempted to cast away his confidence for a bowl of food, not unlike that Esau did in Genesis 25:29-34.
2. No form of spiritual compromise, even in the smallest detail, is ever profitable.
3. There is a great reward for those Tribulation Jews and believers who remain faithful to the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:13).

10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Tribulation saints just need a little patience and keep on in their resistance to the Antichrist. In the tribulation, the second coming is no more than 7 years distant- that is a "little while"! If they endure the Tribulation period faithfully, there will be a great reward.

Notice the similarity between this verse and Hebrews 11:39 regarding receiving the promise for faithfulness and those who lived by faith who did not receive the promise in this life.

10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

It has been two thousand years! But in the Tribulation, the saint will be no further than seven years from the Second Advent. In the midst of his severe testings, trials and persecutions, this verse is meant to be an encouragement for him to hold on just a little longer! He WILL come in Revelation 19.

31. Drawing Back 10:38,39

Summary of 10:38,39

1. The just shall live by faith, 10:38
2. Warning against drawing back, 10:38
 - A. God shall have no pleasure in him
 - B. Results in perdition
3. No drawing back saves the soul, 10:39

10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Since this is tribulational, any man who either makes a profession in Christ but then "draws back" and renounces it for whatever reason has lost any salvation he may have had. He has drawn back to perdition (Hebrews 10:39). There is no security of the believer in the Tribulation. The master sin that cannot be atoned for in the tribulation is apostasy.

"the just shall live by faith" Quoted from Habakkuk 2:4 (also repeated in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 with one change:

1. Habakkuk: **"The just shall live by his faith".**
2. Paul: **"The just shall live by faith".**

Paul left out **"his"** and he did it deliberately and for a reason, and it has nothing to do with Paul quoting any sort of Septuagint or making any sort of a "free quote". Paul knew exactly what he was doing here. The Old Testament saint had to live by his own faith. No faith was imparted to him. His faith depended upon his devotion to the Law of Moses, the sacrificial system and the Scriptures. He is walking by faith under the Law. The New Testament saint has faith imparted to him at salvation (Galatians 2:20b). In Galatians 2:20, Paul says he lives by the faith of Christ, not by his faith **in** Christ. Christ imparted His faith to Paul to help him live the Christian life. It is so very important to notice these differences between the salvation positions between the Old Testament and New Testament saints, for they were not identical. The Law of Moses contained 613 precepts. David reduced them to 11 (Psalm 15). Isaiah reduced those to 6, Micah to 3. Isaiah then comes back and reduces it to 2. Habakkuk and Paul strain the Law down to one point: The just shall live by (his) faith. This is not "saved by faith" but "life by faith".

This is not a salvation verse but a Christian life verse. But we do notice the emphasis of "living by (your own) faith" in the Old Testament. Faith in the sacrifices and in the Law. Faith in the messages of the prophets and the ministry of the priests. God holds man responsible to the amount of revelation he has to work with. There was no new birth in the Old Testament but there were the types of the feasts and sacrifices as well as the prophecies of the Messiah. The Old Testament saint had to put his faith in these things to take care of his sin problem. As a Jew was faithful to these revelations, his faith increased in proportion, hence he built up his own faith by his devotion and belief.

The fact that there are differences between Old Testament salvation and New Testament salvation should be clearly seen in the fact that the Old Testament saint went to Abraham's Bosom at death (Luke 16:22) while the New Testament saint goes directly to heaven at death. How say ye then that both salvations are identical when the saints didn't even go to the same place at death!

We do not live or walk by sight, for our sight is limited and our eyes may deceive us. Walking by sight is walking by human understanding and experience, both of which are greatly limited and unreliable. But when we are walking by faith, we are walking by God's sight and experience, both of which are infinite, perfect, and totally reliable.

In this verse, Paul changed the inspired Hebrew original, as given by Habakkuk and retranslated that inspired original by omitting the pronoun "his", obviously with God's approval. God thought so highly of Habakkuk's "original" that He had Paul change it to make it line up with the progressive New Testament truth. In this case, Paul's inspired translation of Habakkuk was superior than Habakkuk's inspired "original"! This shows that a translation can be superior to the original at times and this is an important truth to consider when considering the Bible version issue.

This might be an argument for Pauline authorship of Hebrews since the author of Hebrews quotes Habakkuk 2:4 the same way as Paul does in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:10.

10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Apostasy leads to perdition, absolute and utter ruin in the Tribulation. Drawing back from one's profession of Christ in the Tribulation will doom that soul to perdition. Even if a man has made a genuine profession of faith in Christ, drawing back from the truth after he had received it results in eternal judgment. Dispensationally, this refers to the person in the Tribulation who hears the truth preached by the 144,000 and receives it, only to forsake it when the going gets tough. There is no eternal security in the Tribulation. The professor in the Tribulation must make it through that seven-year period ("**unto the end**" as in Matthew 24:13) to be saved. If he falls away from his belief and profession, he is lost. To be faithful in believing will save the soul.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 11

In Hebrews 11, faith is evidenced by works and its results. Every person mentioned in this chapter did something to illustrate and demonstrate their faith, against showing the agreement between Paul and James, between faith and works. There is no conflict between the two, unless you misunderstand one or the other.

Everyone needs an example of how to live or how to do something. This is especially true in spiritual things. "How should I live in my generation?" Look at how other believers lived in their generation. Read biographies, autobiographies, letters and journals of those who have gone on before us. Learn from their errors and profit by their successes. The Tribulation saint has been given many Old Testament examples for them to follow and emulation, to teach them how to live in the Tribulation and for examples of how to remain faithful even in the midst of great sufferings and crises of faith.

"The New Testament sets forth a very inspiring account of a "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) in which all of them could be easily associated with some aspect of faith and holiness (Hebrews, Chapter 11).

In Abel, faith worshipped with a holy sacrifice (11:4).

In Enoch, faith walked with a holy God (11:5-6).

In Noah, faith worked on an Ark with a holy pattern (11:7).

In Abraham, faith waited on God for the birth of Isaac with a holy promise (11:8-19).

In Isaac, faith watched his two sons with a holy hope--"concerning things to come" (11:20).

In Jacob, faith waned with God but was restored by the Holy Angel--Jehovah (11:21).

In Joseph, faith wondered at God when with his "bones" he looked to the holy future (11:22).

In Moses, faith wandered with God through a wilderness twice and then stood on holy ground (11:23-29).

In Joshua, faith warred against 31 cities as he stood with the Holy Captain on His holy ground, too (11:30).

In Rahab, faith warned the people of Jericho in the underground testimony of the spies and their Holy God (11:31).

In Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, faith wakened to the miraculous deeds of God in their own holy circumstances (11:32-35a).

And (in) others," faith walled-up their way as they met their God in a holy death (11:35b-40) through circumstances only peculiar to pilgrims and strangers in the earth.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, pages 305-306.

32. Definition of Faith 11:1

11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is the conviction of the truth of anything, even if we can't see it, grasp it or understand it. Faith is a spiritual "sixth sense" that enables the believer to take a firm hold upon the unseen world and bring it into the realm of experience. Faith gives the believer access into things he could never know by science or reason as "faith" makes sense out of the things that cannot be understood by human reason or science. Faith goes beyond human senses into realms that are otherwise impossible to enter into.

" Faith is a common denominator of life. Everyone has faith and exercises faith almost every moment of every day. You walk into a building and immediately exercise faith in a score of ways—faith in the architect who designed the building, faith in the contractor and the workmen who constructed the building, faith in the quality and durability of the materials that make up the building—and you never give it a thought. When you mail a letter, make a bank deposit, or read a page of the newspaper, you exercise faith in the post office, the bank, and the reporter. You feel sick and go to a doctor who prescribes some medicine. You take the totally illegible prescription to the drugstore and watch the druggist pour an assortment of pills into a small container. "Take one of each three times a day," he says, and you do. You exercise faith in the doctor, in the drugstore, and in the mysterious capsules, the content of which you know nothing about.

Faith is a common denominator of life. No one can live a single day without exercising faith—faith in men. Salvation is on the same principle. God has thus made it available to all men everywhere, without regard to education, physical ability, social status, national origin, or native talent. For everyone has faith. The basic difference between the faith exercised by the individual in the daily round of life and the faith exercised by that same individual to the saving of his soul is the object of his faith.

The Muslim puts his faith in the Koran and in Muhammad; the idolater puts his faith in his graven images; the humanist puts his faith in himself; the philosopher puts his faith in his own ideas; the materialist puts his faith in his money; and the religionist puts his faith in his own good works. None of these can save, because the object of faith, in each case, is wrong. Saving faith is faith that rests upon Christ...The writer of Hebrews thus turns his attention to the whole question of faith and presents his readers with a significant sampling of Old Testament people who believed God when faced with something entirely new. Enoch had never seen anyone translated, Noah had never known of a universal flood, Abraham had never seen the Promised Land. Each believer exercised personal faith in God."¹⁵⁷

1. Everyone has faith in something or someone. It always a tangible object.
 - A. In reason, science, philosophy, politics...
 - B. We have faith in doctors, plumbers, the post office, or boss (that we will get paid), the government (that they will get their check).
 - C. It is impossible to live without faith in something or someone.
 - D. We walk by faith not by sight- 2 Corinthians 5:7.
 - E. The just shall live by faith- Romans 1:17.
2. The Christian views faith three ways;
 - A. Faith for salvation
 - B. Faith for supplications

¹⁵⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, pages 147-148.

- C. Faith for sanctification
 - i. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ- Philippians 1:6.
- 3. To have faith requires no schooling, wealth, social status, health...everyone has it and can use it.
- 4. It contains evidences and substances
 - A. We have substance and evidence in our hands when we have a Bible in our hands. Though the final object may not be seen (“**evidence of things not seen**”), it is so real (“**substance**”) that it can be “laid ahold of.” The cases that follow are evidences of this truth.
 - B. These were all Old Testament persons, without a completed Bible, without a church, pastor, hymnbook...
 - C. The object may be seen “afar off” —Hebrews 11:13.
- 5. It must have a tangible object.
 - A. The object is a thing or a person, even seeing Him who is invisible- Hebrews 11:27
 - B. You can’t have “faith in faith”. Many weak Christians talk about “having faith” but they never identify what they have faith in. You have “faith”? Faith in what, or whom? Many modern professors cannot define what they have their faith in except their “faith in faith”.
 - C. “Faith cannot rest on sky hooks. The Christian must be aware that the flesh can subtly deceive him by suggesting that positive thinking is faith. This existential hope is what man has imagined as the alternative for faith. In positive thinking the object is the flesh of self; biblical faith has as its object the Word of God... We must ask ourselves, “What is the object of my faith?” Faith can exist as a false faith, a hope invested in the wrong object. If that object is self, it is the humanistic faith of positive thinking.”¹⁵⁸
- 6. Not based on feelings or superstitions but on facts and reliability.
 - A. Faith is something that is tested and verified.
 - B. Why do I have faith in the Bible? Because it is something that I have verified and tried. Since it has passed every test, I am comfortable with it, can trust it and have faith in it.

Types of faith in the Bible:

1. **The common faith** (Titus 1:4).
2. **Human faith** (Mark 11:22)
3. **Divine faith** (Galatians 2:20)
4. **Mental faith** (James 2:14)
5. **Historical faith** (1 John 5:10)
6. **Wavering faith** (James 1:16)
7. **Little faith** (Matthew 6:30)
8. **Active faith** (Hebrews 10:9)
9. **Faith unfeigned** (1 Timothy 1:5)
10. **Great faith** (Matthew 8:10).

There is a faith that **reposes**: it rests on what God has said and counts on it, as a man reclining on a bed. There is a faith that is **reckoning**: this faith figures that what God says is so, and then acts in accordance with it. There is a faith that **risks**: it dares to act on what God says regardless of the consequences. The great example of this is Hebrews 11:17 where Abraham attempts to kill his son (Genesis 22:10)—he **RISKS** the most precious thing that God had given him. Then there is a faith that **relies** on God instead of self or man. It is odd how many Christians rely on a government check to meet their needs than they rely on God.

¹⁵⁸ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 224-225.

“True faith sees proof of God’s love at difficult times (Hebrews 12:7), sees the love of God manifested in distress and trials (Hebrews 12:6), sees the wisdom of God’s decisions amidst suffering (Hebrews 12:10), sees the ruling hand of God amidst anarchy and confusion (Hebrews 12:3), subjects itself to God without criticism (Hebrews 12:9) and acknowledges the value of suffering as a means of education (Hebrews 12:10).”¹⁵⁹

No one in this chapter is being lauded for their works, although they had works. But faith is greater than works and works are a result of and a fruit of faith. No faith equals no works that will account for anything.

“evidence of things not seen” We know that certain things are even if we cannot see them. There are some rationalists who don’t accept anything they can’t see or put into a test tube in a lab. Yet we believe in many invisible things by the evidences they show. We can’t see radiation but we see its evidences this we have faith it exists. So it is with God. He is invisible but we have faith in His existence based on the evidences He provides. We have not seen heaven but our faith allows us to believe in it as well as life after death. The carnal man does this as well. How many believe in life on other planets yet have no evidence to support that faith!

“There are few things in religion but the truth of them is contradicted by carnal sense. Eternal life is promised to us, but first we must be dead; the resurrection of the body, but first we must moulder to dust in the grave. Blessedness is promised to us at last, but in the meantime, we are of all men most miserable; a comfortable supply of all things, but in the meantime we hunger and suffer thirst. God saith he will be a present help in a time of trouble, but he seems to be deaf to our prayers; therefore, faith is conversant about things present.”¹⁶⁰

“Faith is a kind of spiritual “sixth sense” that enables the believer to take a firm hold upon the unseen world and bring it into the realm of experience. All our senses do this. The eye takes hold upon the light waves that pulsate through space and make real to a person the things he sees. The ear picks up the sound waves and translates them into hearing.

“But there is a whole spectrum of waves beyond the range of the senses. We cannot see them or hear them or taste them or smell them or feel them. But they are real, nevertheless, and, with the aid of modern instruments, we can pick them up and translate them into phenomena that our senses can handle. Faith reaches out into the spiritual dimension and gives form and substance to heavenly and spiritual realities in such a way that the soul can appreciate them and grasp them and live in the enjoyment of them.”¹⁶¹

33. Faith of the Elders 11:2

11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

These Old Testament elders (more fully described later) obtained a good reputation of being men and women of faith.

It must be remembered that everyone in this chapter lived in the Old Testament. None of them had a complete Bible, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a local church or pastor, a hymnbook, any devotional book or Christian radio. They had none of the spiritual advantages as we do in the New Testament era yet they were able to accomplish great deeds by faith. So what is our

¹⁵⁹ Peter Ruckman, *Ruckman Reference Bible*, page 1611.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 31.

¹⁶¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, pages 148-149.

excuse? All they had was a word from God and little else. Their faith was demonstrated by their works and actions (James 2:14-26).

34. Faith in Creation 11:3

11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Creation Science may offer some scientific support for the Genesis account of creation, but ultimately, our acceptance of that truth is based on faith more than anything else. Everything we see and those things that we don't see or can't see were all created by the word of God. Neither Creation Science nor Evolution can be "proven" by science. Both require faith. The Evolutionist has just as much faith (if not more!) if his theory as the Christian has in the accuracy of the creation account in Genesis. Both require faith, just faith in different objects.

"By faith we understand..." regardless of what the evolutionists say! They have faith in their theory,¹⁶² we have faith in the eternal, inspired, preserved word of God.

"framed" The creation was arranged in a logical, orderly manner. This gives rise to the idea of "intelligent design". Even if a man is not a creationist, he still must acknowledge the order and design of creation.

"From an Old English word "fram", meaning "forward, surpass, excellent." A "frame" is "a useful structure with different parts that fit together." The verbal form means "the action of shaping, forming or fashioning something, making it ready for use."¹⁶³

"so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" This is a clear declaration of divine creation out of nothing. While Creationism is a scientific discipline and can be tested scientifically, it, like the false theory of evolution, still requires faith to believe.

35. The Faith of Abel 11:4

11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

This incident is given in Genesis 4:2-4.

Abel offered a sacrifice although we have no record of any procedure for such an offering being given by God. But he had the faith in the significance of his sacrifice and that it would be accepted by God. He had the faith that if he offered the blood of a sacrifice that it would be accepted by God. Somewhere, both boys received some sort of revelation about the need for an offering for their sin. This is not recorded in Genesis. Both Cain and Abel brought the offering, but they had different philosophies. Cain brought the works of his own hands while Abel brought an animal sacrifice (probably a lamb but we are not told that it was. He was a keeper of sheep in Genesis 4:2).

¹⁶² To believe in evolution requires MORE faith than to believe in the Biblical account of creation.

¹⁶³ Stephen White, *White's Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, page 164.

The two types of religions got their start early in human history:

1. Cain's religion, by works, religion and human effort. No faith required. He also brought an offering from the cursed ground. Abel's sheep was not cursed. Humanism and idolatry started with Cain.
2. Abel's religion, based on a substitutionary animal sacrifice, not based on works or human merit, but based instead on faith that God will accept it. True religion started with Abel.

All human religion is based on human works and human merit, that salvation can be earned. Abel came a different way, not relying on his own merit and morality, but in relying on the merit and morality of a substitute, which is Jesus Christ in picture and type. He put no faith in his own works but put all his faith in the works of someone else!

Abel had a faith that worshipped, built an altar and sacrificed. He testified against the carnal worship of Cain. Abel knew he had to offer a sacrifice for his own sin and carnality and had the faith to use the blood of an acceptable sacrifice instead of using the fruits of his own labors like Cain did.

"Now we must conjure up the scene. Here are two stone altars erected with a pile of natural stones, untouched by engraving tool or art of man's device (Exod. 20:25). Two young men are kneeling in front of these altars just outside the Eastern Gate of the garden. Both are praying. Both are waiting for something to happen to give them assurance (Ah! 1 John 5:13!) that God has been pleased with their work. But there are two notable differences in the two worship services which we must be careful to observe.

1. Cain has his face uplifted to heaven with hands spread properly (Psa. 28:2; 1 Tim. 2:8; Psa. 63:4), and where he places palm on palm, he places them "just so."
2. Abel, late in bringing his offering (notice Cain offers first; vss. 3–4), seems to be kneeling "afar off" and is not so much as lifting up his eyes to heaven but seems to be talking to himself! (Fortunately, the Lord picked up this prayer for us on an ultrasensitive stereo Sony machine and plays it back for us in Luke 18:13. It comes out, "**God be merciful to me a sinner.**")

Aside from the two different postures (or attitudes), one would also notice that the "offerings" on this Sunday morning were slightly discordant.

Cain, at his fruit stand, is praying over a pile of vegetables, fruits, flowers, herbs, and shrubs somewhat as follows: "Now, Lord, I am worshipping according to the dictates of my conscience, and it is true that mommy and daddy told me that their sins were paid for by the blood of a lamb, but Lord, look at these beautiful *grapes!* I grew them myself, pruned the vine, kept the foxes out, sprayed the bugs, etc. The juice in them is blood red, and it *looks* just like real blood. I know that you are a God of love and have no pleasure in vengeance or bloodletting. Lord, wouldest thou in thine infinite compassion *turn these here grapes into blood* and enable *me* to live a *better life?*" A silence follows this pious supplication, and for about five minutes it is as quiet as a turkey farm on Thanksgiving afternoon.

Abel, kneeling by his altar (which displays a sheep with its throat cut!), is praying, "Now Lord, I hope you'll take this in my place. I should love you enough to die for you, considering how good you've been to me, but I'm yellow. I'm afraid to die. I should honor you like no one on earth, including myself, since you are Lord of heaven and earth..., but I don't. I put myself first most of the time. So here, Lord, is one of your creatures. You sustained it and nourished it, and I have only tended what was already *yours*. Mommy and Daddy said you killed one of these back in the garden for them. I hope you will accept this one for me. *Take its blood instead of mine.* I deserve to die for my sins, but wilt thou please accept this bloody substitute?"

Crash! Down comes the answer (Lev. 9:24; 2 Chron. 7:1; Matt. 27:54)! There is no doubt about Abel's salvation. The excellent sacrifice which he offered (Heb. 11:4) received a

“testimony” on the spot. And although “the blood of Abel” (Heb. 11:4) was not the one effectual, permanent, and final atonement for sin, it clearly indicates for generations to come that the only sacrifice from man that God wants is a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Pet. 1:18–19).”¹⁶⁴

36. The Faith of Enoch 11:5,6

11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Enoch is dealt with in Genesis 5:22-24.

Enoch was walking with God, against the spirit of his age. He had the faith to walk with God against his generation and there would be a benefit in it.

Enoch had the faith to walk with God in a bad day, rather than to just conform with a wicked and adulterous generation. He testified against the sins of his generation and proved that you could walk with God.

Enoch’s life and walk were a witness to that wicked generation he lived in.

1. See a man who loves God, is surrendered to God and who seeks to live for God and to promote his glory. Enoch no doubt also wanted to know God as much as he was able. You can live for God and walk with God in an evil day and such a life and walk would serve as a continual rebuke to that generation.
2. Many in his day, as in ours, would have said “You can’t walk with God today! It is too bad a day!”
3. Others would not have seen the need for it. “We are also saved by grace and we have eternal security, so why put too much effort in this?”
4. His witness against the sins of his day was an aggressive one. Jude 14 talks about how Enoch was a preacher of righteousness as well as a prophet. But Enoch’s day was so bad and judgment so certain that in his prophecies, he skipped right over the first coming of the Lord (which was associated with no judgments) to the second coming, which is filled with judgments.
5. No doubt Enoch faced a lot of ridicule and backlash for his walk with God when everyone else was walking in the ways of the age. It had to go through Enoch’s mind “Am I right? Or am I wrong, as everyone claims I am? Is this walk with God worth it?” He came to the conclusion that when all was said and done, walking with God was the best life there was.

We see Enoch walking with God, which is something that is never easy, even under the best of conditions. But Enoch lived in a very bad day, much like we do today. The “days of Noah” were upon him, and there were very few faithful followers of God in the earth. Yet Enoch could still walk with God, without a Bible, without a local church, without a pastor, without any devotional books or Christian radio station to help and encourage him. And he did it for 300 years! He maintained communion with God for three centuries! Didn’t he ever get tired or discouraged? Didn’t he ever backslide? Do you have the spiritual stamina to maintain such a walk for 300 years with very little encouragement? How did he know about God? How did God reveal himself to Enoch without a Bible? How did Enoch know to walk with God and how to walk with Him? There must have been a strong amount of revelation in the years before the Flood to

¹⁶⁴ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Genesis*, pages 124-126.

those hearts that were receptive, although the method and content of this revelation is never revealed to us. Yet Enoch had such a depth of knowledge of God without a Bible than many professing Christians do today with a Bible. This also goes for the other Old Testament saints who had a strong knowledge of God.

“translated” When you “translate” a thing or a person, you pick it/him up in one place and put it/him down in another place. When you translate words, you take them from one language and carry them over into another language. The “trans-“ prefix had the idea of moving across something. God translated Enoch across the great divide from heaven and earth, picked him up from the earth and carried him over to heaven.

“The capital value of a saint of God is rarely appreciated by his contemporaries; it is not until he is gone that they realize what a veritable giant he was among them and what his influence meant. The world frequently despises and maligns the dynamic believer during his lifetime. Even other believers do not always properly value the saint in their midst. His standards are too rigid, his beliefs too old-fashioned, his example too cutting. But once he was gone, he was missed by sinner and saint alike. Enoch was missed so much that they tried to find him, but in vain, because God had honored his faith in a signal way and had taken him alive to glory.”¹⁶⁵

11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The only way Enoch could have pleased God that way was by faith, not by works or spirituality. Works do not please God as He does not need our works and can always do a better job that we can. But faith always impresses Him (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9).

“must believe that he is” Faith believes in God even if there is no rational reason to believe in Him. This is one reason why atheists have no joy, peace or answers to any of life’s important questions- they refuse to believe that God “is”. God is pleased when faith is put into Him and not into science or the government or even (Christian) scholarship and education.

We must believe that He **“is”**.

1. That God truly exists. Who would waste time believing in or in seeking a God Who does not exist?
2. That He is Who and What He says He is. We must believe that the Bible gives a true and accurate account of God.

“diligently seek him” Not just seeking God but diligently seeking Him. Too many professors seek God only on Sunday, or on a part-time basis, or if it convenient or if it doesn’t cost us too much. God will not be found like this.

The English word “diligent” means “Marked by persevering, painstaking effort. Prosecuted with careful attention and effort; careful; painstaking; not careless or negligent. Interestedly and perseveringly attentive; steady and earnest in application to a subject or pursuit; assiduous; industrious.” The Greek ἐκζητέω *ekzētēō* (Strong’s #1567) is similar in meaning.

This will take work! Dedication! Diligence! God is a rewarder of those who seek Him with this type of zeal and desire. This reward includes “glory and honour and immortality” (Romans 2:7,8).

I would certainly think the people mentioned in this chapter were seeking God with their whole heart by faith. I can imagine Enoch seeking him diligently in those bad days he lived in,

¹⁶⁵ John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*, page 153.

when the whole world cared nothing about God, much like today. This “diligence” is connected with Enoch by context. Enoch diligently sought after God without a Bible, church, pastor, hymnbook...and yet he still found Him! The Christian can stand out today by making his diligent search for God while his age is diligently seeking their sin. The world is very diligent in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Can the Christian be as diligent in seeking God?

How is God sought?

1. Through Bible reading.
 - A. Not just reading a chapter a day and then thinking you have done your duty, but slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Then you meditate on what you have read.
2. Through meditation.
 - A. It is difficult to meditate with the TV on or looking at your phone.
 - B. Before TV and radio, the house was quiet, with fewer distractions. No wonder the “old timers” were able to do so much more thinking and meditating. But today, Satan has us so wound up and going in ten different directions at once, it is difficult to think. Modern man suffers from attention deficit disorder in that we cannot focus on a topic for more than 5 minutes at a time. Even watching a television show, notice how quickly a scene changes.
3. Through good hymns.
 - A. A solid hymn book is a necessity for Christian devotion.
4. Through devotional work.
 - A. Every Christian must have a time of both family and personal devotion daily.
5. Through church attendance.
 - A. What better way to seek after God than in public, corporate worship with the brethren, under the preaching of the word of God?
6. Through desire.
 - A. Do you want this? Do you want a deeper life and a stronger walk? Too many Christians are content that they are saved and do not see the need for anything else. They take comfort in their “experience” on in the fact that someone told them they were saved when they were four years old in Sunday School. They go to church. They are moral. That is enough. But others see the spiritual needs in their life and want as much of God as they possibly can get. They are like the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon, who seeks after Solomon with all her might until she finds him (Song of Solomon 3,5).

There is the encouragement for those who diligently seek God:

1. 1 Chronicles 28:9, And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.
2. Psalm 119:10, With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.
3. Proverbs 8:17, I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
 - A. This speaks of wisdom but the same principle applies.
4. Song of Solomon 3:1-4, By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not...
5. Jeremiah 29:13-14, And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart...
6. Matthew 6:33, But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Also see Luke 12:31.)

"There has to be a time in your life when you learn to live the life of faith, learn to trust God, and learn to act on faith. Until then your life is not really in "fittin' shape" to *minister* to anyone. One of the saddest things about southern Christianity is the vast control that the Southern Baptist Convention has over supposedly "independent" Baptist churches (all Baptist churches are "independent" according to all standard Baptist church policy). The Convention still controls the politics, property, and much of the social life of Southerners. The Convention's idea of a "church" is a small, respectable, social group of "friends" operated by deacons. Their idea is that the "Church of the Lord Jesus Christ" is basically a social club run by the leading families in the community, who are to keep shoveling pastors through the meat grinder while the big shots up in Louisville and Nashville collect the "kitty" and invest it in government bonds, trust funds, stocks, and manufacturing concerns. Pastors are shuffled around like pawns on a chess board. If he is a *good boy* (raises funds and sends them to headquarters), he gets a big church. If he is a *naughty boy* (doesn't send money to Lottie Moon and pay for the Sunday School literature), he gets a small church. If he is a *bad boy* (will not support the Cooperative Program: i.e., "Give, or I'll blow your brains out!"), you "de church" or "unchurch" him and blacklist him so that he cannot get a church. Southern preachers are controlled by a man called an "Associational Missionary." He draws his salary from "Home Missions."

The Associational Missionary's job is to keep every local church in the Convention in a state of unsettled suspense unless it is supporting everything it is told to support. That is his job; that is his "holy calling." His job—ten hours a day—is to have coffee and cake, or coffee and pie, or coffee and cigarettes (!) with a pastor's trustees, Sunday School superintendent, deacons (or relatives of the same) and make sure that the pastor either "shapes up" or "ships out." If you are an independent pastor, his job is to pressure your people into putting pressure on you to "jine" the Convention. If you are already "in," your people are to pressure you into using the Sunday School literature which has promoted the *RSV* for twenty-nine years. If the pastor of an independent Baptist church resigns, it will not be twenty-four hours before the "missionary" will show up in his little Chevy or Volkswagen and go to work on the "remnant" to get them to vote in a pastor who is chained hand and foot to Nashville or Louisville. (I know exactly what I am talking about, and you don't!)

After a "church split," the *missionary* will be glad to furnish you with some "good prospects" to "rebuild" your work. Every one of them will come from another Convention church and will be sent to your church to undermine its independency. *That is what is going on "down South."*

Now, here is where that matter of FAITH pops up. When a young man answers the call to the pastorate, he is supposed to have been exercised in the life of faith. "No pew can get any higher than the pulpit." If the preacher hasn't ever lived by faith, who in the congregation is going to learn anything about it? Well, here comes a real preacher. He gave up a \$10 to \$15 an hour job (\$4 to \$8 back in fifties and sixties) to go off to school. He and his family have lived in a trailer on rice, peanut butter, and canned meat for three to four years and have seen God produce clothes, medicine, gas, heat, food, and shoes out of nowhere. (We have had them here in school that finished three years with all of their bills paid while supporting a wife and two children at \$3 an hour in 1982.)

In comes the new preacher. When he gets there, he is actually the *only person* in the church that is really *qualified* to "run it." (We are assuming that he is a saved, Bible-believing young man.) The folks (Southerners in this case) who make up his congregation are people who have lived in that town all of their lives, and sometimes the same could be said of their grandparents and great grandparents. They know no more about "going out into a land that they knew not" than a cockroach in Alabama would know about Pike's Peak. They are "established" in the community with their "roots in": insurance policies, kin folk, "holdings," real estate, political connections, and the whole works. There might be one person in the congregation out of fifty who knew something about the life of faith.

Well, the young man comes in and proceeds to go by a charter that says “BY FAITH” (Heb. 11:4, 5, 7–8). To do this, he must believe *unsaved people go to hell—all unsaved people*. That would include the *aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews of his members*. The invisible world is real to him, as it should be (Col. 3:1–3), so away he goes trying to convince his flock that eternity is real; the “things not seen” (2 Cor. 4:17–18) are *permanent* (see Moses in Heb. 11:27); and their holdings, property, real estate, political friends, insurance policies, and kin folk are *TEMPORARY* (2 Cor. 4:18). He won’t be in that pulpit three years before they will be trying to jettison him. First year: “Nice kitty.” Second year: “Poor kitty.” Third year: “SCAT!” They knew nothing about living by an UNSEEN rule. They walk by SIGHT, and *not* by FAITH. When “push comes to shove” in the community, and the pastor takes a Scriptural position on a local issue (which he is supposed to take), he looks behind him and discovers that he is as alone as a “sparrow on a housetop” and his flock has vanished.

Now! They vote him out. They find all of the church members who have been absent for the last three years, drum up a secret business meeting, and vote him out. Out he goes!

Now! The *SPIRITUAL PEOPLE CAN RUN THE CHURCH!* Now, the folks who “have all the answers” and know how to “operate a church” are in charge! Not some mean “dictator”! (Do you *know what I mean, jelly bean?*)

Do you know what happens? Well, travel over to Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, and Tennessee for thirty years (like I have) and find out. Down goes the attendance, down goes the enrollment, and down goes the interest. In comes *another* preacher and then out he goes. Down go the offerings, down goes the attendance, and then finally, when the church that seats 200 is reduced to twenty people who own the property, it closes down. *The Convention has shut down more than 500 churches since 1950.* I have seen these professional church operators that “have all the answers.” *They couldn’t operate a popcorn stand on the midway.* They aren’t equipped. *They know nothing about FAITH.* They have their roots in the *world*, and they intend to keep them there. The pilgrim “life of faith” is as impossible for them as it was for Demas and Judas.”¹⁶⁶

37. The Faith of Noah 11:7

11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Noah’s faith involved the building of the ark, which involved several things:

1. It had never rained or flooded on the earth up to that time. Noah was supposed to believe that something would happen that had never happened before.
2. He had to obey not only in the building of the ark but he also had to follow the exact design and measurements that God had provided him. Boat-building may not have existed in Noah’s day, or if it did, it may not have been very advanced, which means Noah may have had no guild to follow in the building of the ark.
3. “Are you really sure that God told you to build an ark Noah? Are you sure you just didn’t imagine it? Look at all the time and effort you are spending!” You have to wonder how many times those thoughts went through Noah’s head! What if Noah did build it and nothing happened? He would have been a laughingstock for all time and his family would have lost any faith and confidence they might have had in him.
4. Look at the time involved. I don’t think he was 120 years in building the ark as some believe but it still could have taken a while to build. But even after it was finished, there

¹⁶⁶ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 240-243.

was a 7-day delay between God shutting Noah and his family in the ark and when the rain started (Genesis 7:10).

5. Noah may have gotten discouraged in the long building of the ark and all the mockery he had to endure while he was building, but he saw the project through to the end by faith. He didn't quit although all the world was against him.

Noah was “**moved by fear**”, involving the fear of God itself and the fear for his family if he disobeyed God's words about the Flood and the ark.

Noah's faith, fear and obedience condemned that generation that did none of this, and they all ended up being condemned in the end. Every day Noah picked up his lunch box and walked out to the construction site, he was condemning the world that refused to believe or obey. When a man does what God tells him to do and prospers, then his entire life is a reproach to any and all who disobeyed God in order to prosper. The life, faith and walk of a godly man should be a continual rebuke to the sinners and backsliders around him.

“**he condemned the world**” A successful faith will condemn the age in which that man lives. A man stands and proclaim he has faith in God. The world mocks that. But when God publicly validates and vindicates the faith of that man in from of his detractors, that man's faith and its results condemns those people. Noah would have been universally mocked for his public declarations of the upcoming flood and for his building of the ark. When the rains started, Noah was vindicated for his faith and the rest of the world was condemned by God for their lack of faith. The believer gets to say “I was right and you were wrong. I put my faith in God and you did not. You laughed at me, but who is laughing now?”

38. The Faith of Abraham 11:8-12, 17-19

Abraham showed two types of faith:

1. A patient faith that waited- 11:8-16
 - A. Regarding the Covenant
 - B. Regarding the birth of Isaac
2. A tested faith- 11:17-19
 - A. Regarding the sacrifice of Isaac

11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

This involves his faith in receiving the call of God in Genesis 12:1-3 when he was told to go out into a land he had never seen to go and receive promises made by God. What was involved?

1. Leave your family
2. Abram had already left Ur, where he had grown up
3. Go into a strange land that he had never seen and where he knew no one
4. God would then bless him, make his name great, give him that land and a seed

All just on the word and promise of God, with nothing to back it up!

“**Obeyed...**” Abraham partially obeyed. He did not fully obey the order of Genesis 12:1-3. He did not leave Lot behind nor did he leave his own parents behind (Genesis 11:31). In the New Testament the sins of the saints are simply overlooked. You didn't read one word in Hebrews 11:8, about Noah getting drunk, but he did! The New Testament writers are so led by the Holy

Spirit that they automatically, without forethought, skip over the sins of David, Noah, Sarah, Abraham, etc.

“he went out, not knowing whither he went”. This is not frequent today in American Christianity, but it does occasionally happen. A man leaves a well-paying job to go to Bible college, where he has to work two jobs and live in a trailer while studying for the ministry. He graduates and takes a church where he makes less than minimum wage in usually difficult circumstances. He had no contacts, no recommendations, no backing, no financial help. This man went out in faith, not knowing where he went. The same goes for missionaries, who take it a step further, in going in faith to a strange country, people, culture and language, in obedience to their own call.

11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Christian pilgrims are doing exactly the same thing. We are living in a strange country that is foreign to the people of God. They have strange customs and speech in this land. The way they worship is strange. They worship strange gods. We may live here but in reality, we only sojourn here as we are living in “tabernacles” and not in houses. We also are trying to get our children through this age unscathed, in our preparation for them to walk with God in their own generation.

11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham never saw the fulfillment of God’s promises or the fulfillment of the covenant. He saw some of it but not all of it. The ultimate fulfillment would come in the millennium, with the ultimate fulfillment of all of God’s promises. Abraham saw them “afar off” (Hebrews 11:13) but not near at hand. Abraham saw few of the promises fulfilled in his life, but he knew they would be, eventually.

Abraham’s faith then obeyed and waited. Patience is required as is waiting for God as His timetables are not our timetables. Hebrews 10:36 says **“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For ye have need of endurance in order that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.”**

Abraham knew his ultimate blessings would come after this life. Asahel Nettleton said, “The milk and honey lie beyond this wilderness world” and he lived in the days of the Second Great Awakening. The Christian should not be looking to this life for the milk and honey of heaven. We do not look for politics or finance for the ultimate fulfillment or consummation of the Christian life. Our hope is not in this world, else we, of all men, would have been most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19). We have no city here. It is not Rome, Mecca, Jerusalem, Pensacola, Greenville, Salt Lake City...none of them hold the ultimate hope for the Christian. Rather, we look for the New Jerusalem while Abraham would have looked for the millennial Jerusalem as laid out in Ezekiel 40-48. Only a fool would place his trust and hope of things in this fallen and wicked world. No worldly institution will serve us.

Abraham looked for a city but others who walked by faith looked for a country in Hebrews 11:14.

11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Genesis 18 only presents the doubt of Sarah regarding the promise of Isaac, but Hebrews gives us “the rest of the story”. Yes, her faith did lapse but it was there and after her lapse, she recovered and had faith in the promise that her dead womb would produce a child. The New Testament often paints the Old Testament saints in a better light. Lot is a good example of this. With all his carnality, we never would have thought he was a “just” man if Peter had never told us in 2 Peter 2:7.

11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Verses 11 and 12 show another aspect of Abraham's faith, although he shared this one with Sarah. God had promised a child to be born of Sarah although she was past childbearing age. A lack of faith on Sarah's part resulted in the birth of Ishmael in Genesis 16. But once past that lapse of faith, Abraham and Sarah saw their faith vindicated in the birth of Isaac.

39. Pilgrims and Strangers 11:13-16

11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Dying in faith means dying in the belief that the promises of God will be ultimately fulfilled in your children, even if you did not live long enough to see them fulfilled yourself. And this kind of faith was possible with none of the spiritual advantages listed below.

These are all examples of Old Testament faith. What kind of faith was this?

1. They had no Bible
 - A. We have all the promises and examples since we have the completed canon.
 - B. They had very little written revelation, like Abel, Abraham or Job
2. They had no local church for fellowship and support
3. They had few examples of history- 1 Corinthians 10:11, **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**
 - A. They had few historical examples to look back on.
4. They had no pastor to help them
5. They had no indwelling of the Holy Spirit
6. They had no finished atonement- on the “other side” of the cross
7. They died in faith (Hebrews 11:13), seeing these things “far off” although we see them in retrospect

Despite these limitations, the people in this chapter were able to do great things for God and put us later believers to shame.

The Spiritual Pilgrimage.

1. Genesis 23:4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

A. Abraham embraced the term, although he used "stranger".

2. Genesis 47:9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

A. Jacob confessed he was a stranger.

3. Exodus 6:4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

A. Israel would be a nation of pilgrims, typified by the tabernacle, which was a pilgrim structure.

4. Psalm 119:54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

A. The pilgrim has no song in this "strange land" (Psalm 137:4).

5. Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

A. Faith and a pilgrim spirit go together.

6. 1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

A. The stranger and pilgrim are equated.

B. Pilgrims were encouraged to avoid fleshly lusts but to pursue a life of holiness.

7. We are strangers on earth, with no continuing city here (Hebrews 13:14)

8. We live "without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12,13).

9. There is a "reproach" to being a pilgrim (Hebrews 13:13,14). Are you willing to bear it for the testimony of Christ? Many Christians are not for they are too entangled with the things of this world.

10. A puritan is one who stays within a decaying system with the hope of restoring it. A pilgrim is one who realizes it cannot be saved and separates himself from it to save his soul (and that of his family).

A. A pilgrim has left the city and has taken up that long and lonely walk to the heavenly city.

Abraham spoke using pilgrim language to the sons of Heth- Genesis 23:4 and to Abimelech- Genesis 20:13. David uses the language in Psalm 39:12- 12, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."

The Lord also calls Himself a stranger and a sojourner in Leviticus 25:23- The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. God is not "at home" on the planet He created.

"The picture of the pilgrim and the pilgrimage is one of wonder. Although not all of these words presented here are always connected directly with the pilgrim, as we might presently think of him, yet these are the words, along with their cognates, which will comprise the basic contexts of our study of the pilgrim. They are as follows: "pilgrim" (magur, Gen. 47:9; Ex. 6:4; Psa. 119:54; pareldemos, Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11); "stranger" (gar, "to draw self up, to sojourn," Ex. 6:4; magur, Gen. 17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1; noker, "one marked strange," Obad. 12; parolkeo, Lk. 24:18; paroldo, Acts 13:7; xenodocheo, 1 Tim. 5:10; phlloxenla, Heb. 13:12); "fugitive" (barlaeh, "one fleeing," Isa. 15:5; mibrech, Ezek. 17:21; naphal, "to move, shake, stagger, wander, Gen. 4:12 & 14; naphal, "to fall," II Kings 25:11; palit, "one who slips out," Jud. 12:4); "vagabond" (nud, "to move, wander, bemoan," Gen. 4:12 & 14; nua, Psa. 109:10; perlerchomal, Acts 19:13);

"offscouring" (sechl, "scrapings," Lam. 3:45; perlpsclma, I Cor. 4:13, "scrapings round about"); "filth" (perlkoth, "cleanings, offscourings," I Cor. 4:13); "spectacle" (theatron, "public spectacle or show," I Cor. 4:9); "fool" (moros, I Cor. 3:18; 4:10); "wanderer" (nadao, Isa. 16:2; Hos. 9:17; nad, Prov. 26:2; nod, Psa. 56:8; tuab, Jer. 48:12; planetea, Jude 13): "martyr" (Acts 22:20; Rev. 2:13; 17:6). It is obvious from these word studies that there is an overlapping between the very roots of the original words. The pilgrim is often the stranger, the fugitive, the vagabond, the offscouring, the filth, the spectacle, the fool, the wanderer, and the martyr."¹⁶⁷

What does this mean for the pilgrim in terms of his walk and ministry?

1. Your church will be small
 - A. You cannot compete with the modern church with its programs, money, resources and facilities.
 - B. The people you will have will be a people you can preach to and do something with. They will hunger and thirst after these things.
2. The preaching will be intense
 - A. Because of your deeper walk with God. The further and deeper you go with God, the deeper your sermons will be. And the more you will struggle and labor over them.
 - B. It is more difficult to preach these kinds of message. These are not "Simple Sermons for Sunday Morning". They are spiritual deep and demanding on both preacher and hearer. The preacher has labored over these truths and they are hard on him, as he must ensure he is not being a hypocrite as he preaches.
3. Few will visit and many will leave.
 - A. There will be some curiosity about your ministry and others will visit without knowing anything about you. But few of these visitors will come back a second time once they have had a sample of your burden.
4. Holiness will be preached
 - A. You will come to hate the world system.
 - B. The doctrine of sanctification will be precious and desired.
5. Separation will be precious
 - A. The world hated the Lord and the Lord is a stranger here (Leviticus 25:23, **The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.**), so how can you attempt to "fit in"?
6. Fellowship will be few and small
 - A. Most churches and pastors have gone over to the contemporary. It will be a precious thing to find another faithful church and pastor in your area.
7. Accusations will be many
 - A. Friends, families and other Christians will not understand you, your walk, your spiritual desires.

"What is the remnant for these last days? They are initially those who abide in Truth within a decaying Christian identity. They are the puritans who long to get back to what Judah is to be, to what Jerusalem is to be: a true biblical Christian who longs and prays for what should be a true biblical church in a given generation? The remnant are those people left still believing and living the Truth, or what remains for Truth when that, which at its beginning identified with truth, finally leaves truth. The remnant do all they can to stop the disease, the decay; they become the singular hinderer of the city of Christianity from getting further away from the Truth.

However, if the movement, the city, or the church does not change and return to its Lord, then the remnant is forced out of the city—either forced to leave by the city or by their own soul's conscience. They know they must not succumb to the spiritually decaying city or allow the

¹⁶⁷ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, page 314.

pervading leaven to leaven them. The remnant then becomes separated from its city identification, from its visible nativity, from its public family, and becomes in the eyes of organized Christianity, nomadic. This nomadic or refugee heart commences with an awakening call from God to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1, 2). Once this happens, it is a permanent departure from home, never to return. Like three heavy blows are the phrases about "country," "kindred," and "house." Even more moving is the mysterious uncertainty about the destination. This has been a recurring theme of refugee wanderings through many centuries.

From its inception, the Church has been "called out" to a larger destiny, and the remnant continues to be the "true church," ever being called out. The honorable departure is that of Abraham moving westward, with direction and exactness of walk, journeying a way divinely appointed by God. The remnant will always be a "sojourner," a true Hebrew in contrast to the organized, institutional Church. This is his lot in life especially in the days of apostasy. The remnant's exodus is with purpose, and his quest of journey is Christ in His fullness. He is on a spiritual journey, not a carnal wandering. He has made his exodus from Egypt, from sin, from the world, never to return. He not only has made his exodus from Egypt but also from Babylon, the fallen religious system of this world that controls the institutional Church.

The remnant will be slandered by the organized city. The institutional Church will try to hunt down the remnant, blackballing its voice from pulpits, churches, and conferences. Every day it becomes more obvious that the remnant is truly becoming a fugitive in the earth. The institutional Church of the End Time will also try to defame God's remnant in private conversations, defaming and maligning its reputation. They will try to suppress the influence of the remnant's preaching and living before others. Yes, God's remnant will be a fugitive all its days. Demeaning titles and labels will be aggressively branded upon it: legalist, fanatical religionist, close-minded person, misguided soul, cultist, fool, man-follower, etc. The names will even rise to mark it as a disorderly brother, a troublemaker, an enemy of God's people, and even an apostate. Yet in the sight of God individuals of the remnant are true children of God, the apple of His eye, found in His beloved Son; they are marked as part of the Lord of Hosts' remnant.

An individual of God's remnant becomes in the eyes of the world a refugee. Therefore, he must be wise in his flights, always looking for refuge, for sanctuary, a place of rest. Where does he find this refuge, sanctuary, and place of rest? He finds it in his Lord and in the moments of fellowship with other spiritual refugees. Sometimes his refuge is his home, a church in the home; sometimes it is a storefront church; and sometimes it is through a spiritual spring "streaming" from an Internet connection. The refugee is not looking for a kingdom or a temple here. Remnant ministries are not building their kingdoms here; they are tent dwellers with an altar. They are militant against the apostasy, yet they want to fight the fight of faith with a golden spirit. Their very lives within adorn their Lord; they are seeking and dwelling in His life as a land of blessing and fruitfulness.

Triumphantly, God gives them power over this world and the powers of sin. They live in this world, but it is for another world that they are longing. They are awake when others are asleep; they are hungry for God when others don't care; they are pursuing holiness of heart and life while others commend carnality and worldliness; and, they discern others who are of that remnant."¹⁶⁸

"Although there is evident in church history the corporate manifestation of the church, there is equally manifested, and very importantly so, the presence of the individual church within the remnant men and movements. These individual puritans and pilgrims of the grace of God have been a great blessing to each of their succeeding generations. When we enumerate the names

¹⁶⁸ H. T. Spence, "The Awakening Call to the End-time Remnant", Straightway, January-March, 2012.

of the Waldensians, the Hussites, the Bogomils, the Moravians, the Little Flock, the Albigenians, the Paulicians, the Swiss Brethren, the Puritans, the Pilgrims, the Holy Club, etc., we do not identify them with total endorsement. But we do thank God for these remnant forces which so often demonstrated certain characteristics of purity and holiness: simplicity, spirituality, piety, love, communion, fellowship, godliness, character, integrity, joy, refreshment, hospitality, congeniality, firmness, discipline, steadfastness, and other virtues. They were usually small in number, overlooked by the average historian, possessed a dynamic sense to exist, left no institutions, emphasized the Scriptures, taught communion with God, often lacked administrative leadership, held much in common, and often experienced martyrdom. If we were to call the names on the roster of such holy grace, we would certainly leave out someone, but we must at least designate a token of their identities in the earth. They are at least seen in the following: Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), Richard Baxter (1615-1691), Peter Bohler (1712-1775), Thomas Boston (1676-1732), William Bradford (1590-1657), David Brainerd (1718-1747), Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), John Calvin (1509-1564), William Carey (1761-1834), Peter Cartwright (1785-1872), Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), Thomas Coke (1747-1814), John Huss (1371-1415), Sam Jones (1847-1906), John Knox (1515-1572), Hugh Latimer (1485-1555), Martin Luther (1483-1546), George Muller (1805-1898), Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555), Johann von Staupitz (to 1524), William Tyndale (1494-1536), Peter Waldo (1140-1218), Isaac Watts (1647-1748), John Wesley (1703-1791), George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wycliffe (1302-1384), etc.

"Never has there been a time in history when we needed more examples of godliness and purity than in our own twentieth century. The world has all but lost an understanding of the glory of Christ in the life of the pure in heart. Who of us has not been richly blessed by Andrew A. Bonar's presentation of *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*? I continue to thank God for C. H. Spurgeon's "The Two Wesleys," a lecture delivered in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Lecture Hall, December 6, 1861. *The Life of Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley*, reveals as much piety and humility into the soul as theology to the mind. What will happen to the saints of God when we no longer see and read these spiritual classics of church history as both devotional and inspirational to our daily lives? We shall lose much in future generations when these fountains are no longer brought into our present deserts of theological presumptions."¹⁶⁹

11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

The fact that they are seeking a country shows they have not found it down here. They are looking elsewhere. The pilgrim makes it well known and is not ashamed to confess that he is a stranger and a pilgrim and that he is simply passing through and has no intention to stopping and living in this strange country where he finds himself. There is something better out there. He knows it and won't stop until he reaches it.

Notice they are seeking a country, not a city, although Hebrews 11:16 mentions both a city and a country. Countries have cities, so there is no kind of contradiction here. Heaven is a country that has a city, New Jerusalem. That is what the Church is looking for. Israel has a different country and city. Their inheritance in the Millennium and beyond is a regenerated earth with the city of Ezekiel 40-48 as its capital. Israel's eventual inheritance is physical and earthly, the Church's is spiritual and heavenly.

11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

¹⁶⁹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, pages 308-309.

If the country they were in was so bad that they found it necessary to leave in the first place, why return? Israel wanted to go back to Egypt at Kadesh Barnea when the 10 spies brought back the evil report of Canaan. But God would not suffer them to return. God put all that time and energy in bringing them out of Egypt that He was not going to allow them to return and let all that go to waste. If you are saved, you may backslide to the point where you try to return to the old life, but God will not allow you to backslide all the way. You will instead wander in the spiritual wilderness for the rest of your life, in a land of limbo between Egypt (a type of the world) and Canaan (a type of the Christian life). You will wander, without purpose, focus, direction or joy. The backslider is the most miserable person on earth, and he is caught between two countries. He's not comfortable with God's people but the world doesn't want him!

In *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, a man named "Pliable" initially sets off with Christian on his pilgrimage, full of hope and excitement. When they hit the Slough of Despond, Pliable became offended and went back home, forsaking his earlier profession. "Now I saw in my dream that by this time PLIABLE was got home to his house again. So his neighbors came to visit him; and some of them called him a wise man for coming back; and some called him a fool for hazarding himself with CHRISTIAN: others, again, did mock at his cowardliness, saying, "Surely, since you began to venture, you would not have been so base as to have given out for a few difficulties:" so PLIABLE sat sneaking among them. But at last got he more confidence; and then they all "turned tail," and began to deride poor CHRISTIAN behind his back. And thus, much concerning PLIABLE." This false professor went back and was initially mocked and was initially rejected. This is the plight of the backslider, who turns back, usually over a few trifling difficulties.

11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

There is a better country, a better world, a better life, that we can know or imagine. It is better than this world, with all of its sin, corruption and misery. It is better than America and all that nations of man that are or have been or will be.

There is something better than this life and it lies beyond the grave. Israel came out of Egyptian slavery and found something better. When they saw Canaan, even the unfaithful spies had to admit it was everything God said, and more. To refuse to enter such a good land and to actually desire to return to bondage shows a depraved and unregenerated heart. A true believer will never want to go back to Egypt under any circumstance. Even if he never makes it to Canaan, he'd rather stay in the wilderness and at least be in sight of the Promised Land than to return to the land of bondage. They have seen that good land and they will never even consider going back to Egypt for even a moment. They will press forward through all storms and trials, deeming them to be worth it for the prize and rewards that await. They must make a clean break with the old life in Egypt, burn any and all bridges back to Egypt and set their face toward Canaan and make themselves a new life's motto "Canaan or Bust!"

The pilgrim desires a better country, better than anything this world has to offer. If we love this world better than the one that God has promised us, we have a serious spiritual problem. The pilgrim should consider whatever earthly country he is in as a strange place. Paul lived in the glory and power of the Roman Empire, but he said "there is yet a better country". We may be thankful to be Americans, but "there is yet a better country".

We have never seen that land or that city. We read of it and believe what we read by faith. But none of us has seen or heard of the things that God has prepared for them (1 Corinthians 2:9, **But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**). No

doubt the earthly Canaan was "**a land flowing with milk and honey**" (Exodus 3:8) and a land "**beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth**" (Psalm 48:2). But even such a land could not be compared with heaven. Once a person gets a vision of heaven, the best of earthly prospects grows dim.

What kind of a country is this that we seek?

1. A country where God is honored.
2. A country without sin.
3. A country without corruption.
4. A country of peace.
5. It is a heavenly country for a heavenly people.

A. Philippians 3:20, **For our conversation is in heaven;¹⁷⁰ from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

There is no such country on earth. The United States may be a great country but it has had many flaws in his history and cannot said to be a Christian country in any way. Stop looking for this country and city on earth. It doesn't exist and cannot. There is no Utopia.¹⁷¹ We get so wrapped up in our citizenship, patriotism, nationalism and "Americanism" that we forget that we are ultimately citizens of heaven and that we have no continuing city here. This does not mean that we neglect our earthly identifications and duties, but we rather subordinate them to a higher kingdom. We have a higher King than the President. We have a greater country than America. We have a greater citizenship than American citizenship. Right now, we live in exile but the hope is that we will soon be going home". We have no continuing city here, no home here (Hebrews 13:14, **For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**)

Have you ever been in a foreign country for any period and gotten homesick? You find the country you are visiting interesting, but you tell yourself that you are an American and the affairs of this country really don't pertain to you. I spent ten days in the Dominican Republic in 2024 during the time they were having national elections. I knew nothing of the candidates or parties or polices or candidates and frankly, I didn't really care. This wasn't my country. I was only visiting and I was the citizen of another country. So it should be with us on a spiritual level. I'm an American, and I was born here. I do take an interest in the affairs of my native land, but as Christian, I am much more concerned about the affairs of my true home, heaven.

The "**city**" mentioned is the same one we seek in Hebrews 13:14. We desire a better country than the earthly one we live in now and seek a city that has been prepared by God (as Jesus promised in John 14:3, **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**).

38. The Faith of Abraham 11:8-12, 17-19, continued

11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

This is the third example of the faith of Abraham, in Genesis 22. God to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, a command which made no sense. If Isaac was the son of promise and of the covenant why kill him? Unless God was going to raise Isaac from the dead? Abraham must have had faith in a resurrection in that case, as in Hebrews 11:19.

¹⁷⁰ In this context, you could say that our citizenship is in heaven, too.

¹⁷¹ That word actually means "nowhere". It is a place that does not exist.

This also involved a faith that Abraham believed if God took away a good thing in Isaac, He would give Him a better thing in return.

The first two examples of Abraham's faith demonstrated a faith that waited and was patient. This aspect of Abraham's faith demonstrated a faith that was tried. An untried faith is a useless faith and a weak faith. Everyone may claim to have faith but until it has been put to the test, it is an empty claim. And what a test it was! Sacrifice your own son, the heir of the promise who was born by a miracle. For Abraham to obey, in faith of the resurrection, demonstrated that he was indeed a man of faith.

11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Not in Ishmael. The covenant would go through Isaac and, by extension, the Jews. It would not go through the Arabs through Ishmael.

11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham saw the resurrection of the Lord in type and he was glad (John 8:56, **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**).

40. The Faith of Isaac 11:20

11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Isaac is a man with a unique presentation in Scripture. He is a bridge between the more active faiths of Abraham and Jacob. Relatively little is said about him in comparison with Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. Isaac was a submissive man in relation to his father, as seen in his obedience in Genesis 22. But as he grew older, Isaac's submission developed into passivity. Being submissive and being passive are not the same thing. Submission is still an active choice, but you don't need to do anything to be passive.

In Genesis 27, Isaac intended to give his blessing to Esau, but Isaac was going to do it by tradition and not by faith. Esau as firstborn so he would get the blessing, despite Esau's carnality. But it was apparent that God was going to work through Jacob instead. Rebekah schemed to ensure Jacob would get the blessing and Isaac was deceived, trusting the smell of Esau's clothes instead of discerning the voice of Jacob (Genesis 27:22-27). Rebekah was determined to "help God out" in helping Jacob get the blessing. When Isaac realized that he had been deceived, he stated that Jacob was the recipient of the blessings (Genesis 27:39,40). Jacob got the blessing God intended despite Isaac's failure.

Isaac ultimately blessed Jacob by faith, probably a reference to Genesis 28:1-4. The blessing was obtained by fraud in Genesis 27 but was given by faith in Genesis 28. Isaac learned a lesson in Genesis 27 that the will of God will be done even in our failures. Isaac failed in Genesis 27 because he relied on his senses. But he blessed Jacob by faith in Genesis 28 when he learned that God will have his will done even in the midst of our failures. God does not need us to fulfill His plans, but He does want us to learn to co-operate with his will. If Isaac doubted that Jacob was the rightful heir of the promise in Genesis 27, there was no doubt left in Genesis 28. We must have faith that God's will shall be done, even if man proves unfaithful (Romans 3:3,4, **For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written,**

That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged; 2 Timothy 2:13, **If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.**) and that working out of God's purposes will be for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). Isaac would have preferred that the blessing go through Esau, but God overruled and Isaac (and Esau!) had to learn to accept that as being the will of God.

The sins of the Old Testament saints are overlooked in Hebrews through the grace of God. This is because these sins were lapses and not patterns of life. All men fail, falter and doubt but this is not the pattern of their lives. They are men and women of faith but like all sinners, they tire, they stumble, the flesh occasionally rises up, but we are still walking by faith. Isaac does not come across as a great giant of faith in Genesis 27 but the "Hebrews view" of him show Isaac overcoming his failures in Genesis 27 to exercise this faith in Genesis 28. The New Testament does not excuse or justify the sins of the Old Testament saints. The New Testament simply does not mention them, as they would have come under the forgiving provision of the blood of Christ, applied in an Old Testament context.

41. The Faith of Jacob 11:21

11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Jacob is hardly presented as a man of faith through most of his life. He was a self-sufficient man, relying on his wits, his fast talking and his scheming. As we read through his biography in Genesis, we see God gradually breaking him down, especially in Genesis 28 at Bethel and Genesis 32 at Peniel. God also used various circumstances to break Jacob's self-dependence down. Living by your own skills and talents takes no faith and God finally brought Jacob to the point where she stopped living by his own wits and start relying on God.

"blessed both the sons of Joseph" This refers to Genesis 48:1-14 when Jacob was blessing the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. The blessing of faith did involve Jacob's blessing of his own sons in Genesis 49 but of Joseph's sons. Jacob adopted his two grandsons to replace Reuben and Simeon (Genesis 48:5, **And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.**). Reuben, the firstborn, defiled his father's concubine and was unstable as water (Genesis 49:4, **Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.**). Simeon, along with Levi, were condemned because of their anger and later murder of the men of Shechem (Genesis 49:5-7, **Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.**). Both the first and second born of Jacob failed so they were replaced by the sons of Joseph. The faith involved here was that Ephraim and Manasseh would fulfill the hopes that Reuben and Simeon should have fulfilled. Through their unfaithfulness and weaknesses, both were set aside. But God always has a provision for when man fails. When Reuben and Simeon fail, God has Ephraim and Manasseh ready to fulfill his will. This can be a great hope regarding our children, that if some fail to follow God and carry on our spiritual legacy, God may turn to our grandchildren instead.

This can also apply to the ministry. Jacob was obviously concerned for the continuance of the covenant and for the promotion of his own legacy. The two sons who should have fulfilled both were set aside. But God had other provisions in place. We may put much hope in a young man, or even our son, to carry on our ministries, only to be disappointed. We may not get to choose our own successors. But since the ministry is not ours but God's, it is God who chooses the successor of a ministry. Even when we think that a ministry has ceased due to the death of its leader, God has a man ready to step in a fulfill that role to bring that hope to completion.

At the end of his life, we also see Jacob worshipping. He did some occasional worshipping at Bethel and Peniel but now, at the end, he is truly worshipping God in full faith. Jacob has learned to stop relying on his wits and schemes but rather to worship God and to submit to His will. It takes faith to do that, something that Jacob took a lifetime to finally develop. True worship is the ultimate expression of faith as you are declaring your dependence upon God.

"leaning upon the top of his staff" Jacob leaned on his staff, which is something often used by a pilgrim. The phrase marks the end of his long pilgrimage. He died in Egypt, outside of the land promised to his fathers. He died in pilgrim faith, that one day, God would bring his children and their descendants back into the land of promise (Genesis 48:21, **And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.**).

In Jacob's life, we see a man who is slowly but surely growing in faith. You don't see much faith in his life before Genesis 28, which was his initial encounter with God. But Jacob does acknowledge God in Genesis 28. However, we do not see much spirituality in Jacob from Genesis 29-31. He meets God again in Genesis 32 and he does pray out of fear in Genesis 32:9-12. But there I still not much prayer or evidences of faith until Jacob ends up in, of all places, Egypt. Sometimes, living among the heathen does more to draw spirituality out of us than living among the saints. This is why oftentimes Christians who had to go through public school and public universities are stronger than Christians who came out of Christian schools as they had to fight for their faith daily while in Egypt. Jacob did not grow much in Canaan, but he finally blossomed in Egypt.

42. The Faith of Joseph 11:22

11:22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

The reference is to Genesis 50:24,25, **And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.** Although Israel was firmly settled in Egypt, Joseph knew that God would visit Israel and lead them back to Canaan. Whether Joseph foresaw the slavery that would develop after his death is uncertain.

God didn't leave so much as one bone of His Son in Egypt (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9,10). He called His Son **"out of Egypt"** (Matthew 2:15) as He called His people out of Egypt in the Exodus. God may allow His people to stay in Egypt for a season but ultimately, He will call them out. God's people may have to sojourn in Egypt for a season but "this world is not our home". This is what the rapture does, as it calls us out of Egypt into heaven. Joseph lived most his life in Egypt but had the hope he would eventually be laid to rest in Canaan. He realized that this life only had a limited supply of blessings but, as Ashael Nettleton once said, "The milk and honey lie beyond

this wilderness world". Joseph was a great man in Egypt, but his heart was elsewhere. This is another reason why Bible-believers have no use for Bible manuscripts that come out of Egypt. So should it be with all of God's people.

"O rich men, make this a main point of concern, prove that you are not worldlings. You have to frequent the exchange, to visit the bank, to handle large sums of money, but be not money-grubbers, rakers up of gold; be not covetous or grasping. Prove that though in Egypt you are not Egyptians. May this be your prayer, "May God grant I may never so live as to be mistaken for a man of this world who has his portion in this life. My portion is above. Whatever I enjoy here, heaven is my heritage."¹⁷²

Joseph was a man of faith through his life. He had the dreams about his exaltation (Genesis 37:5-11). When he was sold into slavery and eventually wound up in prison, it seemed impossible for those dreams to come to pass. But we never read about Joseph questioning God or despairing of the dreams. He had faith that the dreams would be fulfilled but he may have had no way of understanding how or in what time they would be fulfilled. The fulfillment took a long time to develop, but when it did, the fulfillment came rapidly (Genesis 41). And the final state of Joseph and the extent of his exaltation (second only to Pharaoh in authority) was probably far beyond even what Joseph may have imagined. This shows again that the Lord judges men by a different standard than we do. We would have looked at all these events in Joseph's life and lauded his faith in these circumstances, but God chooses this event at Joseph's deathbed to hold up as the prime example of his faith. We are very poor judges of what God will most delight in? Very likely when we least please ourselves God is best pleased with us. Joseph's deathbed testimony was the culmination and fruit of a lifetime of faith.

In reviewing Joseph's life, Thomas Manton noted "As the Hebrew tongue must be read backward, or as the sun going back ten degrees in Ahaz, dial was a sign of Hezekiah's recovery; so is providence to be read backward. Joseph was made a slave that he might be made a favourite; who would have thought that the dungeon had been the way to the court? that error is a means to clear truth? and bondage maketh way for liberty?"¹⁷³

"All our lifetime we should be preparing for our dying speech and valediction, that we may not go out in a snuff, but may take our leave from the world with honour to God and comfort to ourselves. Christians, is your dying speech ready? Consider, there is no dissembling then, you must be able to speak it in truth of heart, and it had need be pressing, and serious, and stirring, for you shall never speak for God more in the world. I say, Is it ready? Can you call to mind promises? Can you yield up your souls to God? Are you furnished with experiences to confirm others? A Christian is not to die like a beast, to be only passive, merely to yield to the necessity of nature, and there is an end. It is a harder matter to die well than you are aware. Can you take your soul in your hand, and yield it up to God in a confidence of the promises?"¹⁷⁴

"Moreover, if I am to gather from the text that the Holy Spirit has singled out the brightest instance of faith in Joseph's whole life, it is beautiful to remark that the grand old man becomes most illustrious in his last hour. Death did not dim, but rather brightened, the gold in his character. On his death-bed, beyond all the rest of his life, his faith, like the setting sun, gilds all around with glory; now that heart and flesh fail him, God becomes more than ever the strength of his life, as he was soon to be his portion forever. Is it not a grand thing for a Christian

¹⁷² Charles Spurgeon, "Joseph's Bones", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon 966.

¹⁷³ Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 462.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, pages 458-459.

to do his very best action last, being strongest in divine power when his own weakness is supreme? We should desire to serve God in youth, in health, in strength, with all the might we have, but it may happen to us that, like Samson, our last act may be the greatest. Many a good man groans over his life, that having done all he can it is still unsatisfactory; but perhaps the Master may be intending to give him a crowning mercy, just at the fast, and make the place of his departure to be the scene his most glorious victory, so that he may enter into heaven wearing the laurels of faith, there to cast them at the Savior's feet. Joseph, at any rate, is a noble instance of faith's conquest over death."¹⁷⁵

43. The Faith of Moses 11:23-29

11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

More attention is given to the faith of Moses in this chapter than any other Old Testament character and this is not surprising. Moses is the dominant figure in the Old Testament so it is natural that more attention might be devoted to him. To survey the life of Moses can be a massive undertaking.

To summarize the points cited here in relation to the life of Moses where his faith was noted:

1. Faith by his parents to commit him to the waters to escape death (Hebrews 11:23).
2. When he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's Daughter (Hebrews 11:24).
 - A. This would involve renouncing any claim he might have had to the throne of Egypt. If you think about it, if Moses did become the new Pharaoh, he could have freed Israel by royal decree. Instead, he chose the route he did, maybe because he did not have much hope of ever ascending to the throne.
 - B. Though brought up as an Egyptian, Moses would eventually Egypt. Jews would have to consider this. In their wanderings, many Jews adopted the culture of whatever country they were living in, at the expense of their "Jewishness". This is fine up to a point, but Tribulation Jews may have to make some sort of similar renunciation. They might be protected from persecution to a point if they stayed secular. "I'm an American first, then a Jew". This may have been Moses' initial attitude until he determined to fully embrace his Hebrew heritage. That "great renunciation" would ultimately prove to be very costly to Moses. The Tribulation Jew may find himself in the same situation. Will he embrace his secular nationality to try to save his skin or will he fully embrace his religious heritage over any secular claims and bear the full brunt of Tribulation persecutions?
3. When he cast his lot in with the nation of Israel, and the reproach it brought (Hebrews 11:25).
 - A. In the Tribulation, this "reproach" would manifest itself into persecution.
4. He forsook Egypt, figuratively and physically (Hebrews 11:27).
 - A. Egypt is well-known as a type of the world system. Will the Tribulation Jew renounce the world system to fully embrace his religious heritage and with it, bring upon himself the full wrath of the Tribulation judgments?
5. In relation to the first Passover and the resulting Exodus (Hebrews 11:28).
6. Passing through the Red Sea (Hebrews 11:29).

¹⁷⁵ Charles Spurgeon, "Joseph's Bones", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon 966.

The faith mentioned in verse 23 was demonstrated by his parents, especially by Moses' mother, when she cast him upon the eaters in that little ark in the light of Pharaoh's decree to kill all the baby boys. It is natural for parents to go to whatever lengths they can to protect their children but here, the basis of that action was faith, not instinct or preservation.

11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

That took faith because that would upset Pharaoh, maybe to the point of having Moses executed. It would have also upset Moses' stepmother for no doubt, Moses loved her very much. To renounce everything she did for him, including saving his life, must have been a very difficult thing to do. This must have involved some public renunciation by Moses, although it is not directly recorded in Exodus.

"That faith is a grace that will teach a man openly to renounce all worldly honours, and advancements, and preferments, with the advantages annexed thereto, when God calls us from them, or we cannot enjoy them with a good conscience."¹⁷⁶

11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Psalms 84:10 (my favorite psalm) says **"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."** Blessed is the man who comes to see that the pleasures of sin are short-lived and expensive. Better to spend one day in the house of God with God and His people than a lifetime among the wicked.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" It is better to suffer with the righteous than to prosper with the wicked. Everyone must make this choice of "with whom will I cast my lot, the world or the remnant?" In the Tribulation, every believer must make this choice, either to follow the Antichrist for relative ease and safety, or follow Christ with the persecutions and sufferings that will surely go with it.

"Pleasures of sin" Moses chose afflictions over the pleasures of sin by faith. The worldling would choose the pleasures of sin over afflictions. The least sin is a sin, and it deserves hell. The greatest affliction is better than the least sin. Sin separates us from God, but suffering and affliction does not, and therefore the greatest affliction is to be chosen before the least sin. Affliction brings inconvenience upon the body only, but sin brings inconvenience upon the soul. An afflicted state may consist with the love of God, but a sinful state cannot. Affliction may be good and may work out for good (Romans 8:28), but sin is never good. Affliction is sent to prevent sin; but sin must not be committed to prevent affliction. The evil of suffering is but for a moment: (2 Corinthians 5:17, **Our light affliction, which is but for a moment...**) but the evil of sin is forever. We lose nothing so much by suffering as we do by sin. In sufferings and persecutions, we lose the favor of men, but by sins we lose the favor of God. To suffer is not in our choice, we shall not be responsible for that; but to sin, that is in our choice whether we will or no. Afflictions are laid upon us, we are not active but passive only so far as in bearing them we submit to the will of God, but the Lord lays affliction upon us; but we never sin but by our own consent. Afflictions are inflicted, sins are committed, and they will be required of us because they are our own voluntary acts. An afflicted man may die cheerfully, but a sinner

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 477.

cannot. Sin is contrary to the new nature, to the noblest being; but affliction is only contrary to the old nature.

Sin does have its pleasure and only a fool would deny that. The devil is very careful to paint sin in such a pleasant light, else he could not market its wares as well as he does. Men would not pursue sin if it was not so pleasurable. But what these men do not realize is that the pleasure is temporary and expensive.

“Examine your faith by your self-denial. Have you gone back any degrees for Christ? What have you refused for him? But because everyone is not put upon such actual eminent trial, inquire, doth faith take off your hearts from the things of the world? Your weanedness from the world will be an evidence of your faith; when you have low thoughts of the world, of the honours, and pleasures, and treasures of it. It may be we may speak contemptibly of the world, but this is not enough; look to the settled disposition of your souls. Two things you may know it by; what is your first care, and choice delight?”¹⁷⁷

11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Better to be in the wilderness with God's people and God's blessing than to be in the throne room of Egypt without God's blessing. The reproach that comes with following Christ is of infinitely more value than all the vast treasures of Egypt, or the world. You may suffer reproach and poverty in this life but you will be richly rewarded in the next life. Those who are rich in this life but who are without God will suffer eternal shame and poverty in the next life.

We are exhorted to go outside the camp where Christ, bearing His reproach in Hebrews 13:13. Christ is outside the camp of this world, outside the camp of religion, arts, culture, media, government. He is not in those institutions because He was expelled from them long ago. We are to go where He is. We are to have the pilgrim attitude and heart that He wants to have. Moses left the world and cast in his lot with a people bearing the reproach of slavery. He counted the cost and determined that to suffer reproach with the people of God will pay off more than staying in the world and seeking its honors. That payoff will not be in this life, but will come hereafter.

What does this reproach look like? Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, **For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”** He also describes it in 2 Corinthians 4:8-11: **“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.**

Also consider the following verses:

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Manton, *Thomas. By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 489.

1. Psalm 22:6, **But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.**
2. Psalm 31:11, **I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.**
3. Psalm 69:7, **Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.**
4. Psalm 102:8, **Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.**
5. Psalm 109:25, **I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.**

“Self-seekers are many times the greatest self-losers, for God will cross them; God will appear against them, for he loves to resist the proud.”¹⁷⁸

11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

To “**forsake**” means to leave for good, with no intention of going back.

Moses fled Egypt because of the murder charge hanging over his head. The “wrath of the king” may have been more associated with his renunciation of his place in the palace than it was escaping punishment for murdering the Egyptian overseer.

The “not fearing the wrath of the king” may also apply to the contest with Pharaoh in the Ten Plagues. Initially, Moses was timid and uncertain, but as the contest went on, Moses got bolder and eventually lost any and all fear he might have initially had of Pharaoh.

“**Seeing Him Who is invisible**” takes faith but Moses did see physical manifestations of God on several occasions (Exodus 3 at the burning bush, the 40 days Moses was on the mount with God, when Moses saw the back parts of God in Exodus 33:18-23).

“Nothing that seems to be impossible can be done without faith in Him Who is invisible”.¹⁷⁹

11:28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

That first Passover of Exodus 12 was held in faith that:

1. The blood on the doorposts would protect them from the Destroyer. How could blood on a doorpost protect your firstborn from being killed, even if you believed in Moses’ warning concerning that judgment?
2. They would soon be leaving Egypt and their bondage.

11:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

It would have taken faith to cross the divided Red Sea! There were walls of water maybe a hundred feet high on either side, dry land down the middle of the path that could have stretched

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 488.

¹⁷⁹ Source unknown.

10 miles or so. It took faith to walk that path, wondering if the walls of water might collapse and drown you! They could not go back, lest they be captured by Pharaoh's and be returned to Egyptian bondage. The same fate awaited them if they stood still. They could flee to the right and or the left as those escape paths were blocked by high mountains. And to engage the Egyptians in combat would be suicide. The only way to salvation was forward, by marching into the Red Sea. It seemed to be suicide, but God provided the way of escape by parting the waters, but the people still had to have the faith to avail themselves of God's salvation! We must learn to trust God even if in so doing it appears that we are walking into certain destruction. But God would not tell His people to **"go forward"** (Exodus 14:15) just to see them destroyed after all He did to secure their redemption.

Isaiah 43:2, **When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee...** This verse certainly applies!

The author of Hebrews verifies the fact that Israel crossed the Red SEA, not any mythical "Sea of REEDS" that unbelievers are always yammering about. The path of the exodus is below, as mentioned in Exodus 14. As seen by the map below, we are placing Mt. Sinai in southern Jordan/Saudi Arabia, not in the traditional place on the Sinai Peninsula. We have Israel crossing at the Gulf of Aqaba, not the Gulf of Suez. There is no need to reference any sort of "Sea of Reeds" or "Bitter Lakes" as neither location has any bearing at all on the exodus.



"British Admiralty charts show the Gulf of Aqaba has an underwater natural land bridge which gently slopes downward and then upward into Arabia. This distance is approximately eight miles across the site of the Nuweiba beach."¹⁸⁰

"It so happens that at Nuweiba there is a flat underwater road across Yam Suph. Typical of the Gulf of Aqaba are high mountain ranges up to 2,600 metres in height which enclose the gulf. These mountains mostly go straight down into the sea. The Gulf of Aqaba has two deep basins: the northern is approximately 900 metres deep, and the southern approximately 1,900 metres deep. The usual maritime maps of the area are of limited value. The reason is that it is so deep

¹⁸⁰ David Hoffman, *The Common Man's Reference Bible*, page 115.

and with no islands, so there have not been any detailed surveys. Therefore, it is not unusual that relatively large vessels have no sonars or maritime maps when trafficking the Gulf of Aqaba.

“The Qumran fragment from the first century BC, states that the split water was standing as walls on either side of the Hebrews.

“At Nuweiba the coast is totally different. The Nuweiba peninsula is very flat and goes 3.5 km straight out into the gulf. This peninsula is so big that it is easily recognizable on all maps and from satellites. From the Saudi Arabian side it is a similar, although not so pronounced, situation. The Saudi Arabian coast opposite Nuweiba is very flat and also similar to the Nuweiba character. Massive erosion has in ancient time washed out huge amounts of sand and gravel from the surrounding mountains (that today is solid rock) via the wadis. This has generated the flat areas on both sides. Consequently one can expect these flat areas to continue under water.

“Is this the case at Nuweiba? Official data from the US National Geophysical Data Center suggest that there is a distinct underwater road from coast to coast with a maximum depth of approximately 100 metres. However, this data is not reliable since there is some 9 km between each point of measurement, and the computerized extrapolation of data based on such great distances between points of measurements is statistically weak.

“Maps of unknown identity actually show an underwater road character at Nuweiba. A Russian map suggests an underwater shallow area between Nuweiba and the Saudi Arabian coast. At Nuweiba, the distance from coast to coast is approximately 14 km. From the Saudi Arabian coast it is as shallow as 87 m, 4 km out from the coast line. If this is correct and transferable to both sides, it corresponds to a gradient of 2.2%.

“After studying the underwater road from the Nuweiba side by a remote controlled underwater camera, the following data was acquired. The bottom was followed every meter at 0.458 nautic mile (848 metres) with the camera. The starting point was approximately 1,200 metres from the coast line. The depth at that point was 28 metres. From this point the bottom was extraordinary flat to the end of the measurement where it was 82 metres deep. The depth was confirmed by the depth from the camera transferred to the surface and the length of the cable to the camera. The seabed was similar to the peninsula in terms of the character of the ground, as well as in width and the very pronounced flatness with no obstacles. The figures represent overviews of the sea-bed down to 82 metres. The very flat character of the underwater bridge is also found on the Saudi Arabian coast....

“A map produced by J.K. Hall and Z. Ben-Avraham at The Israel Geological Survey exists. This map, which is based on the best available data and the survey can confirm two matters: a broad underwater road at Nuweiba between the Nuweiba Peninsula and the Saudi Arabian coast; and a flat gradient. This data is in accordance with the underwater camera measurements and the Russian data although the Israeli measurements were done more extensively and in deeper waters. The Israeli data suggest a maximum depth at approximately 800 metres. It should be noted that the actual curves from the Israel Geological Survey have been extrapolated from a number of measurements, and that there might be more shallow areas at the suggested crossing site. A calculation of the crossing, based on the Israeli data, indicate a mean downhill gradient of 12% (west coast) and an uphill (east coast) gradient of 15%.

“The underwater land road of the investigated area has the following characteristics:

Very limited vegetation (some grass-like plants in limited areas)

No corals (except some minor corals at the shore line)

No pieces of rock

No mountainous formations

No steep slopes

No organic sediments (like mud)

Extremely flat

Very broad (at least 2 km)

The seabed is covered by sand and gravel

“This means that if the water is removed and the gravel is dried, there is solid ground to walk on. With a very flat area and no obstacles this gradient is possible to walk across. From the texts (Exodus and Josephus) it is clear that there were no obstacles on the seabed suggesting a flat seabed. The total distance with the different calculations of gradients is in the range of 14.5-22 km.”¹⁸¹

44. An Example of Faith- Jericho 11:30

11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

1. The action exercised— faith.
2. The event that followed— the walls of Jericho fell down.
3. The manner how it was accomplished— After they were compassed about seven days.

This took a lot of faith. In Joshua 6:1, Jericho was straitly shut up. No one went in or out. They were well prepared for the expected long siege. Conventional wisdom called for a siege followed by the usual warfare. But God had a different plan. March around the city once a day for six days. On that seventh day, march around the city seven times, then blow the horn and have all the people shout and the walls would fall, allowing Israel to attack. What madness was this? No doubt the inhabitants of the city laughed and mocked Israel as they marched around the city daily and the Israelites themselves must have wondered what in the world they were doing. They had to have faith in God's plan and instructions if they were going to get the victory. Can you obey God in faith when God's will seem like folly and makes absolutely no sense? The means seemed ridiculous in the eye of natural reason; for what could seven priests blowing of seven rams' horns be to overturn such great and strong walls? But God's command and promise will do great matters, for he can bring his ends to pass by means that have not any natural aptitude or resources to accomplish.

Remember, **“the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”** (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).” Faith must use such means as God hath appointed, though they seem weak and contrary to reason.

“Keeping to God's direction, you must wait his leisure, or tarry for the time and season which God hath appointed. Six days the wall stands fast, not a stone stirred, and for a good part of the seventh, but upon the evening of the seventh day all comes tumbling down: Hab. ii. 3, ‘The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.’ Every dispensation of God hath its prefixed period; as the mercy, so the timing of the mercy is merely in God's hand. It is not always ready at our beck and call, but we must wait God's time, who hath his seasons of afflicting and trial as well as of delivering. We must not miscarry through weakness or haste, either give over as discouraged, or break out into any unlawful action to help ourselves: Isa. xxviii. 16, ‘He that believeth will not make haste.’ It is in vain to hope, but while we are waiting and acting in our place and calling. For the promoting of God's kingdom in the world we must tarry God's leisure. We can neither prevent nor put off God's time.”¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Lannert Moeller, *The Exodus Case*, pages 213-216.

¹⁸² Thomas Manton, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*, page 539.

God destroyed Jericho in judgment. Let none of us build Jericho again. Joshua laid a strong curse on those that would rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26 "Cursed be the man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son). This curse was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34, "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun." Cursed are they that revive old superstitions, practices and heresies that God has overthrown.

45. The Faith of Rahab 11:31

11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

This goes back to Joshua 2. It was probably common knowledge that Israel was going to attack Jericho as it would have been the first city Israel would encounter after crossing the Jordan River. Israel, while large in number, was a limited army in terms of equipment, material and leadership, so the inhabitants of Jericho had little reason to worry. But Rahab was of a different mind. She knew how the God of Israel had destroyed the most powerful kingdom in the world in Egypt and how He cleared the way by destroying opposing nations as they marched to Canaan. She believed the additional warning of the spies although no one else did. Her countrymen knew all of this and dismissed it to their own destruction. Rahab was alone in putting any faith in the warnings of God and it paid off by the saving of her life and family and anyone else who may have also heeded the warning and took refuge in her house, protected by the scarlet thread. But when you leave the City of Destruction by faith, you may leave it alone, with your family refusing to come with you, just as Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Rahab may have been a harlot, but she may or may not have been running an actual house of prostitution at the time she received the Jewish spies. She was no doubt a woman of some ill repute which makes her faith and deliverance by grace all the greater. She had the reputation and legacy of a harlot. She was also a Gentile, one of a number of Gentiles who, at times, exercised more faith in God than the Jews did. God led these spies to probably one of the worst houses in Jericho, morally. The grace of God is seen in this. The sinners who are in the greatest need of a visitation from God will receive it. God seems to delight to seek out the chief of sinners in any given area to manifest His grace and goodness to and through. We sin as men, but He pardons as God.

Another blessing that Rahab had was that she was honorably married to a prince in Israel, and one of the ancestors of Christ, namely, to Salmon, father of Boaz (Matthew 1:5, **And Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab**). God can heap honor and blessing upon those that trust in him.

Just because Rahab had a bad reputation did not mean she could believe God, put faith in His word or be saved. She had heard about what God did to Egypt and for Israel. Everyone knew it. She said In Joshua 2:9,10, **I know that the LORD hath given you the land. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you.** This led to putting her faith in the God of Israel in Joshua 2:11,12, **for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD.**

Can you obey God in faith when no one else in your family or town does? You may stand alone but when you do, you are still standing with God. It might have even seemed to be treasonous

and unpatriotic for Rahab to have believed God to the destruction of her own people, but there are times when nationalism and patriotism must submit to the will and word of God.

46. Honorable Mentions of Faith 11:32

11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

The author cannot go into any more details. He has said enough and cited enough specific examples to get across his original point which was that faith had “substance” and “evidence.” He does mention:

1. Gideon. When he got started, he was hardly an example of faith in Judges 6. God commissioned him to fight the Midianites. Instead of responding in faith, he laid out fleece after fleece to “prove” God’s word. He finally did begin to manifest his faith and obedience when he attacked the Midianites with his 300 men. He also demonstrated faith when he destroyed the altar of Baal at God’s command, trusting Him to protect him from the certain retribution the worshippers of Baal would have tried to inflict upon him.
2. Barak, demonstrated in his following of Deborah in Judges 4 and 5 in defeating Ehud. It is interesting that Deborah is not mentioned. It would seem that Barak demonstrated his faith in being willing to follow a woman, something that was almost unheard of in the Oriental society of the day. Barak was noted for his victory, and a mighty, resounding victory it was. All was of God. The enemy’s nine hundred chariots of iron were simply bogged down in the mud. God stepped in with storm and flood, and the impossible became the possible.
3. Samson? He was a man of the flesh, much like Esau. It is difficult to see much manifestation of faith in his life, except in how he died, in his asking God to allow him to avenge the Philistines of his two eyes that they put out. He asked for God to return his strength to him one last time and He did. In that, he was able to kill more Philistines in his death than he ever did in his life.
4. Jephthah did defeat the Ammonites. The only other major event in his life was his vow to offer a burnt offering sacrifice that involved his daughter. His faith is clearly manifest in:
 - A. Taking the word of the elders and acting on it (Judges 11:9-11).
 - B. Sending the note to the king of the Ammonites (Judges 11:13-27).
 - C. Going to battle against superior odds without the help of Ephraim (Judges 12:1-3).
5. With David, Samuel and the prophets, there were simply too many events and examples of faith to list or discuss.

Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah all lived in the dark days of Judges, where every man did that which was right in their own eyes and in days of apostasy and foreign occupations. Yet these four men all demonstrated that it is possible to still live by faith even in the darkest times, even during the Tribulation period.

Was Hebrews written in haste? The author says he would like to develop this though further but was not able to at the time of this writing. He says something similar in Hebrews 9:5. Or maybe he says that the topic before him is too large to deal with. It would take many more pages to detail the faith of the people mentioned in this verse and the author simply have the same or the resources to develop this theme properly.

47. Actions of Faith 11:33-40

11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

What did this Old Testament faith of these listed characters accomplish? Remember,

1. They had no Bible
 - A. We do so we have all the promises and examples
 - B. They had very little written revelation, like Abel, Abraham or Job
2. They had no local church for fellowship and support
3. They had few examples of history- 1 Corinthians 10:11
 - A. They had few historical examples to look back to.
4. They had no pastor to help them
5. They had no indwelling of the Holy Spirit
6. They had no finished atonement- on the "other side" of the cross
7. They died in faith (Hebrews 11:13), seeing these things "far off" although we see them in retrospect

These people:

1. Subdued kingdoms
 - A. Victories of Moses, Joshua, Barak, Gideon, David, Joab, Jephthah, Caleb, Daniel...
 - B. These victories were both political and military.
 - C. Will the believing remnant in the Tribulation subdue the kingdom of the Antichrist by faith?
2. Wrought righteousness
 - A. Think of the ministries of all the prophets and righteous men in the Old Testament.
 - B. The Tribulation is a very unrighteous period yet the Tribulation remnant will bring righteousness to a very unrighteous dispensation.
3. Obtained promises
 - A. Caleb, who received a whole mountain (Joshua 14)
 - B. Joshua, who lives to see Joshua 1:6 fulfilled
 - C. David, who lives to see 2 Samuel 7:12 fulfilled
 - D. Joseph, who asked for a promise about the treatment of his bones after he was dead (Exodus 13:19).
4. Stopped the mouths of lions
 - A. Daniel in the lion's den in Daniel 6.
 - B. Being thrown to wild beasts could be one mode of execution of the remnant in the Tribulation. It was used against Christians during the early church as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:32 (if we interpret that verse literally).
5. Quenched the violence of fire
 - A. The obvious case being Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 2.
 - B. This could refer to being burned at the stake. Quenching this fire would not necessarily mean putting it out or escaping it, but rather enduring it and even despising its terrors.
6. Escaped the edge of the sword
 - A. David did on at least a dozen occasions in 1 Samuel.
 - B. The two spies did this (Joshua 2).
 - C. Abiathar did this (1 Kings 2:26).

- D. Remnant Tribulation saints may be marked for this sort of death but would be miraculously delivered from it.
7. Out of weakness were made strong
 - A. Samson, Joshua, Benaiah, the “three mighties” of David, and Hezekiah (Isaiah 38, 39).
 8. Waxed valiant in fight.
 9. Turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
 - A. Who are the “aliens” and what Old Testament incidents are being referenced here? A. W. Pink would suggest Joshua 10:1-10 and 2 Samuel 5:17-25. It could refer to the many times Israel was able to turn back invading forces, as many times the Philistines or the Syrians tried to invade the land and were thwarted.
 10. Women received their dead raised to life again.
 - A. The two cases found in 1 Kings 17:21 and 2 Kings 4:35.
 11. Many were tortured and did not accept deliverance
 - A. When they were tortured for their faith, they did renounce their profession. They had faith that there was something better waiting for them on the other side of death if they remain faithful and true to Christ. They could have renounced their faith and have been delivered from their physical sufferings but chose not to.
 - B. This would clearly have an application to the fates of many of the Tribulation saints.
 12. They endured
 - A. Cruel mockings
 - i. Sometimes this can be worse than death!
 - B. Scourgings
 - i. Think of Paul and Silas in Acts 16.
 - C. Bonds
 - D. Imprisonments
 - i. Think of the years John Bunyan spent in prison. All he had to do was to promise the authorities that he would stop preaching without a license and he refused. The Virginia Baptists suffered their imprisonments for the same reason.
 - ii. Paul also knew something about imprisonments.
 - E. Stonings
 - i. Tradition says both Jeremiah and Baruch were stoned in Egypt.
 - F. Being sawn asunder
 - i. Tradition says Isaiah was placed in a hollow log and was sawn in two on the order of Manasseh.
 - G. Slain with the sword.
 - H. Tribulation saints will endure these things.
 13. They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins
 - A. Many were exiled from home and family for the faith.
 - B. Tribulation saints will have their houses, lands, fortunes and monies taken from them, meaning they will be reduced to poverty in the midst of their sufferings. All will have will be the clothes on the back. They will wander from place to place for shelter but no country will assist them for fear of upsetting the Antichrist. These believers will literally be on their own.
 14. They were destitute
 - A. Many lost their wealth and fortunes for their faith in Christ.
 - B. Many suffered loss of even food and water and the basic necessities of life in their sufferings.
 15. They were afflicted

16. They were tormented

17. They wandered

A. In deserts

B. In mountains

C. Dens and caves

D. They did nothing to improve their situations. All they had to do was renounce their faith in Christ and they could have escaped this persecution. But by faith, they understood that a little suffering now would result in a better resurrection later. So many of the martyrs could have avoided their fate by simply renouncing their faith, but very few did as they also understood this principle, by faith.

These seem to be broken down into three categories:

1. Material victories- they subdued kingdoms

2. Moral victories- they wrought righteousness

3. Spiritual victories- obtained promises

11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

“waxed” is from the Old English “weaxan”, meaning “to grow”. “Wax” means “to grow old or become”.

11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

There are many times when women show more faith than men. Look at the women at the cross and after the death of Christ and compare their actions to that of the disciples.

“that they might obtain a better resurrection” Being faithful unto death grants the believer participation in the resurrection of the righteous, which leads to eternal life. But those who apostatize or renounce their profession in the tribulation will doom them to the resurrection of the unjust, which will land them at the Great White Throne judgment, where they will be judged and condemned of sin, only to be cast into the lake of fire forever. Everyone will be resurrection. The question is regarding which resurrection?

11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Notice the similarity between Hebrews 11:36-38 and 10:32,33 regarding the sufferings and persecutions inflicted by the world upon those who choose God, rejected the world and who lived by faith.

11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

The world was not worthy of such people, but heaven is worthy of them. The world doesn't want these kinds of people. They mock them, belittle them, ignore them and kill them. The world has its heroes, but they are not the heroes of heaven.

"God's reverse thinking (Isa. 55) and reverse "ways" (Isa. 55:8) constrain Him to say that a rich church is *poor* (Rev. 3:17) and a poor church is *rich* (Rev. 2:9); blind folks see (John 9:39) and folks with both eyes *can't* (John 9:39); if you save your life, you *lose* it (Matt. 10:39) and if you lose your life, you *save* it (Matt. 10:39). The martyrs of A.D. 1000–1800 had to be run out of the world because they were of such excellent quality that they didn't belong in this sorry, stinking, evil mess."¹⁸³

11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

"The martyrs obtained an "A" in loyalty. They could have "accepted deliverance" by simply being disloyal to Christ. Like old "Martin" (Luther), they would not "recant." They would not bow down to the Pope; they would not pray to Mary or the saints; they would not trust the Catholic "Mass"; they would not force their children to be sprinkled; and they would not reduce the Lord of Glory to a jug of liquor and a piece of stale bread."¹⁸⁴

They did not receive the promises in this life. They knew that the rewards for a life of faith and for following Christ were not for this life. They had the faith that if their walk with God did not pay off now, it would after death in glory. "Good things come to those who wait".

Notice the similarity between this verse and Hebrews 10:36 regarding receiving the promise and those who lived by faith who did not receive the promise in this life.

11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

With the wording of this verse, I am not sure what it means. The first part is no problem, but the second half of the verse is tough. If I don't understand it, it is not because I believe that it is a mistranslation. How arrogant that attitude is! A man has an education and he approaches the Bible as he would any other book and he imagines that he should be able to understand every verse and if he can't, he blames the author, in this case, God. Matthew 10:23 falls under this observation, where the Lord says, **But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.** Here is another verse that I simply do not understand!

Better reasons why we don't understand a verse would be:

1. It is deliberately obscure to force us to study, meditate and pray about it. God does explain Himself to lazy readers.
2. We are simply too stupid to understand it! Psalm 73:22 says, **So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.**
3. Most "scholars" rely on their education and assume that they should be able to understand every verse. When they hit a verse like this, they claim "the text is obscure" or "the King James Bible is translated incorrectly" and then they proceed to re-Write the verse so they can understand it. What arrogance! The problem is not with the text. The

¹⁸³ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 283.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

problem is with your little three-pound brain! Assume the text is correct as given in the Authorized Version. Confess you don't understand it and pray for light!

4. Some men reject the plain reading of the text because it goes against their theological system or their theological presupposition. If they took the text at face value, it would mean they would have to change what they believe so they look for any excuse to change the text.

One possible interpretation is that "they" (both these Old Testament saints and the future Tribulation saints) need us of the Church Age to be complete. When all is said and done, we are part of one grand group of believers, regardless of what dispensation we live in or whether we are Jews or Gentiles. This was the interpretation Charles Spurgeon had and it seems to be a good one to me. Think of it! Even the smallest, most "insignificant" believer is needed and necessary to complete this grand gathering. If we are missing, that organization is incomplete and not "perfect". This should serve to encourage even small churches and "insignificant" believers in any age. I am as important as Moses or Abraham, when all is said and done! That is not an arrogant thing to say but it has been well-said that the ground at the foot of the cross is level.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 12

One of the main themes of Hebrews 12 is “hope”.

48. Run Your Race 12:1

12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

The writer has in his mind's eye the Olympic games, where all the different tribes of Greece were gathered together to display their athletic skills. Among the contests were footraces. The writer makes this footrace an illustration of the Christian life. We must run with patience along the appointed course if we would win the prize of our high calling.

We are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. We should not limit ourselves to just a handful of men and writers to influence us in our race and ministry. There is a vast cloud of witnesses who have gone on before us, of whose life, ministry and writings we can benefit from. I have heard some preachers claim they only read the Bible and nothing else, certainly no commentaries by other men or any theological or biographical writers by other men. What a self-induced poverty these men subject themselves to! I have many men and women in Christian history whom I have looked to for instruction, inspiration and guidance. Take full advantage of the vast Christian legacies we have at our disposal and of the vast number of good and useful books and writings that these Christians have left for us.

This “great cloud” does not necessarily refer to saints of heaven. It is unknown if they are aware of as to what is going on in the earth. But we have our contemporaries who are constantly watching us, both saint and sinner, to see if our profession is genuine and if a Christian life really can be lived today.

Run your race

1. Your race is long.
 - A. It is a marathon, not a sprint.
 - i. This is why we run with “patience”. This is no “hundred-yard dash”. The patience is needed after the five-mile mark when your side begins to ache; after the ten-mile mark when your legs begin to cramp; after the fifteen-mile mark when your lungs begin to burst; and after the twenty-mile mark when you feel like you are going to drop if you take another step. “Ye have need of patience...” (Hebrews 10:36; James 1:3,4).
 - ii. A marathon is 26 miles, 385 yards. To start well is good but if you only run 26 miles and do not finish the course, what profit is that to you?
 - B. Some men seem to fly through their race (John the Baptist, Robert McCheyne, Hugh Binning, Henry Marytn) but for most of us, it is a long run to New Jerusalem.
2. Your race is uphill.
 - A. You are running from earth to heaven and it is uphill all the way.
 - B. The pilgrims ascended to Mt Zion as they sang the Songs of Degrees of Psalm 120-136.
 - C. Some run to heaven, some run to hell.
 - i. **The way of the transgressor is hard** (Proverbs 13:15) but they are running downhill, which is easier.
 - D. None stand still, for we are all racing to some final destination.

3. Your race is fraught with dangers.

A. Interfering with another person's race.

i. You have your track, and I've got my track. I've got to keep my eyes on the Lord, and you've got to keep your eyes on the Lord. Don't ever get to be an expert in other people's affairs. Don't ever do that. The Bible says, "to his own master he standeth or falleth." He has got his track, and I have got my track.

B. Others will try to hinder you to hinder you.

i. Paul to the Galatians- 1. **"Ye did run well; who did hinder you...?"** (Galatians 5:7).

ii. Consider the "Daughters of Jerusalem" in the Song of Solomon. "The Daughters of Jerusalem" would represent carnal church members. They are a very interesting group in the Song. They seem to be constantly picking on the newly-saved Shulamite and try to pour cold water on her budding relationship with Christ. Carnal Christians have no real interest in developing their own personal relationship with Christ, but they want no one else to do so either. They can't stand to see someone else in revival because it condemns their own hearts. If they do happen to see a new Christian falling deep in love with Christ, instead of encouraging her and following her example, they try to discourage her, mainly due to jealousy of Solomon's favors toward her. They were better than this shepherd-girl yet Solomon was ignoring them and paying attention to her! "Who was this Shulamite anyway? She's all tanned and hardened and is an unimportant nobody. What makes you think Solomon would pay any attention to you? Why, look at you! What makes you so special? You didn't go to the right school! You just got recently saved. We've been in this church for years and now you come blowing into town and try to make us look bad with your 'super-spirituality'!" The Shulamite would deny none of it for it was all too true. Such criticism would be enough to discourage many a young Christian from pursuing Christ. To end such carping, the new Christian may just freeze up and dry up like his critics. Thus, the daughters of Jerusalem have become a stumbling block to a babe in Christ and they will pay dearly for it at the bema seat. Why are they referred to as the Daughters of Jerusalem? Because they are legalizers who kept looking to Jerusalem and Judaism (Galatians 4:26) for their spiritual bearings instead of looking to Christ...The Daughters would rely on their church membership, family heritage, good works and tradition to make them acceptable to Christ. The Shulamite had none of that so she must rely upon grace for her relationship and these legalizers couldn't stand that. The Daughters do not have a good testimony in 2 Kings 19:21 "This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (see also Isaiah 37:22)...They seem to lack, however, the desire for that fervent pursuit of Christ which is found in the Shulamite maiden. They represent a lukewarm, beclouded, and casual company. Hudson Taylor once remarked: "In appearance they are saved—but merely saved, that is all." They are the Lord's people, but have not the degree and warmth of true, full bridal affections."¹⁸⁵

C. Danger of disqualification

¹⁸⁵ John Cereghin, *Pilgrim Way Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, pages 31-32.

- i. There are rules- 2 Timothy 2:5, **And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.**
 - a. You run in your own lane.
 - b. You do not hinder other runners.
 - c. You do not cheat.
 - d. You don't start before the gun sounds. You have a false start. It happens in swimming. Many times, the swimmers dive before the gun is fired, and they have to come back and start over. They allow two false starts, and then they are out of the race—disqualified.
- ii. You are judged afterward to see if you ran lawfully.
 - a. If you did, you are rewarded.
 1. Paul ran his race well, lawfully.
 - (a). 2 Timothy 4:7, **I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:**
 2. Paul did not run in vain.
 - (a). Philippians 2:16, **Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.**
 - b. If you do not run lawfully, you are disqualified. What does that mean spiritually?
 - c. 1 Corinthians 9:27, **But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**
 1. To be a castaway is to be disapproved, to not be accepted by the judges at the bema.
 2. Many will run and finish but will not have run well, or cheated. It would appear they ran well, but the judge knows the truth.

4. Rewards

- a. An unsaved athlete of Paul's day ran for a laurel wreath, "a corruptible crown." But in the Christian race, you receive an incorruptible crown. Peter calls it "**an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you**" in 1 Peter 1:4. There is an "incorruptible crown" for the Christian who keeps his body in subjection and keeps it under and stays in training condition as an athlete.

It requires training and discipline

1. Every weight must be laid aside that distracts from our training and goal
2. The eyes must be kept on the goal (Philippians 3:13) which is called the "**mark for the prize of the high calling**" (Philippians 3:14). The hurdler does not look down at the hurdle when he jumps it; his eyes are fixed straight ahead. A swimmer, racing the "Australian crawl," cannot stay in his lane unless he keeps his eye on the blue tile on the bottom of the pool in his lane. He will become tangled in the corks if he fails to do this. "**Set your affection on things above...**" (Colossians 3:1-3).
3. In swimming and track and boxing, you do not drink alcoholic beverages, and you do not smoke. There is no way you can do it and hope to win.
4. The Christian is in training. He should be like a trained athlete. He shouldn't oversleep; he shouldn't under-sleep. He shouldn't overeat; he shouldn't undereat. You should be in training. Second Timothy 2:3, "**Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**" Now, here's our verse. "**And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully**" (2 Timothy 2:5). It

matches 1 Corinthians 9:25, **And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.**

What Paul would say in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27:

9:24 **Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.**

1. Do you race to win? Or just to “beat the air” (1 Corinthians 9:26)

9:25 **And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.**

1. You must strive to master the techniques of running- 1 Corinthians 9:27

2. There is training involved and discipline

A. Certain foods you don't eat

B. Get up at 4 AM every day. We read of these young athletes (gymnasts, hockey players, people training for the Olympics...) who get up at 4 AM and whose parents drive them to the gym or the hockey ring so that can get in several hours of practice before they go to school for the day. That's dedication!

9:26 **I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:**

1. This has the idea of shadowboxing. It looks impressive and is a part of training but it really does not accomplish anything.

9:27 **But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**

1. To be a castaway is to be disapproved, to not be accepted by the judges at the bema

2. Many will run and finish but will not have run well, or cheated. It would appear they ran well, but the judge knows the truth.

3. What does this involve for the Christian is who disapproved at the Bema Judgment? It involves loss of reward but not a loss of salvation. But it would involve so much more loss than we can imagine here.

“let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us” Can you imagine running with weights strapped to you legs? It would slow you down and hinder you. Anything that would hinder us from running and finishing our race is to be discarded. Sin is mentioned as doing that but even things that are not sin and hinder our Christian walk and ministry. A thing realizes may be innocent or commendable but can still hinder us spiritually. This weight could be an innocent affection that threatens to turn away the diligence of our heart's love and dedication to Christ.

Notice the word “**sin**” is used, not “sins”. This refers to the singular sin principle from which all sins (in the plural) flow. Thus, the writer here is not referring to any particular sin; he is referring to the principle of sin itself and our own sin natures that hinder our spiritual progress.

49. Looking Unto Jesus 12:2

12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Looking unto Jesus”

1. The Tribulation saint must keep his eyes on Jesus, not Moses or the law or anything else as he goes through the Tribulation.

2. The Christian must also be “looking unto Jesus” at all times, not to self or the world or even the church. If we are looking onto Jesus then we are not looking to anyone or anything else. He has our full attention and we will follow Him as He leads us in His will.

The runners that jump the hurdles never look down at the hurdles. They run and focus on what is in front of them. They look toward the goal. They look at the hurdle before they get to it, but as they approach it their eyes are up over the hurdle. They do not run up there and look down at the hurdle to see if they are going to get their legs over.

“The eyes must be kept on the goal (Phil. 3:13) which is called the “mark for the prize of the high calling” (Phil. 3:14). The hurdler does not look down at the hurdle when he jumps it; his eyes are fixed straight ahead. A swimmer, racing the “Australian crawl,” cannot stay in his lane unless he keeps his eye on the blue tile on the bottom of the pool in his lane. He will become tangled in the corks if he fails to do this. “Set your affection on things above...” (Col. 3:1–3). An oriental prince once required a captive to walk clear through his city with a bowl of milk on his head. The journey was nearly two miles. He was told that if he spilled a drop of the milk he would lose his head. Guards followed him to carry out the orders. The prisoner successfully made the trip, and at the finish of the journey, the prince said to him, “Now, give me a description of what you saw while passing through my city.” The young man, bathed in sweat, answered, “Your majesty, I can’t remember seeing anything.” That’s how to get rid of worldliness! If your neck were on the line, you wouldn’t spend the time you spend with the idiot box! “As you go through life, my brother, whatever be your goal, keep your eye upon the donut and not upon the hole.”¹⁸⁶

“Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” He is the One Who started it, created it and maintains it. Christ is the Originator and Perfecter of our faith, not some theological system. He will ultimately complete our faith and bring it to a consummation. He will also perfect our faith and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

“author” The Greek word for author (archegos) means “leader” or “pioneer.” It is the same Greek word translated captain in Hebrews 2:10, **“the captain of their salvation.”**

“the joy that was set before him endured the cross” There was the joy of doing and completing the Father’s will, of defeating Satan, the world and the flesh, of obtaining redemption of mankind, and the honor of glory that He would receive after His ascension in Acts 1. With all of that set before Him, a few hours of suffering would indeed seem like a light thing. As Jesus endured His cross, can the Tribulation saint endure his with the same kind of joy that Jesus had?

“endured the cross, despising the shame” And there was shame! The world made sure of that! They did everything they could to humiliate Christ and to shame Him as much as they could. He was crucified, the punishment of a criminal, and that was the most shameful of all methods of execution. He was numbered among the transgressors. He hung naked, suspended between heaven and earth. But that shame was something to be despised, as it was all within the will of the Father. It was so insignificant in the grand scheme of redemption that it was nothing to be even considered. The work on the cross would provide salvation for mankind, and there was nothing shameful in that. As the Tribulation saint suffers his persecutions, he must also learn to despise the shame that comes with persecutions and not to allow it to interfere with his faithfulness and joy.

¹⁸⁶ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, page 290.

Jesus was the only One Who could really appreciate the pain and shame of the cross. Crucifixion is bad enough for any man, but for Christ, it was worse. He was more aware and sensitive to the sinfulness of sin and its severity than we could ever be because He was absolutely holy and sinless. We were born, burped, bottled and brought up in sin. We are accustomed to it and deadened to it while Christ was not. That is why the physical sufferings of Christ were nothing compared to the spiritual sufferings He endured on the cross.

We must also endure our cross and not be embarrassed by it. Everyone has a personal cross or crosses and they are given us by God to keep us humble and dependent upon him. Consider Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7) that God refused to remove. It helped Paul although others may have mocked him for it, saying it was a judgment of God or that if Paul had more faith, he wouldn't have to suffer from that thorn, whatever it was. We sometimes are embarrassed by our circumstances and believe it is a judgment from God but the opposite is usually true. Christ died a humiliating death but it was not in judgment upon Him, although He was mocked for it.

If you "**look unto Jesus**" that means you are looking away from everything and everyone else. You can only fix your gaze on one object at a time. The word has the idea of looking with an all-consuming interest.

"Looking unto Jesus" Why look on anyone else? Who else is going to help you in your race? What else is a worthy goal? Why look at Mohammad? What has he ever done for anyone? Why look on any pope or religious leader? They are all unworthy. Only Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

"is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." After His ascension. His work was done, so He sat down in the place of honor and power.

50. Consider Him 12:3,4

12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

"consider him"

1. Another exhortation for the Tribulation Jew to consider Christ, His person, work and claims.
2. It would take a lifetime of study and meditation to come to a full realization of the depths of the sufferings of Jesus leading up to and on the cross.
3. We are to consider a person, not a theological system! I am to consider Christ, not Calvinism, the "Baptist distinctives", Dispensationalism, etc.

"Are you suffering persecution? Consider Christ, Who was persecuted. Have friends and family turned from you because of your stand? Consider Christ, Who was likewise abandoned and not supported by friends or family (as in John 7). Have your friends betrayed you? Consider Christ, Who was betrayed by a man He once called "friend" (Psalm 41:9). Whatever you are suffering, Christ went through it, too. This allows Him to empathize with us as our Great High Priest and it comforts us to realize that He went through the same issues that we are going through. "If you are weary, He was weary (John 4:6). If you are tempted, He was tempted (Luke 4:1-12). If you are betrayed by friends, so was He (John 13). If you have been given a bitter cup by the Father, and its draught has set your teeth on edge, you are not alone (John 19:29). If you are out of money, so was He (Matt. 17:24). At least you weren't born in a stable (Luke 2). Consider what He went through, how He went through it, and why He went through it; then you will find your

spirits are lifting and the “feeble knees” are gaining new strength. “CONSIDER HIM!” That is the solution for saved and lost. No lost man who seriously “CONSIDERED HIM” for two hours would need an invitation to be saved; he would call himself to the altar and answer his own call. You cannot meditate on Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; and John 13-21 without being smitten in the heart.”¹⁸⁷

The “**contradiction of sinners**” is to go against something, to oppose. Sinners will oppose the gospel, the Bible, the Church, Christians and God. If they are not contradicting, then something is wrong with us. They contradicted the fathers and our Lord, and we should expect nothing better if we are right with God. This is supposed to be an encouragement to us in our persecutions. They attacked the Lord and contradicted Him. If it happens to us, we know we are in good company for it also happened to the Lord.

“For Christians, this contradiction of sinners will truly increase in the days ahead. End-time Christians will witness relatives, communities and entire governments turn against them. Professing Christians will either rise up against our choice to live a deeper and higher Christian life in Christ or turn their backs on us. This “contradiction” of sinners will be manifested with hatred against our standards of living, our standards of dress, our stand against contemporary Christian music and our deep respect for reverential worship. Public castigations and rebukes suggesting we have lost our minds with our view of Biblical separation will increase. It is one thing to endure the cross, but it is another thing to endure the contradiction of sinners.”¹⁸⁸

12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Friends and family may oppose us but ultimately, we wrestle not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12) but our warfare is spiritual and not carnal.

“John Wycliffe’s Lollards were responsible for hand-copying the Bibles from which they preached. If they were captured and condemned to burn at the stake, the Roman Catholic Church authorities took their personal Bibles, wrapped them around their necks, and burned both together. How appropriate that these preachers and their Bibles would burn together. There are some that resisted unto blood.”¹⁸⁹

51. Exhortation Against Forgetfulness 12:5a

12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children.

“**ye have forgotten**” something we often do and are so prone to do, hence the reminder here.

These Tribulation saints had forgotten something that they needed to be reminded of. They had forgotten the exhortation for them to keep moving on, pressing forward, and progressing toward glory, not letting the occasional “bumps in the road” discourage them. Who had encouraged them? The author of Hebrews had but it appears that someone earlier had also encouraged these Jews. In the midst of their sufferings and trials, they had forgotten these exhortations to faithfulness and may have been on the verge of quitting.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, page 297.

¹⁸⁸ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 265.

¹⁸⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 268.

“which speaketh unto you as unto children” Exhortation belongs to sons. God does not exhort Satan’s children, only His own. If anyone would need exhortation for patience and faithfulness, it would be Tribulation saints.

52. Divine Chastening 12:5b-13

Summary of 12:6b-13

1. Chastening

- A. Do not despise it, 12:5
- B. Do not faint under it, 12:5
- C. The Lord chastens those He loves, 12:6
- D. He scourges His sons, 12:6
 - i. He only chastens His own sons, 12:7
- E. If God does not chastise you, then you are not a son, 12:8,9
- F. God chastens us for our benefit, 12:10
- G. It is not pleasant yet it brings forth eternal rewards, 12:11

12:5b My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

“My son” Who is the son? The audience shifts from “Hebrews” (plural) to a “son”. It could be God directly addressing Israel as His “son”, which Israel was (Exodus 4:22).

“chasten” used 6 times in the Authorized Version, from an Old French word “chastier” meaning “to punish in order to correct”. Chastisement is different from suffering. We are chastised by the Father when we have done something wrong and need correction. Suffering can come without any sin in our life to have triggered it. Jesus suffered yet He had no need of any chastisement as He was sinless. But He did bear our chastisement in His work as our substitutionary Lamb of God- Isaiah 53:5.

The Tribulation period is a time where God chastens Israel His son for their millennia of idolatry, corruption, disobedience and sin. God is pruning and purging these sins from the heart of Israel so that they might be ready to assume their rightful place in the Millennium. This chastening was hard and it must have pained God to allow Israel to go through it, but fathers will occasionally practice some “tough love” on their sons if they need to be “whipped into shape”.

Biblical information on “chastening”:

- 1. Chastening comes from committing iniquity:
 - A. 2 Samuel 7:14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:
- 2. God can chasten in His anger
 - A. Psalm 6:1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
 - B. Psalm 38:1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
- 3. Chastening can be “proactive” to prevent future and additional trouble
 - A. Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.
- 4. We can chasten ourselves to purge ourselves from unconfessed sin so that God can

deal with us

A. Daniel 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

5. God chastens those whom He loves

A. Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

B. Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

C. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

6. Good men are chastened

A. Job bore chastisement- Job 34:31

B. Psalm 73:14. This psalmist complains that he is chastised all day long while sinners seems to be free from suffering. But he complained in ignorance until he went into the house of God, and then he came to understand their end (Psalm 73:17-22).

7. God chastens only His sons

A. Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

B. Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8. Chastisement is evidence of sonship

A. Hebrews 12:7,8 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9. Chastisement is to develop holiness

A. Job 34:31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

B. Hebrews 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness

10. Jesus bore our chastisement in His passion

A. Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

11. There is chastisement in relation to improper observance of the Lord's Table

A. 2. 1 Corinthians 11:32

Patience is required when we undergo chastening, so we can obtain the benefits of the correction. "**Faint**" would have the idea of "to lose heart", or to despair. You may think God is dealing with you unfairly or that you can deal with any more that God might lay on you. But God's intention is to correct, not destroy. Do not "faint" by giving up on God or by losing your faith in Him during these seasons.

One thing that should be done that will allow us to better deal with chastisement is to inquire into the cause of the affliction. This is what Job was doing while he was sitting on the ash heap. He begged God to tell him what caused God allowing Satan to afflict him (even if Job never was told that it was Satan doing this, and that God only allowed it). God "**does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men**" (Lamentations 3:33). If therefore He sends chastisement upon you there must be some cause, which you must search out and discover.

When brings about this kind of “chastening” and “rebuke”? Many times it is unconfessed sin. We all sin and we should repent and confess as soon as we realize that we have sinned. When we continue in sin without this kind of repentance, God will bring chastisement into our lives to bring us to the point of repentance, confession, forsaking and restoration of fellowship.

1. A continued stupidity of soul, proceeding from a continued course in sin. God needs to give us a kick at times to wake us up to the fact that we are in trouble.
2. Carnal diversions. The pleasures and cares of the world, as they render men insensitive of judgments to come (Luke 21:34, **And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.**).
3. An obstinate stubbornness of spirit. Their hearts can often be made harder by afflictions. We know we are in sin, refuse to do anything about it, so God must resort to the rod to humble us.

How can we “despise” this chastening?

1. A man may despise it when he murmurs at it and complains of it. A want of resignation shows that we despise God's chastening hand.
2. We despise the chastening of the Lord when we say there is no use in it, no purpose in it. We believe God is punishing us for no reason.
3. We may think it dishonorable to be chastened by God. We are humiliated by it, embarrassed by it. We may think of ourselves too highly to think that God should chasten us.
4. When we do not seek to be bettered by it. Many a man has been corrected by God, and that correction has been in vain. Many have sometimes walked a mile or two, almost limping along, because there was a stone in their shoe, and did not stop to look for it. Many a Christian goes limping for years because of the stones in his shoe, but if he would only stop to look at them, he would be relieved.
5. When we despise the morality of the chastening. We would call into the character of God and charge Him with sin while we are in the crucible.

If you despise the chastening, you will not profit from it and you would have suffered it in vain. We are warned not to faint and not to despise the chastening. The dangers are that one kind of Christian, who is weak, will be terrified by his chastisement and take it as a sign that God is forever through with him and has cast him aside permanently as a “castaway”. This Christian “faints.” The other type of Christian bears it with a “stiff upper lip” and accepts the chastening stoically. This kind of Christian will tend to despise the chastening of the Lord. Both responses are wrong. Do not presume but do not despair. Don't give up but don't laugh it off.

12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

This is quoted from Proverbs 3:11,12, **My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.**

As a father, I chasten my children, but I do not chasten someone's children. God chastens His own children. He does not chasten Satan's children. He allows their father to chasten them,

Chastening and scourging show love of God toward us. God loves us enough not to leave us in our sin but wants to bring us out of it and make us better Christians. A child who is under discipline will find it very difficult to believe that his father is doing it out of love. It will be just as

difficult for Israel in the Tribulation to see the loving hand of the Father as the Antichrist tries to destroy them.

The “**scourging**” involves the discipline that attempts to break the human will and to bring it under divine control. It involves physical pain, as Jesus being scourged with a Roman whip in His passion. It can also involve sickness or some other physical infirmity. This is the physical aspect of scourging. Sometimes, the Lord has to “beat” the devil out of us!

“**Chastening**” is sufficient for the humble man, but the more stubborn man may require scourging. Sometimes, only speaking a word to the child will be sufficient to bring the child to tears. Others are more stubborn and have a stronger will. This is the verbal aspect. God will chasten through the Scripture, either in private readings or in a preached sermon.

Why chastisement (verbal) and scourging (physical)?

1. To keep the Christian humble (2 Corinthians 12:4-8)
2. To equip him to sympathize with others (2 Corinthians 1:1-4)
3. To keep his affections “on things above” (Colossians 3:1-3)
4. To prove to him that God’s promises were real (Philippians 4:13,19)
5. To show him that the grace of God was sufficient for the severest trials (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Chastening and scourging can come in four forms:

1. The thorn (2 Corinthians 12:7). This keeps you humble. This is physical.
2. The knife (John 15:2). This is for pruning so you will bear fruit. This can be both verbal and physical.
3. The word of God (John 15:3). This is to keep you clean. This is verbal.
4. The whip (Hebrews 12:6). This keeps us heavenly minded and dependent upon God. This is physical.

12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

A father who does not chasten his sons is not much of a father and is negligent in his responsibilities as a father. A father who does not discipline his son hates him (Proverbs 13:24). Do you want to see your child in jail, or worse? If not, you will correct him when he does wrong.

We are told about enduring the cross in Hebrews 12:2, enduring the contradiction of sinners in Hebrews 12:3 and enduring chastening here in Hebrews 12:7.

The fact that God will take Israel into the Tribulation is a proof of His love for them because God is dealing with their national sins to cure Israel of them once and for all. If God had not chastised Israel, it would have demonstrated that He did not love them and that Israel was just like all the other nations, instead of being a nation with a unique relationship with God. Israel would also be unfit to take their rightful place in the Millennium as the center of the nations without this chastisement.

12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

If you claim to be a Christian and have no chastisement in your life, you have nothing to brag about. It means you are not a Christian. If you claim to be a Christian and can never see a time in your life when you can say you were under the divine rod, then your claim to be a Christian is illegitimate. The Christian life involves frequent dealings and corrections by God as we are still frequent sinners, even after salvation. God takes no such care for false professors. If you are my son, I chasten you but I do not chasten the neighbor's children. God does not discipline the devil's children (He will judge them later) but His own.

“all are partakers” You are not alone in your chastisements as all Christians go through it as all Christians still sin. Pity the professing believer who has never known the divine rod. Such a man is not saved!

“bastards” Your claim to be a son of God is illegitimate. Despite any profession you make, you have no claim to be a son of God if you have no chastisement.

12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

You may not have thought much of your parents while they were chastening you, but when you become an adult (and especially when you become a parent!), you will come to appreciate it and you will thank your parents for being tough on you. The best teachers are usually those who were the toughest on you, who didn't let you get away with things. They also did not allow you to live or work below your potential.

12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

The goal of chastisement is our holiness, for holiness is impossible without it.

“after their own pleasure” There was much of their own human temper mixed with their chastisements, they let off their wrath upon us sometimes by the medium of chastisement, but God never chastens his children merely out of anger. God does not chasten as man chastens.

“that we might be partakers of his holiness” This is the goal of chastisement, even if God has to use the devil to beat our sin out of us. The goal is forsaking of the new life and moving onto holiness.

12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

No one enjoys chastisement, including the one who is dishing out the chastisement. Who enjoys two weeks in bed with the flu? Who enjoys passing a kidney stone? Who enjoys six weeks “in traction” with a bad back? Who enjoys declaring bankruptcy? Who enjoys receiving news that a precious little boy or girl has been run over in the street? Who enjoys being fired when the gas and electricity are turned off? Do you shout with joy when you miss your plane or have a flat tire when you're thirty minutes late for an important appointment? It takes plenty of grace to say, “Hallelujah. Everything is going fine,” when you're being whipped. “Glory to God! I'm fifteen thousand dollars in the hole!” “Bless God! I broke my leg!” It's one thing to shout when everyone

is in good health and eating steak, but it is another thing to shout when the doctor says, "It's terminal."

It must be remembered that the Father does not enjoy chastising His children, but He realizes it is necessary. Any human father understands this. I have four children and I have had to chasten each one of them at various times. I never enjoyed it and it pained me as much as it did my children. But I did it for their own good, that they might profit from it. I did it because I loved them. If I did not love them, I would have never chastised them and would have let them go their own way, straight into perdition.

Consider the story of Dirk Willems, who was born in Asperen, Gelderland, Netherlands. He was rebaptized and became an Anabaptist as a young man in Rotterdam, thus rejecting the infant baptism practiced at that time by both Catholics and Protestants in the Netherlands. His rebaptism, plus his continued devotion to his new faith and the baptism of several other people in his home, led to his condemnation by the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands and subsequent arrest in Asperen in 1569. Willems was held in a residential palace turned into a prison, from which he escaped using a rope made out of knotted rags. Using this, he was able to climb out of the prison onto the frozen moat. A guard noticed his escape and gave chase. Willems was able to traverse the thin ice of a frozen pond, the Hondegat, because of his lighter weight after subsisting on prison rations. However, the pursuing guard fell through the ice and yelled for help as he struggled in the icy water. Willems turned back to save the life of his pursuer, and thus was recaptured. His erstwhile pursuer stated his desire to let Willems go, but the burgomaster "reminded the pursuer of his oath", causing the pursuer to seize Willems. Willems was thereafter held until he was condemned by a group of seven judges, who ordered that he be burned at the stake on 16 May 1569, as well as that all his property be confiscated "for the benefit of his royal majesty". Willems was executed in Asperen, and with a strong eastward wind blowing that day, the fire was driven away from the condemned's upper body, thus prolonging his torturous death. It was reported that the wind carried his screams all the way to nearby Leerdam, where he was heard to have exclaimed things such as "O Lord; my God", etc., over seventy times. The bailiff on horseback nearby was so saddened by Willems' suffering that he said to the executioner, "Dispatch the man with a quick death." Though it isn't known if the executioner obeyed this request, it is known that Willems eventually died there, "with great steadfastness", and "having commended his soul into the hands of God". The cover picture on Martyr's Mirror illustrates Willem saving the life of his captor, who would re-arrest him. The events of Willem's death were not joyous but they left behind the peaceable fruit of righteousness in establishing a testimony to the truth of another martyr. And who knows if anyone was saved as a result of Willem's death?



12:12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

We should always be ready to encourage a brother who may be under the rod, that he will take the chastisement as a son and as a Christian. We are not to be judging our brother in these seasons with a goal of possibly discouraging him as one day, it will be our turn. We will be under the rod and we will be looking for a friendly word in those seasons! The Tribulation saints are also encouraged by these words.

12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Chastening can work in strengthening our walk. We tend to wander all over the pathway, distracted by worldly temptations, instead of focusing solely on Christ. When we are under the rod, it tends to focus us on our relationship with God and that will result in making our paths straight, as we will be too busy with doing our business with God to focus on anything of the world.

53. The Need For Holiness 12:14

12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

This is one of those difficult verses in Hebrews. It must be interpreted and applied in the Jewish/tribulation context that Hebrews is set in theologically. Anybody can “see the Lord” without holiness (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Acts 17:31). Every eye shall see Him at the Second Coming as well in Revelation 1:7. Matthew 5:8 poses the same problem: **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”** The unsaved from Adam to Satan will behold Him on a white throne (Revelation 20) at the last judgment.

“Follow peace with all men” is a desire that we can get along with all men, even the unsaved, to some degree. We are not looking for a fight and we are not to be contentious. Be kind, courteous and respectful to all whom you meet and have dealings with. But this is tempered with holiness. We want to be friendly with all men but that does not mean we follow a sinner into a bar and have a drink with him, or engage in an act of sin or go to a sinful location just so we can be “buddy buddy” with a lost man. We are to certainly follow this peace with holiness with the brethren. Many Christians are friendlier with sinners than they are with saints, but it should be just the opposite. Peace and fellowship, based on holiness with the brethren, should be the primary aim of every Christian. How can we expect to “get along” with the world in our witness if we can’t get along with the brethren at the church house? If we are biting and tearing and suing each other in court, it shows that Christians are unable to get along with each other and that makes for a terrible show for sinners who are watching us. Every sinner in town knows about the church split! I have heard of deacons having fistfights in the parking lot of the church, church members who try to starve out the preacher, and so on. The nastiest letters I have ever received came from two fundamental, independent Baptist evangelists! Sometimes, sinners have treated me better and with more respect than have the saints.

“without which no man shall see the Lord” If everyone and anyone can and will see the Lord with the physical eye (at the Second Coming in Revelation 1:7 for example), why are those who are “holy” promised that they alone will see the Lord? The “pure in heart” shall “see God” in

Matthew 5:8. Moses saw the back parts of God in Exodus 33:23. There must be different ways to "see God". One way would be physical, the other way would be spiritual. Holiness is the discerning feature here. We often say that we "see" something in the sense that "I understand it and comprehend it". A student may be studying Calculus and struggle with it. But through continual and diligent study, he will one day say, "I see it now!" That means he understands it. But without holiness, there will be no communion or fellowship with God, either on earth or in heaven.

Some people think they will "see God" on the basis of anything else besides holiness.

1. Some rely on their works. They have done many mighty works that are impressive to the eye but were not build on a foundation of the glory of God. At the judgment, they will be rejected by God Who will say He never knew them in Matthew 7:23.
2. Some will rely on morality, that they were good, religious and moral. They paid their bills, they raised fine children, they were upstanding in the community and were active in their church. They build on a foundation of religion and morality but that will fail them as well in the day of judgment.
3. Others take a universalist approach, thinking all will be saved in the end and that none will go to hell. To them, the Christian, Jew, Moslem and Hindu all worship the same god and all go to the same place at death. But followers of a false god will never see the true God in His glory and beauty. This is the same attitude as the optimist who says "All is well, there is no hell. God is the Father of us all so we will all see Him at the end".
4. The atheist just throws the whole concept out the window. Since there is no God, no one will see Him and no one will be judged by Him.
5. It is important to equate holiness with God and heaven. One must be holy if he is to see God and that is only possible through the imputed righteousness of Christ. But there are many (like Moslems and hedonists) who hold to a very carnal and fleshly view of heaven. To them, heaven is nothing but an eternal orgy, to revel and indulge in the flesh forever. There is no holiness required you enter Allah's heaven, just submission and obedience (and killing as many infidels as you can through jihad doesn't hurt either). Those who hold unholy views of God and heaven (the hedonist can also be included here) will never see God properly.
6. Certainly education and scholarship can make one worthy to see God! But there are no verses to support such a view. Degrees and IQ are no substitute for holiness. In fact, most men become less holy with every additional academic degree that they earn.

"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" If thou goest with Belial, dost thou think that Christ will go. with thee? Will Christ be a pot companion for thee? Dost thou expect to take the Lord of love and mercy with thee to the haunts of sin? Professor, dost thou think the just and holy One will stand at thy counter to be co-trader with thee in thy tricks? What thinkest thou, O man! wouldst thou make Christ a sharer of thy guilt? and yet he would be so if he had fellowship with thee in it. Nay, if thou wilt go on in acts of unrighteousness and unholiness, Christ parts company with thee, or, rather, thou never didst have any fellowship with him. Thou hast gone out from us because thou wert not of us; for, if thou hadst been of us, doubtless thou wouldst have continued with us. And as to heaven, dost thou think to go there with thine unholiness? God smote an angel down from heaven for sin, and will he let man in with sin in his right hand? God would sooner extinguish heaven than see sin despoil it. It is enough for him to bear with thine hypocrisies on earth; shall he have them flung in his own face in heaven? What, shall an unholy life utter its licentiousness in the golden streets? Shall there be sin in that higher and better paradise? No, no; God has sworn by his holiness--and he will not, he cannot lie, --that those who are not holy, whom his Spirit has not renewed, who have not been, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, made to love that which is good, and hate that which is

evil, shall never stand in the congregation of the righteous. Sinner, it is a settled matter with God that no man shall see him without holiness.”¹⁹⁰

54. Warning Against Failing of the Grace of God 12:15-17

12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

“fail of the grace of God” Compare with “Ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4). This does not mean you have lost your salvation, but that the grace of God has become ineffectual to you because you did not seek it, desire it, utilize it or obey it when it was offered to you. Cain is a good example of this in Genesis 4. After God rejected his offering, he got mad, bitter and upset. God dealt with Cain and explained to him how to remedy the situation, but Cain was too angry and rejected the dealing of God and instead, murdered his brother. God showed him grace and Cain rejected it. The grace of God failed Cain because Cain rejected it. The fault was not with God but was with Cain. Man fails grace. Grace does not fail the man unless man wants nothing to do with it. God fails no man who seeks Him and who obeys Him.

This can also apply in the Tribulation period, which is probably the primary interpretation and application. We have already seen that there is no eternal security in the Tribulation period. The Tribulation period is not the Church Age and the Church Age is not the Tribulation period. The security of the believer is a Church Age doctrine, but it does not apply after the rapture. If a professing believer in the Tribulation period takes the Mark of the Beast, he has lost his salvation. He must “endure to the end” (Matthew 24:13) in the Tribulation period. The Tribulation saint must make it through all seven years (or until he is martyred) without compromising in order to be saved. Thus, a man who “fails” the grace of God is a Tribulation saint who compromised somewhere in the Tribulation period and who this has lost his salvation. We know this sounds heretical because we are living in a dispensation where this cannot happen, but the Tribulation period is a “whole ‘nother ballgame” as they say. We have to take into consideration what is said in Hebrews 3:14,16 and 6:4-6.

That’s the doctrinal interpretation. Of course, you can make any spiritual application you want, which is what most of the commentators do. They can’t grasp the dispensation truth (because it would make them look like heretics) so they confine themselves to the spiritual applications.

“Bitterness”

1. It has the idea of something that has a sharp, acidic taste that is unpleasant.
2. Bitterness is a major, besetting sin for many for that emotion will destroy the heart faster than anything else will. It can make the grace of God and the workings of God in our lives null and void.
3. This bitterness can be directed either toward God or man.
4. It flows from a situation or an event that causes resentment and anger. The context shows a danger of developing bitterness toward God through His chastenings, but almost anything can trigger it.
5. It produces a sour, miserable and unforgiving attitude toward God and man and a bitter person is no joy to be near for his complaining can be contagious. It ruins the heart, spoils the attitude and destroys His redemption.
6. There is a real danger to the Christian if he allows bitterness to root in his heart than it could destroy his walk with God and knock him out of his “quest for Christian purity”.

¹⁹⁰ Charles Spurgeon, “Holiness Demanded”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermon 2902.

“root of bitterness...” Bitterness is likened to a weed in a garden. It can be planted easily, and it springs up quickly and in short order, can overrun and defile an entire garden of the heart.

Concordance study on **“bitterness”**:

1. Bitter cries

- A. Genesis 27:34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.
- B. Esther 4:1 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

2. Bitter lives

- A. Exodus 1:14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

3. The Passover was eaten with bitter herbs, to remind Israel of the bitterness of their bondage

- A. Exodus 12:8
- B. Numbers 9:11

4. Bitter waters

- A. Exodus 15:23 And when they came to Marah,³ they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.
- B. Numbers 5:18,19,23,24,27
- C. James 3:11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place⁶ sweet water and bitter?
- D. Revelation 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

5. Bitter affliction

- A. 2 Kings 14:26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

6. Bitter in soul

- A. 1 Samuel 1:10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.
- B. Job 3:20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;
- C. Job 7:11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
- D. Job 10:1 My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
- E. Job 21:25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.
- F. Isaiah 38:15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

7. Bitter complaint

- A. Job 23:2 Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke¹ is heavier than my groaning.

8. Bitter words

- A. Psalm 64:3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

9. Bitter ends of life

- A. Proverbs 5:4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.

10. Bitterness of heart

- A. Proverbs 14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

- B. Ezekiel 27:31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.
11. Bitterness caused by wayward children
 - A. Proverbs 17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.
 12. Bitter drinks
 - A. Isaiah 24:9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
 13. Bitterness caused by apostasy
 - A. Jeremiah 2:19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
 - B. Jeremiah 4:18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.
 14. Bitter lamentation
 - A. Jeremiah 6:26 O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.
 15. Bitter weeping
 - A. Jeremiah 31:15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.
 - B. Ezekiel 27:31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.
 16. Bitterness of spirit
 - A. Ezekiel 3:14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.
 17. Bitter sighs
 - A. Ezekiel 21:6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.
 18. A bitter day
 - A. Amos 8:10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.
 19. A bitter nation
 - A. Habakkuk 1:6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs.
 20. Israel in bitterness for Christ at the Second Coming
 - A. Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.
 21. Gall of bitterness
 - A. Acts 8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.
 22. Bitter mouth
 - A. Romans 3:14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
 23. Put away bitterness
 - A. Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

24. Warning against bitterness against wives

A. Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

25. Root of bitterness

A. Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

26. Bitter belly

A. Revelation 10:9,10 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

“Continued bitterness and resentment of situations, circumstances, or even individuals in a Christian's life can yield four results.

1. Bitterness will paralyze a person's ability to exercise faith in God's Word. With a paralyzed faith, we will not continue to overcome. Faith and effective prayer presuppose the believer is going on with God. A wrong attitude results in wrong living and wrong praying.

2. Bitterness will prevent the experience of God's forgiveness in our lives. How sad it is that many do not know God's forgiveness because they continue to harbor a bitter, unforgiving spirit towards others. If we are forgiven, forgiving others should be natural for us. Some may say, "I can forgive, but I just cannot forget." It is not that we may never remember it, but the offense or even the memory of the offense should never disturb us again. We must look upon the memory of the incident without malice, bitterness, or resentment.

3. Bitterness can plague even our physical bodies. One who is angry and bitter is leaning to his own understanding, trying to analyze why he has been treated so wrongly. Proverbs 14:30 declares, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."

4. Finally, bitterness can give place to the Devil. It opens the door to demonic tormentors; it will victimize the saint, affecting his inner life and testimony."¹⁹¹

12:16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

“**profane**” This word comes from a Latin word meaning “somebody outside the door of the cathedral”; that is, in the world. Esau was profane. This is the man whom God says twice that He hated (Malachi 1:2 and Romans 9:13). Esau is a type of the carnal Christians who is wrong with God, has lost any and all of his spiritual inheritance and cannot repent to get back into the good graces of God, although he may weep and wail over his condition.

This is also where we get our word “profanity”.

The warning here is to sell your spiritual birthright for something cheap. Esau sold his for a bowl of soup but many have sold their cheaper than that. Most will compromise and renounce their faith for money, security, pursuit of worldly fame, to avoid persecution, etc. The motives are different but the results are the same. The danger of this is very real in the Tribulation with its severe persecutions. Some Tribulation saints will sell their birthrights to avoid persecution or will succumb to the intense pressure to go along with the world system, which is a major temptation in our day. But all they will get for that is a “bowl of soup” and a temporary benefit.

¹⁹¹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 276-277.

12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Esau got so bitter with Jacob over his theft of the birthright (the selling of the birthright was Esau's fault but the stealing of the blessing was the fault of Rebekah and Jacob) that and the blessing that Esau wanted to kill Jacob in Genesis 27:41. It took years for that bitterness to finally mellow in Genesis 33.

“Though he sought it carefully with tears”. Bitterness and carnality will get you eventually. You may weep and wail over your sins but you can push yourself past a place of genuine repentance if you lose your heart and spirit through bitterness.

“he found no place of repentance” Keeping in mind the Tribulation context, a Tribulation saint who “fails of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15) and who does not “endure to the end” as in Matthew 24:13 cannot repent of his apostasy and failure. He can in the Church Age but apostasy is fatal in the Tribulation period. If you do not hold fast and take the Mark of the Beast (or commit some other similar sin with regard to the Antichrist), you lose your salvation and are damned, with no remedy. Esau “crossed the line” and there was no way he could repent of his carnality and to get back into God's graces. God patiently deals with people but there is a deadline that differs from person to person that, when crossed, means that God will no longer deal with that person and that He will abandon him to his own choices.

55. The Assembly and the City 12:18-27

12:18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

Sinai (and the Law) was necessity in our Christian lives, especially early in our Christian lives when we needed to learn the use of the law, but God took Israel away from Sinai when that was completed, and He never took them back there. They went from Sinai to Canaan. Yet many believers want to stay and dwell at the foot of Sinai and continue to stay in spiritual bondage to the law. This was the problem of the Galatian churches that Paul had to rebuke them about. Many denominations do this today with their followers, like the Seventh Day Adventist cult and many “Messianic” congregations. We were at Sinai once but let us leave and not return! It is a Lodebar for the Christian, a place of no pasture.

A description of Mt. Sinai:

1. It was a literal mountain in southern Jordan (not on the Sinai peninsula as it is often depicted).
2. It “burned with fire”. The “thunders and lightnings” were seen as threatenings which depicted the sanctions of a broken law.
3. It was a mount of “blackness” and gloom.
4. It was a mount of “darkness”. This is an appropriate picture of the hopelessness of seeking salvation through the law.
5. It was a mount of “tempest” or a “rush, like that of a sudden storm.
6. It was a mount marked with “the sound of a trumpet;” as quoted from Exodus 19:16. This blast of the trumpet above the roar of the tempest caused all the people in the camp to tremble.
7. It was marked by “the voice of words” as quoted from Deuteronomy 4:12,13.

This represents a negative, yet honest, view of the law and hopelessness of those trying to earn their salvation by keeping the law. Thank God that He has provided us with something better, which is the entire burden of the Book of Hebrews.

12:19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

“Let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:19). The voice of God at Sinai was so powerful that it put fear in the hearer, even into the heart of Moses.

12:20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

At the giving of the Law, man was to keep his distance and was unable to approach too closely because of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. This is something that would be contrasted in the description of Mount Zion, that follows. There was no grace or mercy at Sinai. If even an animal wandered to the border of the mount and touched it by accident, he was to be stoned. If a sinner broke one of the precepts by accident, he was still judged as guilty and had to pay.

12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Verses 18-21 refer to the events of the giving of the Law in Exodus 19 and the summation of those events in Deuteronomy 4:11-13. These passages deal with how God manifested Himself in the giving of the Law and the associated events surrounding it. It was a terrifying and sobering display, designed to remind Israel what a holy God they would serve and what the penalties would be for disobedience and apostasy from that Law. It was a lesson that Israel would never really learn, as seen in their constant apostasies and resulting divine judgments.

There was not much hope for a life or a walk with God at Sinai, for that is not the burden of the Law. The Law was necessary as it defined sin and set the requirements of dealing with man's sin. But once that Law was fulfilled by the death of Christ (Romans 10:4), we are now able to move beyond Sinai onto Zion for a better hope and divine presentation, one of grace and fellowship and communion with God.

12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Not Mount Sinai but Mount Zion (Sion is the alternate spelling)! Zion is fairer than Sinai. It is the city of the great God. Another one of the “better” things of Hebrews although the word “better” is not used here. But here is a better geography and divine presentation than Israel saw. There would be dread and terror in approaching Mount Sinai but none of that is present in the approach to Mount Zion. Law was manifested at Sinai, grace at Zion. You would go “to” Mount Sinai but you go “unto” Mount Zion.

We are “**come**” to Mount Zion. We were warned off at Mount Sinai, warned not to approach the mount or to even touch it. But Mount Zion has nothing but welcomes and encouragements to all who would approach.

“There was no habitation of man upon it, neither did it yield pasture for flocks. The Mount of God stood out in terrible sublimity against the sky, holding communion with the stars, but refusing to deal with men. It was sublime, but stern and tempest beaten. God came upon Sinai with His Law and the dread mountain became a type of what the Law would be to us. It has given us a grand idea of holiness, but it has not offered us a pathway thereto, nor furnished a weary heart with a resting place, nor supplied a hungry soul with spiritual food. It can never be the place where congregated multitudes erect a city for themselves and a Temple for the living God—it is not the shrine of fellowship, but the throne of authority and justice.”¹⁹²

“A traveler by train has often reached a place without his knowing that he is there. The guard or a friend has to tell him. Often it is because that he had expected the journey to last longer. So deep is there in us the spirit of salvation by effort and attainment, by what we are and feel, that the rousing call is needed continually. Here you are, sooner than you thought, in very deed, come to Mount Zion! Come, let us walk about Zion, and go round about her. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion. God has made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge!”¹⁹³

Comparisons between Mt Sinai (Hebrews 12:18) and Mt Zion:

MOUNT SINAI	MOUNT ZION
In a wilderness	In a fruitful area, in the Promised Land
Law was given	A place of grace, promises, covenants
Terror, smoke, blackness associated with it	A more positive presentation
	Called the “heavenly Jerusalem”
	Associated with a host of angels
Israel only	For believing Jew and Gentile
God only visited Sinai for a short season	God dwells in Zion
A rocky, uninviting mountain	A glorious, heavenly city
Genders to bondage- Galatians 4:24,25	Is free- Galatians 4:26
	Is the mother of us all- Galatians 4:26
Identified with Hagar	
Could be touched as it was physical	Cannot be touched as it is spiritual and heavenly- Hebrews 12:18
Temporary	Eternal
Necessary for its day	Something better
Old Covenant	New Covenant

Psalms 48:12,13 is the companion passage about how the pilgrim view Mt. Zion. No such lauds are written about Mt. Sinai. Sinai is necessary but Zion is to be desired. We’ll add a brief exposition of Psalms 48:12,13 here.¹⁹⁴

Psalms 48:12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

A. Walk about Zion

1. You have to know where it is first if you are to walk about her. You must be able to locate Zion, the spiritual elements of the Kingdom of God.

a. Can you spot the truth? Can you distinguish it from error?

¹⁹² Charles Spurgeon, “The General Convocation Around Mount Zion”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, volume 28, sermon 1619.

¹⁹³ Andrew Murray, *The Holiness of All*.

¹⁹⁴ Preached by O. Talmadge Spence but I do not have a copy of the sermon.

- b. Can you find a genuine Bible preaching church and preacher? Can you discern a good church from a bad one, a faithful church from a compromising one?
 - 2. Walk about Zion and go round about her
 - a. Scope it out. Map it. Familiarize yourself with it.
 - b. When I was a boy, my father was in the Air Force, which means we moved every year. One thing my father loved to do was “snoop” when we moved into a new area, to see what was there. I have picked that up. I love to look around, go down back streets and even spend time of Google Maps, looking at places I may never go through its Street View feature.
 - c. We need to be this curious about Mt. Zion and the things of God. What is it like? What are its features and points of interest? Are you curious about the things of God and have a desire to explore?
- B. Tell The Towers
 - 1. Zion has towers. They are usually for defense. In that case, it means Zion has its enemies, those who would attack it and attempt to destroy it, either by outright attack or through subtle infiltration.
 - 2. Check in those towers and defenses. Are the towers of truth and orthodoxy still gleaming in the sun? Are they still strong and secure? Or have they suffered neglect and are in a weakened condition? If so, they must needs be rebuilt or repaired, as Nehemiah repaired the walls of Jerusalem.

Psalm 48:13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

- A. Zion has bulwarks
 - 1. The idea is of an entrenchment, another reference to her defense against her enemies. She is a strong and well-fortified city.
- B. Consider her palaces
 - 1. Palaces are residences for royalty. Mount Zion is the habitation of the King and He dwells there. It is the Royal City of God.
- C. That ye may tell it to the generation following
 - 1. It is important for the current generation to pass on Biblical truth to their children, just as our fathers and grandfathers did to us. The Old Testament is very strong in these kinds of admonitions, especially in Deuteronomy (as in Deuteronomy 6:20, among other verses).

There are seven characteristics of this “Mount Zion”:

- 1. It is a “heavenly Jerusalem
- 2. It has an innumerable company of angels
 - A. They are ministers to the saints and the messengers of God. What will they do in heaven?
- 3. It has a “general assembly” and “church of the firstborn”
 - A. It is populated by saints, angels, and God Himself
- 4. God is the “Judge of all”
- 5. The spirits of just men are made perfect
- 6. Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant is present
- 7. Here is the “blood of sprinkling”

12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

This is the only mention of a church in Hebrews besides in Hebrews 2:12. One explanation for this is that if this is a Tribulation epistle, the Church has been raptured out. No Tribulation saint is or was a member of the New Testament Body of Christ as it simply is not on earth during the Tribulation. There is the **“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect”** here but that is not a term applied by Paul anywhere in his writings to the New Testament Church. There is a “church” made up of “called out believers” in the Tribulation but it is a different body from the New Testament Church. This is not the New Testament church. It is referred to as the “church of the firstborn”. Israel is God’s firstborn in Exodus 4:22, **And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.** No Gentile nation nor the New Testament church is ever referred to as God’s firstborn. This must refer to the body of Tribulation saints.

“which are written in heaven” Luke 10:20 says that our names are written in heaven, but the “names” is not mentioned in this verse, but it is implied. This is a New Testament reference. Does it involve the “Lamb’s Book of Life”? If so, the names of all the righteous are written in that book, both Jew and Gentile, so the idea is not solely a New Testament one. Today, many of the Church are still on earth but their names are on the roll in glory.

Every man should ask “Is my name written there? On the page white and fair? In the book of Thy kingdom, is my name written there?” Is is on the heavenly roll? To have your name written on the church roll is good but that does not guarantee that it is written on the heavenly roll.

“God, the Judge of all” This phrase may have the judgments after the Second Coming in view. God judges all, saint and sinner. These in heaven have passed the ultimate judgment and have been found to be worthy to be in Mount Zion through the finished redemptive work of Christ on the cross.

“the spirits of just men made perfect” Only in glory when we receive our glorified bodies. We will then be “perfect” as we will then be in our final, eternal, glorified form, never to sin again, fit for heaven, eternity and eternal communion with God.

12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

The **“new covenant”** is millennial and Jesus is the mediator of it.

The **“blood of sprinkling”** refers to the heavenly mercy seat where Jesus applied His blood after His death on the cross. It is there where the sin problem is settled eternally and where it is accepted by the Father. That blood speaks better is compared to the blood of Abel, the blood sacrifice he offered in Genesis 4 and the blood he shed at the hands of Cain. The blood offered by the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God was better than the blood of that sacrifice offered by Abel. Both sacrifices resulted in the deaths of the offerers, but since the blood of Jesus was superior to the blood of the animal that Abel offered, Jesus’ blood speaks of better things than the blood Abel offered and the blood that he spilled.

“speaketh better things” What did the blood of Christ say that was better than what Abel’s blood said? Both were killed but the blood of Christ secured redemption for all mankind, something the blood of Abel could not do. Abel was a righteous man and he died for a righteous reason, but his blood could save no one because his blood was sinful, just like the

blood of every other man. Abel's death was before the start of the Mosaic dispensation so there is no direct comparison with Abel's blood with the sacrifices and offerings under the Mosaic system.

12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Notice the match mate to the "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" in Hebrews 2:3. The reference was to God on earth Who spoke at Sinai. The Jew was to listen and hear and not to despise what he heard and saw then. How much more now, on the eve of the tribulation period? "Much more shall we not escape...If we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven..." (Hebrews 12:25). The warning of neglect and not hearing the words of God is given again. It is important enough to be repeated over and over again. The writer is full of the danger of their falling short, tarrying under Sinai (as the Galatians did), and not going onto perfection.

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" Will God speak, or maybe appear, to Israel in the Tribulation? To encourage them in the midst of their sufferings? If so, this is an admonition for tribulation Jews not to ignore or despise what God is saying to them in the midst of their sufferings.

12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

This is probably a reference to Haggai 2:6,7, **For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.** When the Law was given at Sinai, even Moses feared and shook. But the second shaking of the whole earth before the Second Coming will be more intense. There will be many powerful earthquakes in the tribulation but this last days shaking is more a political and moral shaking of the nations, as God will shake the nations and send them confusion, anarchy and turmoil in judgment.

This shaking will also involve heaven. Revelation does tell us of many heavenly signs and wonders that will take place in the Tribulation period but heaven itself will undergo some sort of turmoil. It can refer to the heavens, but it probably also includes heaven itself, with another angelic rebellion and resulting turmoil in Revelation 12:4 (**And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.**). When Lucifer originally fell, that was a major shaking of heaven and maybe the universe.¹⁹⁵

This is a warning regarding these shakings by God. Shakings, like earthquakes, can be frightening things and experiences. The judgments of God deserve respect and they are things that no one wants to experience.

Why does God shake the earth? For the gross sins of mankind. For example, consider this quote from A. W. Pink in his commentary on Hebrews: "The fullness of time was come." First, the world had reached its climacteric of sin. History has given a faithful record of the terrible

¹⁹⁵ Depending on how one views the so-called "Gap Theory" of Genesis 1:1,2. I have a full treatment on it in my *Pilgrim Way Commentary on Genesis*.

moral conditions which obtained among men in the century that immediately preceded our Lord's advent. At Rome, which was then the metropolis of the world, the Court of Caesar was steeped in luxury and licentiousness. To provide amusement for his senators six hundred gladiators fought a hand-to-hand conflict in the public theater. Not to be outdone, Pompey turned five hundred lions into the arena to engage an equal number of his braves, and "delicate ladies" sat applauding and gloating over the blood that flowed. Children were the property of the state, to be disposed of as was deemed best for the public interests. The aged and infirm were banished to an island in the Tiber. Marriage was wholly a matter of sensual caprice; divorce was so frequent, it was customary for women to count them by the number of rings worn on their fingers. About two thirds of the entire civilized world were slaves, their masters having absolute power over them.

"Conditions in Greece were even worse. Sensual indulgence and every species of cruelty were carried to the highest pitch. Gluttony was an art. Fornication was indulged without restraint. Parents were at liberty to expose their children to perish from cold and hunger or to be eaten up by wild beasts, such exposure being practiced frequently, and passed without punishment or censure. Wars were carried on with the utmost ferocity: if any of the vanquished escaped death, slavery of the most abject kind was the only prospect before them; and in consequence, death was considered preferable to capture. "The dark places of the earth were filled with the habitations of cruelty" (Ps. 74:20). The world had reached its climacteric of sin, and this provided a dark background from which could shine forth the Light."

Every generation has sins like this and worse. Why would not God send shakings to dislodge such entrenched sins in these empires and social systems?

12:27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Only God's remnant will make it through these shakings. With the current generation in turmoil and anarchy and confusion reigning, the only thing that will get you through it with your sanity intact will be communion with God. This applies now and to the believer who is struggling to survive and remain faithful during the tribulation period. '

The question of Ezekiel 22:14 remains to those believers who live in the times of God's shakings, **Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it.** It can if the heart is "fixed" as in Psalm 57:7, **My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.**

The only thing that will get you through the seasons of God's shaking will be your communion with God. Your church won't save you, neither will your theological statement, where you went to school or how many souls you won last year. All are shaky foundations when the foundations are being shaken and moved!

Can you endure? What about your family? Your church? That shakings of 2020 (especially the Covid-19 lockdowns that harmed so many smaller ministries) will claim many victims. Many small churches (including mine) might not make it. I have known of two churches within the last three years that shut down (and that is based on my VERY limited knowledge of these events).

God has shaken the nations in times past and He will do it again:

1. Isaiah 2:19,21 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth...To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged

rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

2. Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

3. Even Satan shakes kingdoms in Isaiah 14:16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

4. Isaiah 24:18 And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

5. Ezekiel 38:20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

6. Joel 3:16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope⁷ of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

7. Haggai 2:6,7,21 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts....Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth.

8. Luke 21:25 Upon the earth [there will be] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

A. The perplexity that we find ourselves in today reveals to the world that we have lost our way as a nation. We have no solution for our problems, and we will not have the resources to be delivered. The sea and waves are roaring throughout our country; a deafening sound is ever echoing with talk of mournful and painful destruction.

God is also sifting the nations in a similar manner, as in Amos 9:9, **For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.** Israel is being shaken but this involves all nations. Even Jerusalem will become a "burdensome stone" in Zechariah 12:3, **And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.**

These shakings, prophetically, are occurring now with the nations in a constant state of flux and turmoil, but it will be fulfilled in the Tribulation. God gives fallen man no rest (Isaiah 57:20). Man gets over one crisis and the next one is on his doorstep. God keeps the nations in a constant state of turmoil and in His judgment, will not give them the rest and peace they seek. Whenever the religious and political leaders all come together to "pray for peace", God sends two more wars. This is why the world is looking for One Man who can tie this thing all together, and who can provide the answer and a solution to all the troubles facing mankind today. That man is the Antichrist and his initial success will be the primary reason why the world will accept his leadership so quickly.

Consider the many shakings by God in human history:

1. The Flood
2. The Exodus

3. The Assyrian and Babylonian exiles of the Jews
4. The rise of the Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Roman Empires
5. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This would have shaken Judaism as nothing else ever had before.
6. The fall of Rome
7. The Dark Ages
8. The Reformation
9. The world wars
10. The terrorist attacks of 9/11
11. The rapture will be a major shaking!
12. The Tribulation period will be greatest time of shaking in human history.

God shakes His men, too:

1. Noah was shaken in the events around the Flood
2. Jacob was shaken at the apparent death of Joseph
3. Moses was shaken after his failed attempt to deliver Israel by his own hand and his resulting 40-year exile into the wilderness.
4. Peter was shaken at his denials of the Lord
5. Saul was shaken in Acts 9 at his conversion

If you were born in 1900, consider all these shakings you would have had in your life:

1. On your 14th birthday, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday. You may get drafted by your 17th or 18th birthday.
 2. There is constant agitation by fascist and socialist extremists in the 1910s that threaten to spark a revolution in America at any time.
 3. You survive World War I, then you deal with the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1919 where as many as 50 million people die worldwide.
 4. When you are 29, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.
 5. When you turn 39, World War II starts.
 6. When you turn 41, the United States is fully pulled into World War II. Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.
 7. At age 50, the Korean War starts. 5 million perish.
 8. From your birth, until you were 55, you dealt with the fear of polio epidemics each summer. You experience friends and family contracting polio and being paralyzed and/or dying.
 9. At age 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn't end for 20 years. Four million people perish in that conflict. During the Cold War, you lived each day with the fear of nuclear annihilation.
 10. When you are 62, you have the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, almost ended as we were *that close* to a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union over the Soviets placing nuclear missiles in Cuba.
 11. You live through the rebellions of the 1960s, which one preacher referred to as "America's Tribulation Period".
 12. When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.
- Talk about a lifetime of shakings!

What are some things that cannot be shaken?

1. The word of God. Man's understandings of the word of God may be shaken but the word itself remains constant. Man tries to shake the word with new Bible versions and

exotic new theologies and theological systems, but they all collapse when shaken, or when they are put to the test.

2. The person and work of Christ

3. Prophecy. This would include the prophecies relating to Israel. Our understandings of prophecy often change but the prophecies themselves never change.

4. The promises of God. Our faith in these promises are often shaken by our circumstances and trials but they always emerge as true and dependable at the end.

5. God's plan of salvation. Man gives you dozens of plans of salvation, but the true plan remains constant. We may also be shaken by doubts about our salvation, but these shakings can actually be good for us as they will force us to make sure we really were saved, despite our doubts, failings and carnalities. We would emerge from seasons of shakings with a stronger faith than ever,

6. God's working in human history. There is a Biblical political philosophy¹⁹⁶ but God's plan for the ages proceeds along with no amendments.

7. The Church. Even the gates of hell will be unable to shake it (Matthew 16:17-19).

The list could be expanded considerably. Remember, in all of the shakings in our generation, 2 Corinthians 4:8a gives us a precious promise "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed."

Everything man-made will not survive the shakings. Everything that is divine in origin will also be shaken but they will always survive the shakings.

Now compare that with things that can be shake, which would include anything human, such as:

1. Politics
2. Economics
3. Philosophy
4. Societal norms
5. Religious teachings, not to be confused with scriptural truths
6. Humanistic teachings

56. Exhortation to Fear God 12:28,29

12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

"We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved..." There are two interpretations:

1. A Millennial kingdom (the kingdom of Heaven) which is the subject of the Book of Hebrews and therefore is not stretched.

2. An eternal reign as kings (Revelation 22:5, **And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**) after the Millennium.

Since this is one of the "unshakable things" of Hebrews 12:27, the promises of a Millennial kingdom cannot be moved or shaken, no matter what all the postmillennialists and amillennialists say about the doctrine and the promise. All the governments and religions of the world, plus Satan himself, will do their best to prevent the establishment of the kingdom, but they will all fail, as in Psalm 2. After all of the shakings of the Tribulation period, the Tribulation saints will need all of the encouragement that they can get about more stable days ahead. We can only imagine how terrible the Tribulation period will be with all the upheavals and shakings

¹⁹⁶ One of the best books on this topic is *The Sure Word of Prophecy* by Peter Ruckman.

of governments, religion, society and everyday living will be in light of the judgments and the aftermath,

"This verse expresses that which will keep us amidst the shakings. At times we wonder who will be next to fall away; what minister, what ministry, what school will be the next to fall away as God shakes? The only way we will survive this End-time shaking is for our lives and all that is within us to be grounded and secured in that which cannot be shaken, in something that is unmovable. We must be found in a place or Person where the grace of God consumes us with reverence and godly fear. We can never lose this precious consciousness of reverence and godly fear. It must ever be in us until the day we die. The day we start becoming flippant and casual with God is the day the falling away begins in our lives.

"How vulnerable we are during the shakings of life: the testings, the trials, and the temptations. Such shakings are an integral part of our preparation for heaven. Jesus was perfected through suffering, not in character, but in His role as Redeemer; likewise, having been delivered from the power and dominion of sin, we must through trial and suffering be prepared for our heavenly abode. While the purified heart is freed from the tendencies to sin, it is never, while on probation, delivered from the susceptibilities to sin. When we are victorious in any trial or temptation, we thereby strengthen our motives to remain righteous and thus put to death motives which would lead us again into sin. This process is what brings us to be "established" in grace (13:9c). While going through these shakings, we must not let our moods and spirits be affected. No matter how deep the trials, we must ever know the Spirit of Christ.

"Oh, to dwell in the purging fire of God's holiness! Precious and needful are His chastenings and shakings."¹⁹⁷

12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

"Fire may be either a blessing or a curse. All depends upon my relation to it whether it meets me as a friend or an enemy. The fire of God, as it comes to purify, to consume the sacrifice and convert it into its own heavenly light-nature, to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to transform our being into flames of love, blessed the man who knows His God as a consuming fire. But woe to him on whom the fire of God descends, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, in wrath and judgment. Oh, that in the fulness of faith all believers might see and fear this impending judgment, and, moved with the compassion of Christ, give themselves to warn men and snatch them from the fire. For our God is a consuming fire."¹⁹⁸

God is not simply a "fire" but a superlative fire, an all-consuming oner:

1. Fire can purify and what the fire of God purifies is made pure and holy forever
2. Fire can destroy in judgment and whatever the fire of God destroys is destroyed beyond remedy

We can see both applications of this in 2 Peter 3:10-12.

¹⁹⁷ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 285-286.

¹⁹⁸ Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All*.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 13

Even in Paul didn't write Hebrews 1-12 (and he may very well have written it, we just can't be sure), chapter 13 has Paul's fingerprints all over it.

57. Exhortation Regarding Brotherly Love 13:1

13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

In order for it to continue, it must first start! It must have existed in the early church and that was one good thing they were doing that needed to continue.

"brotherly love" here is Strong's #5260, "philadelphia" in the Greek. We also get our English word "philanthropy" from this. This is love among the brethren, in the context, love among Christians, which is a great way to give an effective witness to the unsaved. When the unsaved see Christians biting and tearing at each other, seeing Christians sue each other in the courts and seeing church splits, it leaves a stinking "witness" in that community.

During the last days and in the Tribulation, men will lack for natural affection, the love of many will wax cold and even families and the best of friends will be split over the gospel. Men will not hesitate to turn on each other for the most trivial of reasons. When men and even Christians start a "dog-eat-dog" mentality, it is important for the remnant to practice and maintain true Biblical love toward each other.

58. Exhortation to Hospitality 13:2

13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

You never know who may show up at your door or who you may encounter in the streets. Look at these encounters are possibilities to do good to me, or even to angels in disguise. Abraham faced this situation in Genesis 18 when the Lord Himself and two angels showed up at his house.

These angels look like men. None have wings are none are ever presented as female. How would you entertain an angel "unawares" if they had wings? They would stick out like a sore thumb and you wouldn't be able to miss them!

"entertain" is to render hospitality. Orientals took this responsibility very seriously. "Inns were filthy, ruinously expensive, and of low repute. The Greek had always a shrinking from hospitality given for money; inn-keeping seemed to him an unnatural affair. In *The Frogs of Aristophanes*, Dionysus asks Heracles, when they are discussing finding a lodging, if he knows where there are fewest fleas. Plato in *The Laws* speaks of the innkeeper holding travelers to ransom. It is not without significance that Josephus says that Rahab, the harlot who harboured Joshua's scouts in Jericho, kept an inn. When Theophrastus wrote his character sketch of the reckless man, he said that he was fit to keep an inn or run a brothel; he put both occupations on the same level...On the ordinary business of life, Christians had journeys to make. Both their price and their moral atmosphere made the public inns impossible. There must in those days have been

many isolated Christians fighting a lonely battle. Christianity was, and still should be, the religion of the open door.”¹⁹⁹

59. Remember Those In Bonds 13:3

13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

We should have sympathy for those in trouble. Not only in the Church Age but also in the Tribulation period, as many saints will be imprisoned by the Antichrist and his followers, as a prelude to their eventual martyrdom. This suffering will be great, even unto death. For these suffering saints, we should:

1. To feel deep compassion for them;
2. We are to remember them in our prayers;
3. We are to remember them, as far as practicable, with aid for their relief.

“and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” This is suffering without being persecuted or imprisoned. It would involve the sufferings in our common cycle of life, which we must all endure, some more than others and some more severely than others.

“You could be in anyone’s shoes, and it is only by the grace of God that you are not in the shoes of a paraplegic or a “basket case” or someone on a respirator. You need to “feel” for all of those Christians when you are present with them and absent from them. They number into the tens of thousands: double cleft palates, hair lips, hunchbacks, cripples, deformed limbs, cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, colostomy, existing on pills and shots, rheumaty arthritis, Brite’s disease, Hotchkin’s disease, cerebral palsy, meningitis, and much more.

“That is not to mention thousands who are at this moment starving to death, being tortured in prisons, burying their loved ones, and seeing their life’s goals and ambitions destroyed. People have problems. Some of the problems that you have are rough, but they are nothing compared with what thousands of Christians are called to go through. I’ve seen thirteen-year-old girls on kidney machines dying while “mommy and daddy” went into debt \$30,000 (back in 1982), through a period of ten years, trying to keep their baby alive. I’ve talked to them after they’ve had their dead mothers exhumed and examined because there were “flies in the coffin in the corpse’s eyes.” I’ve prayed with folks while they cried in wheelchairs because the pain was so bad that they couldn’t sleep more than two hours a night and were afraid of becoming dope addicts if they took all of the necessary “pain killers” to get to sleep. I’ve seen people try to support four children under twelve years old after the father left home and the gas and lights were shut off in the dead of winter. I’ve had to counsel pale faced young fathers who came from the maternity ward to ask about what to do with a mongoloid baby that was born. I’ve had to knock at the door of a mother at 2:00 A.M. to tell her that her son had just been killed in a gun fight.

“I’ve had people in my own congregation after ten years of plastic surgery and skin grafts on a body where there was 50 percent of it covered with third degree burns and 25 percent of it covered with second degree burns. I’ve also preached to insane people in the asylum where not a spark of sanity showed on a face throughout the message. I’ve preached to crippled children in spastic clinics where their hands grew out of their elbows and their feet grew out of their knees. A minister that cannot place himself in the BODIES (see the text) of those people and weep with them (see Rom. 12:15) HAS NOT BEEN CALLED TO MINISTER ANYWHERE. Half of the “Fundamentalist” big shots in America are nothing but motivational promoters and

¹⁹⁹ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*.

executives. Men like Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagan, Kenneth Copeland, and Chuck Swindoll make a living with PSYCHOLOGICAL SUGGESTIONS and MENTAL GYMNASTICS. There is nothing “Scriptural” about their ministries, not even when they quote Scripture. They actually look down on sick Christians as people who don’t have enough “faith.”

“If I seem short tempered with some of the brethren at times (which I am), it is because most of the people I write about think that they have terrible problems when they have no real problems at all. They live on tax-exempt property (Bob Jones Jr. and Bob Jones III did for forty years) with a new car every two years, students to mow their lawns and trim their trees and bushes (Arlin and Becky Horton), and most of them have never had to sweat out a light bill or gas bill for half a century (Martin, Price, and Custer). They all carry hospital insurance; they all carry tons of life insurance; and they live by “faith” about like Demas and Diotrephes (Dobson and MacRae). I tend to “get short” with them. I know that they have never cleaned out a septic tank or a grease trap, and most of them would rather die and go to hell than to get their little pinkies dirty cutting down trees or moving stumps and rocks. I tend to think: “Man, if the Lord dumped on you Bible critics what I’ve seen Him dump on some folks, you’d blow your brains out!” They probably would. A man who is so afraid of RIDICULE that he’d lie about manuscript evidence, translations, the Bible, and his motives and reasons for attacking the Bible, wouldn’t be able to bear a real load of any kind for more than twenty four hours.”²⁰⁰

60. Marriage is Honorable 13:4

13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Marriage is honorable because God instituted it in Eden and maintained it throughout human history. “Forbidding to marry” is sign of a doctrine of devils (1 Timothy 4:3).²⁰¹ Sexual purity will diminish as we get closer to the rapture with an explosion of pornography, perversion and “alternate lifestyles”. One of the signs of the last days and the “Days of Noah” will be a perversion of sex and marriage. It will be a major challenge for any Christian to keep himself pure in such an age, but it is important that he do so. The apostolic charge to “**flee fornication**” (1 Corinthians 6:18) still stands, especially in this day. And it will be much worse in the Tribulation as the Holy Spirit will not be in the world with His restraining ministry that He has today. If you think things are bad today (and they are), just wait until after the rapture where all restraint will be cast off.

“**Whoremongers**” are single, unmarried people involved in fornicating with harlots. They practice “whoredom”. “**Adulterers**” are married people engaged with sex outside of their marriage.

61. Christian Conversation 13:5,6

13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

“**conversation**” is “lifestyle” or “manner and conduct of life”.

“**Covetousness,...is idolatry**” (Colossians 3:5). First it was sex in verse 4, now it is money in verse 5. These are two of the three gods of modern America, the third being “education”. We

²⁰⁰ Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 335-337.

²⁰¹ The Roman Catholic system does this with its priests.

must learn to be content with what we have. Even Esau could say “I have enough” in Genesis 33:9-11. Paul would repeat this exhortation in Philippians 4:11 and 1 Timothy 6:8 when he said, “And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” as in Joshua 1:5.

13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

This is quoted from Psalm 56:4 and 118:6.

“The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” “Those bold souls who had the faith to claim this promise (vs. 6) also obeyed Matthew 10:16–21 in the face of torture, imprisonment, and death and decided that what **“man”** could do to them was not to be feared (see Matt. 10:28). What **“man”** can do to his fellow man is a shrieking terror that defies documentation.

“I have *The History of Torture* in my library. It is a study that will turn your blood cold and make your skin crawl. To face what thousands had to face would require a faith in such promises as Hebrews 13:6 that would surpass credibility. Christians have been skinned alive, had their breasts cut off with shears, had spears rammed up through their crotches and were left propped up in the air to die, have been thrown bodily into enclosed pits thirty feet deep onto other bodies and left in piles of hundreds of bodies to die in the dark with broken bones and no food and water, have been whipped until they died, have been stoned until they died, have been bound hand and foot so that rats could eat them (sometimes pigs and dogs), have been forced to watch pigs eat their babies, and have been forced to watch their husbands and sons being roasted alive for four hours at a time.”²⁰²

Man can do a lot to you and can destroy your body, but we are told to fear Him Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell (Matthew 10:28).

62. Exhortation Regarding Spiritual Leaders, Part 1 13:7

13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

The context relates to spiritual rule, the elders and leaders in your church who do their best to lead you in the right way, into correct doctrine and steer you away from sin and apostasy. They must give account for your soul (also see Hebrews 13:17,24), so why not help them out?

We live in a rebellious age where Christians don’t like following the leadership God has placed over them, especially if that leadership is urging some unpopular positions. If a Christian hears their pastor urging them to do something they don’t like, the usual response is “That preacher isn’t going to tell me what to do!” In that case, the world, your flesh and the devil will, as you will obey someone.

This is not to say that pastors are infallible and that they should be followed blindly. Pastors can err and they can make some stupid decisions as they are still human. If they are obviously in the wrong on an issue, you are under no obligation to follow them. And if you encounter a pastor who thinks that he is a substitute for the Holy Spirit in your life, avoid him. Some pastors think they have a God-given authority to micro-manage your life, even to the point of telling you what kind of car to drive or what kind of job to take or in telling your children who to

²⁰² Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, page 345.

marry. This is a plague in the church and these kinds of men must be confronted. We are pastors and under-shepherds, not dictators!

If you find yourself in a position that you cannot respect or honor your pastor (for whatever reason) enough to obey his teachings and follow his leadership, then you need to find one who you can submit to as fast as you can. But this is a real problem for some Christians as they are so spiritual, they just can't any preacher in a 50-mile radius who is up to their level whom they can follow! These are the people who change churches every 18 months because they can't get the pastor to follow THEM and submit to THEM, instead of it being the other way around.

"The spiritual rulers mentioned in the passage have *five* things said about them to which the Christians should pay attention:

1. They are to be *remembered* (vs. 7). **"Know them which labour among you, and are OVER you in the Lord"** (1 Thess. 5:12).
2. They are to be *followed* (vs. 7). **"Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ"** (1 Cor. 11:1).
3. You are to consider their *end* (vs. 7). **"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..."** (2 Tim. 4:7).
4. They are to be *obeyed* (vs. 17). **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear"** (1 Tim. 5:20).
5. They are to be *greeted or saluted* (vs. 24).²⁰³

This indicates they are to be honored and saluted. When I am in another church, I would never call the pastor by his first name, but always as "Pastor" to build up the support his own people should have for him.

There are two extremes with pastoral leadership:

1. Weak. Think of groups like the Plymouth Brethren who tend to minimize the office of pastor. Southern Baptist churches tend to more "deacon run" than "pastor led", which reduces the pastor to being little more than a preacher and not a leader or an administrator.
2. Dictatorial. This is the "Leadership is Never Wrong" and "Touch Not My Anointed" crowd who think the pastor is to be followed blindly and should never be criticized or questioned. This is not an example of spiritual leadership but is more of a religious dictatorship.

"the end of their conversations" Regarding your spiritual leaders whom God has set over you, consider how they wound up their lives and ministries. Take the long look **"Consider their latter end"** (Deuteronomy 32:29). Ask God to teach you to number your days (Psalm 90:12) so that you finish your course with joy (2 Timothy 4:4-8). This is why I choose certain men who were examples for me to follow in the ministry and in the Christian life (men like Robert Murray McCheyne, O. Talmadge Spence, Charles Spurgeon, Asahel Nettleton, etc..) They were examples in life and death. Spence died of ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, "Lou Gehrig's Disease") in July, 2000 and I saw him a few months before his death. He couldn't speak nor could he control his facial muscles, but his mind was active and unaffected up to the end. He demonstrated that a Christian can die a difficult death as a Christian and honor God in the process. We should have a number of godly men and women either in our generation or in previous generations that we respect and honor since they had such a great impact and influence in our lives. We do not make idols out of them, but we study and learn from their testimonies and try to shape our lives according to the example they left behind. That is why

²⁰³ Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, page 348.

God moved on people to write biographies, autobiographies and for writers to compile journals, letters and sermons, all for our benefit!

63. The Immutability of Christ 13:8

13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

This is regarding the immutability of Christ in His nature. The same God Who manifested Himself to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, the apostles and the martyrs is still our God today.

If Jesus does not change, then His doctrines, His programs and the truths of Christianity do not change either. The same God served in the early church through the Dark Ages through the Reformation through the revivals and to this present hour of apostasy remains constant. Doctrines and practices do not need to be updated simply because we are living in the 21st century and this also means that our Bibles do not need to be revised or updated either. We don't need a "new theology" or a "new way of doing church (like the contemporary Christianity of our day) or a "new Bible for a new age." The old ones will do just fine.

64. Exhortation to Stability 13:9

13:9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" There are so many of them today, it is almost impossible to list them all. That is why your heart must be grounded in the truth and in grace so that you will be so familiar with the truth that you will be able to immediately spot the error when you are confronted with it. Spiritual discernment will be an absolute necessity in the last days.

"it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats"

1. The heart is established and strengthened by grace and a relationship with God, not by spirituality, self-righteousness, religious observances or scholarship. Meats may strengthen the body, but grace strengthens the soul and spirit.
2. "The Jews had rigid food laws, laid down at length in Lev 11:1-47. They believed they could serve and please God by eating and by not eating certain foods. Possibly there were some in this Church who were ready to abandon their Christian liberty and once again put themselves under the yoke of Jewish rules and regulations about food, thinking that by so doing they were going to add strength to their spiritual life."²⁰⁴

"There is something about a sensual religion that attracts the natural man. Even today, people are so caught up with the aspects of the natural man that they believe eating or not eating certain foods has some spiritual value. Paul made it clear in Colossians 2:16,17, **Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.** Additionally, Romans 14:17 states **For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.** We must never make the external,

²⁰⁴ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible*.

physical things a spiritual reality...Our firmness of heart and life is to be found in the grace of Christ, not in sacrificial meats.”²⁰⁵

65. We Have An Altar 13:10,11

13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

What is this altar and who are these people who have no right to eat from it?

This altar is said to be “without the camp” and “without the gate.” The “blood is brought into the sanctuary” (Hebrews 13:11) from the altar of burnt offering (see Leviticus 1,6), but our “altar” is for spiritual, not literal animal sacrifices (Hebrews 11:15,16 and 1 Peter 2:5). Roman Catholics insist on a literal sacrifice at their mass of literal wine and bread that has been magically transformed into the literal body of Christ, which is to be eaten, cannibal style. The wine has also been turned into blood and is then drunk,

Altars serve several purposes:

1. For worship, when personal altars were built in the book of Genesis.
2. To commemorate great events, such as Noah building an altar after the Flood.
3. For testimony and witness, as in Joshua 22:26.
4. For sacrifice.
5. To sustain the priests.

13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

“This is the operation described in Exodus 29:10–14 (see comments in that Commentary) and Leviticus 4:11–12. The comparison is appalling. Christ is not only likened to the sacrifices of the altar of burnt offering and the Passover Lamb, but His death on Calvary is also likened to the cast off, discarded REFUSE of an undesirable animal: “But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and HIS DUNG, shalt thou burn with fire WITHOUT THE CAMP: it is a SIN OFFERING” (Exod. 29:14). When Christ “became sin” for us (2 Cor. 5:21), He took our curse (Gal. 3:13) to the extent of being likened to Satan (see John 3:14), and as such, was REJECTED OF GOD (Matt. 27:46). He was “refuse” cast out of the camp. THAT’S WHAT THEY DID WITH LEPERS (see Lev. 13:46—“He is unclean; he shall dwell alone; WITHOUT THE CAMP shall his habitation be”). My, my, what a picture! Christ was LEPEROUS for the leper. Christ was cast off for the “cast off.” Christ was forsaken for those whom God should forsake.”²⁰⁶

66. Without the Gate and Camp 13:12-14

13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

This is the climax of the book of Hebrews, where Christ shed His own blood on the cross to have it applied on the heavenly mercy seat to sanctify and save those who believe in Him. His

²⁰⁵ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, page 292.

²⁰⁶ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 355-356.

suffering brought our sanctification. This is something we remember every time we observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; His sufferings and death.

There is no sanctification with suffering. One cannot buy a book (other than the Bible), read it through in a few hours and be sanctified. We must abandon our sins and crucify our old sin nature (Galatians 2:20). That involves crucifying our sin nature spiritually in the way that Jesus was crucified physically. His physical crucifixion was exceedingly painful. Our putting to death our sin nature through the crises and process of sanctification will prove just as painful to us spiritually. This is why Paul likens it to crucifixion in Galatians 2:20. Are we will to suffer the pains of abandoning the world, crucifying our sins and drawing closer to God through our pursuit of holiness and Christian purity? Are we willing to die a little bit each day so that we may be more alive in Christ?

Jesus suffered and was crucified outside the city walls of the Holy City. He was not given the honor of being stoned according to the law, and He was not given the honor of being put to death in Jerusalem. Jesus suffered and was executed without the camp because He was despised and rejected (Isaiah 53:3). The mainline Judaism of the day did not want Him. The modern institutional church also hates the pilgrim and wants nothing to do with him and will afford him no honors.

13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

"Let us go forth" an exhortation, not a command. You have to want to go to where Jesus is. He is not going to drag you out of the camp. The Lord had to literally drag Lot out of Sodom but He will not do that with the modern believer. If you want to stay in the City of Destruction, you may, at your own spiritual peril.

Christ is **without the camp**. He is not in the mainline institutional churches and denominations. He is not within the confines of acceptable religion. He is outside those areas, in storefront churches, small works pastored by faithful men, and in congregations overlooked and bypassed by the ecclesiastical powers-that-be. The best preachers in our generation are men you never heard of. They are not preaching in Sword Conferences nor are they invited to speak at Spiritual Leadership Conferences or Shepherds Conferences or any nationwide gathering. They are faithfully toiling away in small, ignored, out-of-the-way churches, faithfully ministering to their small congregations and are the ones who keep the Biblical ways from perishing in their generation.

We have to **"go"** without the camp. It must be a deliberate and volitional decision and act on our part. We must look at the spiritual scene around us, realize the failure of the institutional church, see that Christ is without the camp, and go to Him. He will not drag us to go without the camp but He will invite us to come to where He is.

Leave whatever and whoever you have to leave to get to Christ, for He is worth any sacrifice you have to make and any earthly tie of friendship you may have to sever.

"Going forth to Christ without the camp" is the big problem with modern American Christians, and we have commented on this at length under Hebrews 11:8. Christians want to establish a name for themselves in their local communities as social and financial big shots. The biggest trouble with Pensacola is the saved people in it. You see, the saved people in Pensacola want to get along with the saved and the unsaved people in Pensacola. They don't want any enemies; not even one. Now, I'm not telling you to make enemies every time you turn around so that you get fired every other month and can't hold down a job. But this thing is a matter of trying

to go along with the world to please the world system. I'm not talking about taking orders from your employer on the job; you owe the work to him, and when you are on the job, you ought to obey cheerfully as a Christian should. But there doesn't have to be any of this "buddy buddy" stuff. You look out across Pensacola, and you will find saved people putting their arms around unsaved people at the water fountain while laughing at a dirty joke together; taking a cup of coffee together, while joking about the preachers in town; and standing around the water cooler shooting the bull about the latest Clint Eastwood picture or "Wasn't Dolly Parton good in 'The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas'?"! Then the Christian turns to the lost man and says, "Why don't you come out to my church next Sunday? We have a fine little preacher...." That's what does the damage!

Every Christian should be out of step with the age in which he lives. If the slack between you and the Bible-believing "point man" is five to ten years, you are following "afar off" for worldly reasons. Do you know why all of these big works have their hands tied and cannot really accomplish anything SPIRITUALLY in the towns where they are? It is because they are tied up FINANCIALLY with every hybrid animal in the zoo; they have to "stay in good" with rich people to get their money. That is all there is to it—period. The fact that SOME of these rich people are "professing Christians" is beside the point. The point is that the King James Bible issue is an OFFENSE to these people, so it must be shoved under the rug. Take the Greek Receptus instead, and then call yourself a "BIBLE BELIEVER." You mean "coward," don't you? What you mean is, "I'm in the CAMP!"²⁰⁷

Going without the camp involves the practice of Biblical separation, where we separate from disobedient brethren and have no fellowship them but rather rebuke them. The institutional church is in deep apostasy. We are never encouraged to stay within the camp and try to rescue them as a puritan. We are told to turn our back on it, rebuke it and leave it as a pilgrim. Once done, you may walk the lonely path of a pilgrim, with little encouragement and few companions, but the Lord approves, and He will guide you to that Heavenly City that is the goal of every Christian. One cannot fellowship or commune with Christ while one stays within the camp of the institutional church, for Christ is not there. One must go outside the city walls of the institutional church to where Christ if one desires fellowship with Him. To go "within the veil", one must go "outside the camp".

You can't have communion of Christ if you are not in the same place He is, spiritually. You cannot have communion with Christ at the Mass. You can't have communion at a Christian rock concert or a Southern Gospel "all night sing". You cannot have communion with Christ if you are still part of an apostate church or theological system. You go where He is to be with His flock if you want communion with the Good Shepherd (Song 1:7).

The true child of God will find himself more comfortable outside the camp than inside of it. He will be more comfortable worshipping with a dozen saints in a storefront than with 5,000 professors who are within the camp.

Usually when you go "outside the camp" you go alone. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian left the City of Destruction and his wife nor any of his friends followed him, only Pliable did and he lasted until the first bump in the road. Outside the camp, fellowships will be sparse but they will be precious. You will be alone, misunderstood, slandered but you will be in the company of the saints and angels and you will flee from the wrath to come. It is always best to be where Christ is, no matter the circumstances.

Notice this admonition is in chapter 13, verse 13. Thirteen is the Biblical number of rebellion. Someone is in rebellion here. Is it the institutional church that is in theological and practical rebellion against God? Or is it the pilgrim who is rebellion against the mainline Christianity of his generation?

²⁰⁷ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*, pages 357-358.

“bearing his reproach” To follow Christ and to go where He is will bring reproach, not honor. Are we willing to bear it?

1. Psalm 22:6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
2. Psalm 31:11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.
3. Psalm 69:7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.
4. Psalm 102:8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.
5. Psalm 109:25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.
6. It also involves identifying with His sufferings, as in Philippians 3:10, **That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.**
7. Jesus was reproached on earth, not honored. Why should seek a better office than He had?

“bearing his reproach”

1. We bear “his” reproach, not “our” reproach. Let’s not create our own reproach by acting like jerks and fools, for if we suffer for our sins, what reward do we have (1 Peter 3:14,17)?
2. He bore the reproach of our sins in His body on the cross. We bear His reproach of testimony.

What is this “reproach”? The world hates Christ and everything about Him. That includes His church, His Bible, His hymns, His people. If you follow Him without the camp, then you are identifying yourself with Christ and against the world. You cannot be for both. Christ and the world are on opposite sides and you cannot identify or follow both at the same time. How many professing Christians try though! The confess Christ yet dress immodestly. The listen to carnal music, including the various genres of secular music, plus Christian Contemporary Music and Southern Gospel Music. The read bad literature. Yet they go to church. They want to be identifying with Christ without bearing His reproach. They seek a popular Christianity that the world will at least tolerate. But this “facing both ways” attitude will accomplish nothing spiritually and will only bring compromise and carnality as its fruits.

13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

This is because we are spiritual pilgrims who refuse to settle here on earth. Our citizenship is heavenly as is our walk and our hope. Pilgrims are on the move and have no certain dwelling place, and thus, no continuing city to dwell in. We put no faith in any ecclesiastical center here on earth and look to no earthly denomination or fellowship to be the standard of truth. The spiritual goal of our pilgrimage is a heavenly city that we do not see and that is not here yet but that is coming. We left the “camp” in the hope and faith that there is a better country and city to be had elsewhere.

Cities are places where men go to make their fortune, gain an education, seek power and influence or to avail themselves of cultural opportunities. But none of these things interest the pilgrim. He only desires God and the things of God. He counts all other things as dung so that he may win Christ rather than the world (Philippians 3:8). The world’s attentions and affections are centered on cities, but the affections of the saint are focused elsewhere.

We do not look to Rome, Mecca, Salt Lake City, Greenville, Hammond, Murfreesboro, Pensacola or any other city for our spiritual guidance. We look to the New Jerusalem and the heavenly Mount Zion. Our spiritual polestar is not a carnal or physical location on this earth that will one day be consumed by fire. Rather, it is a spiritual and heavenly location. It is no less real and tangible than any earthly city, but the difference is in its location and nature. Abraham looked for such a city (Hebrews 11:10) and we must as well if we are true children of Abraham.

Dispensationally, the literal descendants of Abraham (Israel) do have an earthly city they will look to in the Millennium (as described in Ezekiel 40-48) but the Church has a heavenly New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21 and 22.

If we are to go outside the camp, that means we must needs leave the world and the world system. Therefore, we cannot have a city-home here. If we did, it would demonstrate that we are still in the world and have not gone outside the camp. If I am looking toward Salt Lake City as my spiritual dwelling place, it shows I am still thinking and living carnally in looking to a literal, physical city that is grossly corrupt, no better than Sodom spiritually and that will burn one day. If I am to set my affections on things that are above, why am I looking horizontally?

Have you noticed earthly cities? They may gleam outwardly and inspire some degree of awe but scratch the surface and you will see all manner of sin, corruption and depravity. A mere handful of blocks removed from the U. S. Capitol in Washington lies slums. Parts of Philadelphia resemble a war zone, worse than any third-world country. Baltimore and Chicago are shooting galleries. New York City is infested with every conceivable sin. Jerusalem is referred to as “Sodom” (Revelation 11:8).

If a professing believer has a continuing spiritual city here on earth, it usually indicates he is following a theological system, or a man more than he follows Christ and His Word. If a man looks to Rome, he is setting the pope and his apostate Romanist system as his god. If a man prays thrice daily toward Hammond, Indiana, it shows that the late Jack Hyles is his prophet and what he preached and taught makes up his confession of faith. But since no theological system is inspired or perfect, that means to human teacher or preacher can claim divine inspiration or infallibility either. That is why I must always lift my gaze upward, to Him Who is Perfect and to the city He inhabits and sanctifies by His presence.

“we have no continuing city” “The literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob DO (see Heb. 11:10 and comments), and though that city be in temporary bondage (Gal. 4:25) and will still bear the shame of “Sodom” (Rev. 11:8), it will be “THE LORD IS THERE” in the Millennium (Ezek. 48:35). The nations will make pilgrimages to it (Isa. 2), for out of it shall go forth “THE LAW OF THE LORD” (Isa. 2:3). It is the Christian who has no “continuing city” here. Our “continuing city” is up THERE (Gal. 4:26–27). We have an unchangeable city there because it is an unchangeable Saviour who built it (John 14:1,2). Since He is “THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO DAY, AND FOR EVER,” we don’t have to worry about something He builds. Everything here is characterized by change and decay. Our city is “incorruptible...and that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1:3–5).”²⁰⁸

“but we seek one to come” The city we seek is not here yet, either Millennial Jerusalem or New Jerusalem. We can’t see it but we desire it. We are told of these cities and both are described to us in holy Scripture. Thus, we walk by faith in a city described but not yet brought into existence, rather than walking by faith in considering earthly cities.

Hebrews 11:16 says that this city is “prepared” as also related by the Lord in John 14:3. Jesus said He would go to prepare a place for us and that has taken over 2,000 years. The

²⁰⁸ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Hebrews*, page 357.

description of the New Jerusalem reveals much divine care and planning in His preparation of an eternal home for the saints.

Do not build your nest on any one of the trees of earth, for they are all marked for the axe, and they will all have to come down, and your nest too, if you have built upon them. (Charles Spurgeon)

“In these verses Paul gives us a meditation concerning sanctification that we must keep in mind. Because sanctification is the broadest aspect of the great work of the atonement, each separate context in Scripture concerning sanctification provides additional insight. In this chapter at least three aspects concerning sanctification are mentioned: (1) sanctification is through the spilt blood of Christ, (2) sanctification is found outside the gate, and (3) sanctification was rejected by the people of the city. It is amazing how professing Christians rejoice at a sinner's salvation while often becoming angry over the testimony of a believer's entrance into the provisions of sanctification. The doctrine of Sanctification is hated by the institutional church; the camp hates holiness. Sanctification (even distinct from the Spirit-filled life) is that work of the atonement that caused Christ to be crucified outside the camp. Our sanctification was secured without the gate where Christ suffered. The ultimate aim of the sacrifice is outside the gate. For the very reason of having to leave the city or camp, many Christians refuse to enter into sanctification. They refuse the blight and reproach of a holy life outside the carnal camp of a dead institutional church.

“What is the master sin of the Laodicean Church Age? It is lukewarmness! There is no fervency for God. Any true fervency for God disturbs the darnel sleep of the institutional church. It affects relationships among friends and even married couples. If we were to lay aside the stigma of the truths of sanctification and biblical separation in our ministry, we would flourish numerically. In this world the *alone* Christian (without the camp) must ever keep in mind that “here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” Allowing ourselves to be put to death on that altar with Him is a part of our sanctification. We must identify with Him by going outside the camp; we must lay ourselves on that altar and take His reproach. Then we must live with it, no matter how many words of hatred are hurled against our Christian walk.

“...A preacher, deeply studying and longing for a specific truth for his life, may be led of the Lord to preach that truth out of the very longing for it, though it is yet unexperienced. Communicate the truth of a deeper life to others. You may not understand it all, but communicate it with great desire. Communicating truth with such a heart may be used of God to prompt another heart toward that same longing and desire.”²⁰⁹

67. Offering Praise 13:15,16

13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Not physical sacrifices as were offered in the Old Testament but spiritual sacrifices of praise. If a Christian cannot offer a sacrifice of praise, what can he offer?

13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

²⁰⁹ (H. T. Spence, The Epistle to the Hebrews, pages 297-298, 302).”

Offering sacrifices of praise and doing good works (“**do good**”, showing a continued emphasis on good works outside of the Epistle of James) are offerings that God is pleased with and will accept.

“**communicate**” from the Latin “communicate” meaning “to impart to others and share, especially with respect to material things”, from “communis” meaning “common property”. “Communicate” means “the action of sharing things (mental, material or spiritual) with others.”²¹⁰

68. Exhortation Regarding Spiritual Leaders, Part 2 13:17

13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Our responsibility to the spiritual authorities God has placed over is:

1. Obey them
2. Submit yourselves to them

Why? Because they watch over the souls of those under them and they will be held accountable to how their followers turn out spiritually at the judgment. If you are a spiritual rebel, your pastor will testify against you in that day. But if you manifested a meek, humble, submissive and quiet spirit, that will be rewarded at your judgment when your pastor testifies to that.

“**for they watch for your souls**” Pastors and elders actually lose sleep over the spiritual state of their flock. One of my church members experienced a family crisis a few days before Christmas one year and it burdened me so much that it almost ruined my enjoyment of the holiday. When you are in a crisis, your pastor is too. If you fall into sin, your pastor feels it and will agonize with you and over you about it. A hireling cares nothing for his sheep except for the paycheck they give him (John 10:12,13), but a genuine under-shepherd will watch over the flock God has given him

It is “**unprofitable**” for the Christian not to obey and follow their spiritual leadership because they would not be obeying Romans 13:1-5, 1 Timothy 5:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12. They could be drawn off into cults (Acts 20:29,30), pick up false doctrines (Ephesians 4:14), make “shipwreck of the faith” (1 Timothy 1:19), and wind up with a bonfire at the bema seat. Pastors often have to give account of some of their flock down here with grief when the apostatize, wander off into the local Kingdom Hall or just continue in a state of spiritual apathy year after year. They only hope that it will not be repeated at the Judgment Seat. Every genuine pastor desires to give account of his ministry with “joy”.

69. Closing Exhortations and Benedictions 13:18-25

13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

“**Pray for us**” Although we do not know who wrote Hebrews, the recipients of this letter knew who the author was.

²¹⁰ Steven J. White, *White's Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 253.

We should always want to be doing things honestly and with a good conscience, as we will have to answer for what we do (and don't do) at the judgment seat.

13:19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Was the author in prison at the time of this writing? Timothy has been released from an unrecorded imprisonment in Hebrews 13:23.

13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

God is referred to as:

1. The God of peace. Even in the most troublous and distressing situations, He can bring peace to the souls of men.
2. The Great Shepherd of the sheep, of whom pastors are under-shepherds.

The resurrection is also mentioned in this verse, which is associated with the blood of the everlasting covenant. God is both a God of Peace and a God of Life.

13:21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Good works mentioned again (see Hebrews 10:24), with the desire that God will perfect us through the good spiritual works that we do.

“**make you perfect**” here is not the Greek word “telios”, meaning a spiritual perfection. Paul has already adequately addressed the need for spiritual maturity in Christ. Here, Paul uses the Greek word “kataritzō” (Strong’s #2675), meaning “to cleanse or purge” (as in John 15:2 and Hebrews 1:3), “to equip”, “to put completely in joint”, “to frame” (Hebrews 11:3), “to prepare” (Hebrews 10:5). This Greek word speaks of brining the maturing, deeper-life Christian unto greater balance or symmetry with Christ. This word can be used of setting a bone back into joint. In our process of Christian growth, we may have some truths well-established. There may be other aspects of our lives we have been afraid to address. This is part of the Great Shepherd’s ministry. He seeks to bring us to a proper view of the whole of our lives. Is the whole life in balance? A great part of the sanctified life is working toward a greater symmetry of the self-life in Christ...It is often used in connection with regeneration (Hebrews 1:3). It may also be used for a cleansing or purging after one has put his faith in Christ (John 15:2).²¹¹

1. “katartizō” speaks more of the process of perfection while “telios” speaks of the state of being perfect.

The Synonymous Words For "Perfect"²¹²

1. teleiōs (Strong #5049) = that which has reached its end. From telos, end. Lat. finis, nothing beyond; hence perfect, in the sense of initiated. See 1Co 2:6. Phi 3:15.
2. teleioō (Strong’s #5048) make a full end, consummate, accomplish.

²¹¹ H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 306,318.

²¹² From Appendix 125 in the *Companion Bible*.

3. epiteleô (Strong's 2005) = to finish, or bring through to an end.²¹³
4. akribôs (Strong's #199) = accurately, precisely, exactly, assiduously.
5. akribēia = accuracy, preciseness, exactness.
6. artios (Strong's #739) = fitting like a joint = perfect adaptation for given uses. Occ. only in 2Ti 3:17.
7. pleroo = to fulfill, accomplish.
8. katartizô (Strong's 2675) = to arrange or set in order, adjust, &c. It occurs thirteen times, and is rendered "mend (as in mending of nets)" (Mat 4:21. Mar 1:19); "prepare" (Heb 10:5); "frame" (Heb 11:3); "restore" (Gal 6:1); "make perfect" (Heb 13:21. 1Pe 5:10; "perfected" (Mat 21:16. 1Th 3:10); "fit" (Rom 9:22). Passive "be perfect" (Luk 6:40. 2Co 13:11); "be perfectly joined together" (1Co 1:10).
 - A. "It does not necessarily imply, however, that to which it is applied has been damaged, though it may be so...it signifies a right ordering and arrangement...It expresses the pastor's desire for the flock (Hebrews 13:21)...to supply what is necessary."²¹⁴
 - B. "to put a thing into its appropriate condition...of a person in error, to restore, set right (Galatians 6:1)."²¹⁵
 - C. With these definitions, this is a pastoral and ministerial word.
9. exartizo = to equip, fit out (as a vessel for sea); i.e. ready for every emergency (occ. only in Act 21:5 and 2Ti 3:17).
10. hexis = habitude (as the result of long practice or habit). Occ. only in Heb 5:14.

13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Only Paul would call an epistle of 280 verses "a few words"! But he could have included much more material, but may have been constrained.

13:23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

This is an unrecorded imprisonment of Timothy, who had just been released, and the recipients of this letter were familiar with him. Maybe the readers didn't know that Timothy had been released so the writer shares this bit of good news with them.

13:24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

Both your pastors and elders and the rest of the brethren.

Italy- possibly Rome? Or in the area near Rome? If so, this epistle was probably written somewhere in Italy, if not in Rome.

13:25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

²¹³ The 'epi-' prefix intensifies the meaning.

²¹⁴ W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, pages 466-467.

²¹⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, page 842.

ARCHAIC WORDS DEFINED

“behooved” “from the Old English “behofian”, “be”= intense thoroughness and “hof” to heave and “ian” the action of. It is an intense lifting up, requiring much effort, but done in order to give a useful or necessary advantage, hence the idea of “ought” or “necessary” (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 156).”

“communicate” from the Latin “communicare” meaning “to impart to others and share, especially with respect to material things”, from “communis” meaning “common property”. “Communicate” means “the action of sharing things (mental, material or spiritual) with others (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 253).”

“disannulling” from the Latin “dis”, “utterly apart” and the Middle English word “annul” (which comes from the Latin “ad”, “to” and “nullus” “none or nothing”). Thus, “disannul” means “the action of utterly reducing something into nothing” (as in “to put out of existence”) (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, pages 338-339).”

“Although the dis- prefix usually signifies negation, in this case, it is intensive. Thus, “disannul” means to cancel, abolish, annul, abolish, void or nullify” (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 101).”

“divers”

1. “It is from the French divers, “different”. Thus, “divers” means different, diverse, varied, unlike, distinct, various or several (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 107).”

2. “From the Latin diversus, to be turned in different ways (di= ‘utterly apart’ and ‘vertere’= ‘to turn’. Thus, as an adjective, “divers” modifies its noun (always plural) as ‘being different in character or quality in comparison to other things or to each other.’ As a plural noun, divers are ‘two or more people that are different in character or quality from other people’ (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 349).”

“framed” “From an Old English word “fram”, meaning “forward, surpass, excellent.” A “frame” is “a useful structure with different parts that fit together.” The verbal form means “the action of shaping, forming or fashioning something, making it ready for use (Stephen White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, page 164).”

“succor” to help, assist. It also includes the idea of comfort. It is to rescue someone with provisions. The original Latin root literally signified “to run under” (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 320).

“sundry” from the old English “syndrig”, from “sundor”, “separate”. “Sundry” means “separate, special, private, various, diverse” (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 322).

“surety” The word has the idea of “A pledge or formal promise made to secure against loss, damage, or default; a security.”

“vesture” comes from the French “vesture” meaning “clothing” and it goes back to the Latin “vestis” meaning “clothing”, from which we get our English word “vest”. “Vesture” is “clothing or something that covers” (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 362).“

“wax” is from the Old English “weaxan”, meaning “to grow”. “Wax” means “to grow old or become”.

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@ *An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New Testament*, Jon Weatherly, Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, for Fall Semester, 2003.

Commenting and Commentaries, Charles Spurgeon

* *The Master's Seminary Journal*

\$ Custer, Stewart, *The Biblical Viewpoint*, Bob Jones University²¹⁶

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! Reviewed by Dr. John Cereghin

+ Beeke, Joel and Randall Robinson, *Meet the Puritans*

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% Five Top Commentaries on Hebrews, Ligonier Ministries,

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-book-of-hebrews/>

\$ Alford, Henry, *Hebrews*, in vol. IV of *The Greek Testament*. 4 volumes, 1875, 360 pages. Concise comments on the Greek text. He dates Hebrews A.D. 68-70 (p. 74 of Introduction), argues convincingly that Christ is addressed as God both in the Greek and the Hebrew (p. 20), holds that "Word" in 4: 12 refers to "the spoken word of God" (p. 83). On 6: 1-6 he has a unique view: the people are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but are not elect! "All elect are regenerated: but all regenerate are not elect" (p. 113).

? Altridge, Harold, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia, 1989. Technical detail abounds, with many informative points made about pertinent scholarship on syntax or background. All in all, this is behind Bruce and, with Lane's 2 vols., near the top in exegetical coverage. Altridge has 14 excursuses scattered in the 437 pages. In addition to detail in the main body, substantial footnote detail delves into various issues, such as cross-references, commentary literature, writers in church history, etc. Sometimes Altridge is ambiguous, as in stating that those in 6:4-6 are apostates whose rejection leaves them with no hope of repentance, yet describing them in words that seem to denote their past salvation. So he does not clarify whether they have lost salvation once held, or never were genuinely saved. He does say that the writer hopes for better things from his readers. Generalities in the excursus on "rest" (126-28) keep elusive what the "rest" means.

^ Anderson, Robert, *Types in Hebrews*, 1978. A rewarding study which evangelical Christians can ill afford to neglect.

\$ Archer, Gleason Leonard, Jr., *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1957, 108 pages. Brief Conservative exposition, suitable for a Bible study class. He presents the two natures of Christ on 1:8 (p. 20), holds that the people in 6: 3-6 were mere partakers of the Spirit, not indwelt by Him (p. 40). He dates Hebrews A.D. 65-66 (p. 8).

? Archer aims to provide a well-organized, "handy guide" (p. 1) as a systematic exposition to help a pastor, Bible teacher or English Bible instructor in a college. Taking

²¹⁶ He tends to plagiarize from Cyril Barber somewhat. He also gets sugary in his reviews.

the central theme, Christ's superiority and its implications for victorious living, Archer follows the progression of the developing theme. He gives a 5-pp. outline at the outset, then writes the book in the form of his detailed outline, filling in verse by verse with key word meanings, related Old Testament passages, and brief help on problem passages such as 6:4-6 and 10:26-39 (he holds that those in view are professors though never genuinely saved). This is a very good brief survey compactly arranged.

\$ Barclay, William, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 1957, 254 pages. Brief liberal notes filled with religious and literary quotations. He dates Hebrews A.D. 80 (p. xix), translates 1:8 "God is your throne forever" (p. 7), speaks of angels as a Jewish belief (pp. 8-11). On 6:4-6 he holds that they are Christians who became apostates (pp. 55~57).

\$ Barmby, J., and C. Jerdan, *Hebrews* in volume 21 of *The Pulpit Commentary*, 1950 (reprint), 447 pp. Homiletical expositions of unequal value. They have a good index of homiletical topics (pp. 421-426), uphold the deity of Christ (pp. 14-15), have a good treatment of 4:12 (pp. 111-112); on 6:4-6 they hold that it describes "complete apostasy from the faith after real conscious enjoyment of the gifts of grace" (p. 159) and attack Calvin's position (pp. 160,161).

Brown, John, *Exposition of Hebrews*. 2 volumes., 1862. 902 pages. Dr. David Smith says of this work, "There is not a single instance of carelessness in investigating the true meaning of a text, or of timidity in stating the conclusion at which the author had arrived." What more could be said in praise of any exposition?

\$ A conservative exposition, sometimes archaic, always Presbyterian. He favors Pauline authorship (I, p. 6), defends the deity of Christ. (pp. 26, 56), holds that the Word of God in 4:12. is a specific revelation (p. 214). On 6:1-6 he holds that the people had received information and blessing from the Holy Spirit, without actually being made new, creatures in Christ (pp. 284-291); men could not be in this exact category except in the apostolic age (p. 290).

? Brown, Raymond, *Christ Above All. The Message of Hebrews*, 1982. A principal of Spurgeon's College, London did this in the refreshing Bible Speaks Today series, drawing on such greats as Bruce, Hughes and Westcott but keeping the exposition very readable and practical. Possibly Apollos wrote Hebrews in the early eighties. "Rest" in chapter 4 is a future reality on which we need to concentrate, yet is not attained by works but is God's gift (p. 90). Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-31 are taken to refer to those who once had outward signs of being Christians but never were "genuinely born again by God's Spirit" (114). The penitent offender and weak backslider are not in view (cf. 189), yet Brown speaks confusingly of the ones described as if once they really trusted in Christ. This is a stimulating, inviting exposition for laymen or Christian workers who want a book competent but easy to read.

\$ Bruce, Alexander Bahnain, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1899, 472 pages. An exhaustive interpretation of Hebrews as a formal defense of the faith. He holds that the first readers were basically out of sympathy with the doctrinal views of the author (p. 10), shows a striking contrast which runs through the O.T. quotations in 1: 5-12 (p. 57). He thinks 6: 1-6 defies classification: "The Bible is an excellent book for the purposes of

practical religion, but rather a tantalizing book for the systematic theologian. Its writers know nothing of the caution and preserve of the "system-maker" (p. 210). One will not agree with everything, but it is a valuable study.

* Bruce, F. F., *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. NICNT, rev. ed., 1990. xxii + 426 pp. Prior to his death, F. F. Bruce revised his 1964 commentary on Hebrews, replacing the American Standard Version (1901) text with his own *ad hoc* translation and incorporating 25 years of additional relevant research.

He summarizes the essence of the epistle this way: Hebrews "has this to say: that true religion or the worship of God is not tied to externalities of any kind" (p. xi). Later he adds: "This is the book which establishes the finality of the gospel by asserting the supremacy of Christ, his supremacy as God's perfect word to man and man's perfect representative with God. More than any other New Testament book it deals with the ministry which our Lord is accomplishing on his people's behalf now" (p. xii). With broad strokes Bruce then traces the theme of the book, giving the reader a clear picture of the whole before commencing with a detailed commentary of its individual parts.

The author devotes close attention to the identity of the addressees (pp. 3-9), including a well-documented discussion of the various views. He concludes that they appear "to have been a group of Jewish Christians who had never seen or heard Jesus in person, but learned of him from some who had themselves listened to him... Yet their Christian development had been arrested; instead of pressing ahead they were inclined to come to a full stop in their spiritual progress, if not to slip back to a stage which they had left... He encourages them with the assurance that they have everything to lose if they fall back, but everything to gain if they press on" (p. 9).

He gives equal attention to the book's destination, authorship, and date. He cautiously suggests Rome as the destination (p. 14). He vigorously disputes the notion that Paul authored the book and demonstrates the unlikelihood that Aquila and Priscilla penned it. He is willing only to venture a broadly worded conclusion that "the author was a second-generation Christian" (p. 20). His discussion of the date is just as ambiguous, but he sees use of the epistle by Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 96) as proving a first-century date, the period immediately preceding A.D. 70 being a possibility (pp. 20-22). He concludes his introductory chapter with an excellent survey of the epistle's use of the OT Scripture (pp. 25-29) and a recognition of its magnificent harmony with the accounts of Jesus' life and ministry as portrayed in the gospels (pp. 29-34).

The introductory section alone is worth the price of the volume, but its explicit and thorough exegetical commentary on the text elevates its value even more. It investigates difficult passages with depth and precision. Discussions of Hebrews 6 and 10, for example, are lucid and non-evasive. He concludes that the "author emphasizes that continuance is the test of reality. . . He is insisting that those who persevere are the true saints" (p. 144). Commenting specifically on Hebrews 6:4, Bruce suggests that "enlightened" be understood in the sense of baptism and that "tasted the heavenly gift" connotes the Eucharist (pp. 145-46). The phrase "partakers of the Holy Spirit," he contends, is to be compared to the situation of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9 ff. (pp. 146 ff.; 260 ff.). "Whether it is possible for one who has been in any real sense a partaker of the Holy Spirit to commit apostasy has been questioned, but our author has no doubt that it is possible in this way to 'outrage the Spirit of grace' (10:29)" (p. 146). He provides

excellent thoughts on the great faith chapter Hebrews 11`especially those about the faith of Abraham.

The commentary represents the quality of work commonly associated with F. F. Bruce. Shortcomings are hard to find. Though revised, it still bears the marks of the 1964 commentary, however, with many references to works dated prior to 1960. Basically, it is the same commentary, with updated footnotes. The bibliography (pp. 34-43) has been updated from the earlier edition as well. Footnotes located at the bottom of the page, with actual Greek terms and phrases included, are very helpful to the serious student. Yet the lay person will not be disappointed. This volume is an excellent blending of a technical with a practical, and sometimes hortatory, exposition of the text. It should become part of the library of pastors, students, and laymen.

!! Bruce provides a thorough, reverent exposition from a reformed viewpoint with many helpful insights. He maintains that its authorship remains unknown (p. xiii); dates it before A.D. 70 (p. xlv); holds that Hebrews 6 is a real warning against apostasy (p. 123) but does not question the perseverance of the saints ("those who persevere are the true saints") (p. 118); and suggests Simon Magus as an example of this apostasy (p. 122).

^ Bullinger, Ethelbert William, *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*, 1956. A series of studies on Hebrews 11 by the "father" of modern ultra-dispensationalism. An extensive expository treatment which frequently provides discerning explanations of Greek words and their origin. Preachers will find these studies helpful.

\$ Calvin, John, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 1549, 1948, 448.pages. In places archaic, but still a helpful commentary. He holds that angels assist in eternal security (p. 50), defends the unity of the Person and the two natures of Christ (p. 74), often attacks the Papacy (pp. 110; 130, 223., etc.). On 6:1-6 he holds "that the elect are beyond danger; these warnings apply to the reprobate, but believers should thus be on their guard (pp.136-139). God's covenant partakes of the nature of both testament and covenant (p. 208).

\$ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews* in Vol. XIV of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1956, pp. 335-555. Sometimes archaic, sometimes helpful sermons on Hebrews. He assumes Pauline authorship (p. 341), strongly urges the deity of Christ (pp. 375-376). On 6:4-8 he argues that there is repentance for these people, but not a second baptism (p. 411). He has an interesting exposition of 10: 19-23 (pp. 454-455).

Dale, R. W., *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church. Discourses on Hebrews*. 1871, 314 pages. Among modern divines few rank so highly as Mr. Dale. Daring and bold in thought, and yet for the most part warmly on the side of orthodoxy, his works command the appreciation of cultured minds.

\$ Eloquent and sophisticated sermons which cover almost every verse in Hebrews. He impressively affirms the deity of Christ, "very God of very God" (p. 15). His thesis is that "Christianity is not a new and different religion, but a logical development from Old Testament Judaism (pp. 11-13)." He argues skillfully that the people in Heb.

6:4-8 were genuine Christians who could apostatize (pp. 118-120); he calls the possibility "an awful hypothesis" (p. 122).

\$ Davidson, Andrew Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1950, 260 pages. Small in size, but a treasure of help and insight. He holds that Christ is addressed as God (p. 49), that He is the Author of salvation in 2:10 (p. 62), that He was pre-existent (p. 74). He maintains that the people in 6:1-6 apostatized "against experience and better knowledge" (p. 122); but it is written as a hypothesis to prevent this. His additional notes on the "Rest of God," "Word of God," "Priesthood of Christ," "The Two Covenants," etc., are most helpful.

^ Davies, John Howard, *A Letter to Hebrews*, 1967, 153 pages. A commentary based on the text of the NEB. The writer thinks that Apollos was probably the author. His comments amount to little more than theologically biased paraphrase.

\$ Commentary on the text of the New English Bible; its style corresponds to this liberal paraphrase. Date for Hebrews: AD. 50-70 (p. 9). Apollos is the best guess, but author remains unknown (p. 11). He admits that 1:8. addresses the Son as God (p. 23), holds that the main subject of Hebrews .is the high priesthood of Jesus (p. 51). On Heb. 6:1-6 he holds that it teaches that it is impossible to renew an apostate (pp. 58-59). He states that the writer seems "to have thought that the golden altar was inside the veil" (p. 84).

Deering, Edward, *Twenty-seven Lectures upon Hebrews [chap I.-VI.]*, 1590. Mainly aimed at the errors of the Church of Rome, and at the practical questions of the Reformation period, learned but antiquated set of lectures.

^ DeHaan, Martin Ralph, *Hebrews*, 1959. A collection of radio messages. Ideal for the layman.

\$ Delitzsch, Franz, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. 2 volumes, 1868-1870, 912 pages. An. exhaustive commentary on the Greek text. He deals with many critical problems, but is always reverent. He has an exhaustive bibliography of the older literature (vol. I, pp. 22-35); on 1: 8 he holds that Christ is addressed as God (I, p. 77); Heb. 6: 1-6 describes the apostasy of those "truly regenerate" (vol. I, p. 287), making this the same as the sin against the Holy Spirit (I, p. 291). He has a reasonable explanation of the altar of incense in 9:4 (vol. II, pp. 53-55).

? Though somewhat technical, this work grapples seriously with the Greek text and stimulates thinking on the problems of the epistle. It is good on the Greek.

Dickson, David, *Short Explanation of Hebrews*. 1635. This is generally to be found in connection with the author's *Brief Exposition on Matthew*. We need say no more than get it, and you will find abundance of suggestions for profitable trains of thought.

\$ Dods, Marcus, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in vol. IV of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1907 (Reprinted) 160 pages. A critical but reverent commentary on the Greek text. He states that the author is unknown, but favors Apollos (p. 230), dates it before A.D. 70 (p. 243). On 1:8 the point affirmed is not the deity of Christ, but that He

"has a throne and everlasting dominion" (p. 255); on 2: 10 he translates "author" and comments "the cause is also the leader" (p. 265); on 6:1-6 he holds that these apostates were renewed and yet made such a "deliberate and insolent rejection of Christ!" (p. 298); on 9:4 he has a good explanation of the altar of incense. (p. 328).

Ebrard, John H. A., *Commentary on Hebrews*. 1853, 1862, 437 pages. This is intended as a continuation of Olshausen, but it is an improvement thereon. Ebrard is at once learned and spiritual, and we prefer him to almost any other author whose works the Messrs. Clark have issued.

\$ A liberal commentary on the Greek text. He believes that Hebrews is a systematic treatise, not an Epistle (pp. 10-11), states that the writer quotes the Septuagint where it is incorrect (p. 49), states that Ps. 45 cannot possibly refer to Christ (p. 50), holds that 6:4-6 teaches that "a regenerate person may fall away" (p. 201). He believes that the author was Luke, writing under Paul's direction (p. 426).

\$ Edwards, Thomas Charles, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in vol. VI of the Expositor's Bible, 1892-1905, pp. 491-552. A brief but helpful exposition. He is strong on the deity of Christ (p. 501). On 6:1-6 he holds that whether the saved or the unsaved are described is beside the point; all the grace described is the gift of God, coming like rain in all alike (p. 512). He has an interesting section on chap. 11 (pp. 530-540).

% Ellingworth, Paul, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 1993, 764 pages. Ellingworth's commentary on Hebrews is a massive technical commentary on the Greek text. For those doing in-depth study of the book, it is invaluable. It is, however, not for the faint of heart. Some knowledge of Greek is required simply to follow the comments. A good reference work to have.

!! This book is a technical commentary on the Greek lex; that stresses grammar and structure rather than doctrine Ellingworth gives a huge bibliography (pp. xxi v-xcviii); discusses the authorship (pp. 3-21); suggests a date before A.D. 70 (p. 33); has a brief study of the theology of Hebrews (p. 63-77); lists the manuscript evidence for Hebrews (pp. 81-85); employs a TEV-style translation (pp. 89 ff.); stresses the essential unity between God and His Son (p. 99); holds that Psalm 45 is used to show that the Son is addressed as God and Lord (p. 122); thinks that the author was not a second generation believer (p. 141); argues for "expiation" rather than propitiation in Hebrews (p. 189); denies that Christ has a "house" (p. 195); interacts with the liberal views of Harnack, Bultmann, and others (p. 289); argues that the fear Christ manifested was reverence for God (p. 290); notes chiastic structure (p. 350); gives a table of associations of "covenant" with other terms (pp. 386-88); calls some wording in Scripture "awkward" (p. 436); stresses the substitutionary sacrificial shedding of blood in Christ's death (p. 473); teaches that Christ is coming again for a final triumph (p. 487); sees apostasy resulting in a punishment worse than death (pp. 538 ff.); holds that the Old Testament emphasizes that the fall of Jericho was an act of God (p. 620); and concludes with indexes of subjects, authors and Greek words (pp. 737-7640).

\$ English, Eugene Schuyler, *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1955, 536 pages. A popular exposition written with faith and considerable wordiness. He argues for Pauline authorship (pp. 15-26), sometimes comments on unimportant things (pp. 254-255),

stresses the imminent second coming of Christ (p. 331). On Heb. 6:1-8 he argues for eternal security (pp. 160-162), holds that they are professing Christians only (pp. 163-167).

\$ Erdman, Charles Rosenbury, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1934, 137 pages. A devotional and practical commentary. He stresses the deity of Christ (p. 25), holds that Heb. 6:1-6 refers to a true believer falling away in apostasy, but that this is set forth as a hypothetical case (pp. 65-66)

% France, R. T., *Hebrews in The Expositors Bible Commentary*, Revised Edition, 2006. Recently, the 12 volume *Expositor's Bible Commentary* experienced an extreme makeover and was completely revised. Of the original contributors, some thirty of them are new. Among the new contributions is the commentary on Hebrews by R. T. France. France has done extensive work on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, which suits him particularly well as a commentator on Hebrews.

\$ Goodspeed, Edgar Johnson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. 1908, 143 pages. Brief liberal exposition. He dates the Book A.D. 81-96 (p. 22), holds that 6:6 refers to persons who had actually apostatized (p. 60); seems to deny creation out of nothing (p. 97); has no comment at all on 13:8.

Gouge, William, *Commentary on Hebrews*. 2 volumes. 1655. We greatly prize Gouge. Many will think his system of observations cumbrous, and so, perhaps, it is; but upon any topic which he touches he gives outlines which may supply sermons for months.

+ This massive book, originally published in three volumes, contains the notes of more than a thousand sermons given over a thirty-year period at Blackfriars. The first volume was published in 1655; Gouge was still working on the last half of the last chapter of Hebrews when he died. His son, Thomas, completed it, using his father's notes. It is a golden exposition of the fullness of Christ, second only to Owen on Hebrews. Gouge's work abounds in helpful application. For example, in commenting on Hebrews 11:17, which describes Abraham offering up Isaac, Gouge, who buried several of his own children (including a murdered daughter), has a section on "yielding the dearest to God." He writes, "The grounds of our yielding our dearest to God are such as these: 1. The supreme sovereignty of God, whereby he hath power to command us and all ours; and what he may command we must yield. 2. The right that God hath to all we have. 3. The might and power that God hath to take away all. Willingly to yield what he will have, is to make a virtue of necessity. 4. The due, which, in way of gratitude, we owe unto God. They that hold anything too dear for God are not worthy of God. 5. The bounty of God, who can and will beyond comparison recompense whatsoever is given to him.

! Greene, Oliver B., *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 1965, 602 pages. Fundamental and dispensational, but of somewhat limited value. Greene tends to quote too much from other writers (without crediting his source) and doesn't engage in a lot of independent thought. He also will not hesitate to correct the Authorized Version or cite "Greek scholars" (despite the fact that he did not know enough Greek to be able to critique them). As per the title, he obviously holds to Pauline authorship. On many of the

difficult passages, Greene “punts” and stays with the safe interpretations or just admits that he cannot comment on them. He will not “stick his neck out” theologically. This would limit the value of any work, for that is a primary reason why we consult commentaries!

? Greenlee, J. Harold, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews*. A 616-page work that is somewhat of an encyclopedia word by word/phrase by phrase in defining Greek terms and giving grammar to aid in proper translation of the sense. It is a gold mine for translators, teachers, students, and lay readers (who can glean much due to explanations that are forthright). Greenlee on each verse asks a series of key, probing questions, and his meticulous step by step exegesis elicits answers. On some problems, his answers give more than one view, as on “fall away” (6:6), where options are real Christians (he cites commentators by abbreviations), or those who were not truly Christians (197). The work exhibits painstaking but well-organized analysis, and diligent notations on views that respected scholars take on the various issues.

? Gromacki, Robert G., *Stand Bold in Grace. An Exposition of Hebrews*, 2002. This is a re-publication of a former Baker Book House effort. Gromacki, Distinguished Prof. of Greek at Cedarville College, now retired, takes the view that “fall away” in 6:4-6 involves the saved who remain saved but live poorly, and the one who draws back to perdition in Chap. 10 never truly had eternal life but faces eternal punishment. Much in the 278 pp. is good exposition informed by keen awareness of what the Greek is saying.

? Guthrie, Donald, *Hebrews. An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. This volume replaces Hewitt’s in the series to meet new needs. Though vague, Guthrie apparently favors a date shortly before or after A. D. 70, leaving authorship open. The “rest” in chapter 4 is both present after conversion and future. The discussions of 6:4-6 and 10:26-31 do not appear to arrive at an unequivocal explanation of whether the really saved can actually lose salvation. A clearer taking of some stand would help. However, on many verses Guthrie is clear enough, though this is a concise commentary. I would not rate it near the top but about in the middle.

? Guthrie, George H., *Hebrews*, NIV Application Commentary, 1998. One finds a work sensitively informed in Greek and theology, one that rather often explains matters with perception. Guthrie believes that the genuinely saved will persevere, not fall away. Some vagueness attaches to his effort on what “rest” means as his words go all around it yet fall short of clarifying just what it is as “something” and “the whole soteriological process” and “the process of entry into God’s presence” (152), whatever that means. Frequent illustrations and application material are a big concern, for example on drawing near to God (4:14-16). The work offers fairly good light on main pertinent issues, usually, and gives remarks to stimulate vital practical living.

? Guthrie, George H., *The Structure of Hebrews. A Text-Linguistic Analysis*, 1994. Scholars wrestling with the structure find much information in this work that grew out of a Master’s thesis at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a doctoral dissertation at

Southwestern Seminary. Chapter | traces the history of views on the structure, 2 categorizes and appraises approaches, 3 Guthrie's method of analysis, etc. Chapter 7 finally offers his own proposal. An expositional outline on p. 117 goes only through 10:25.

? Hagner, Donald A. *Hebrews*. 2nd edition, New International Biblical Commentary, 1990, 296 pages. This work was originally in the Good News Commentary. It is by a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, evangelical, and fairly helpful at times, but not nearly in the range of Bruce, Ellingworth, Lane, Morris, etc. for explanatory detail.

Haldane, James Alexander, *Notes on Exposition of Hebrews*. 1860. A posthumous work, and issued, not as a finished exposition, but as "Notes of an intended Exposition." Very valuable for all that.

\$ Hewitt, Thomas, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 1960, 217 pages. A strongly conservative, Reformed treatment. Silas is looked upon as being the most likely author. The writer has some novel interpretations on the "apostasy" passages, and has not reasoned through some of the historic and interpretative challenges. Advocates Silas as author but admits this is hypothetical (pp. 31-32). He dates it near A.D. 65 (p. 39). He has a strong commitment to the deity and pre-existence of Christ (p. 59). He has an interesting note on the "rest" (pp. 91-92), lists three interpretations on the "apostasy" passage in Heb. 6, maintains the "Hypothetical" view (pp. 110-111). On Heb. 10 he argues for eternal security (pp. 165-166).

? Hodges, Zane C. *Hebrews*, in Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1985. A substantial commentary explaining Hebrews from the non-Lordship salvation viewpoint. Hodges takes passages such as the warnings in chapters 6 and 10 to relate to the saved guarding against failure to gain special reward, not the possibility of mere professors ending up unsaved.

Howard, J. E., *Hebrews. A Revised Translation, with Notes*. 1872. Contains a few suggestive observations; but is a small affair in all respects.

^ Hoyt, Herman Arthur, *Christ: God's Final Word to Man*, n.d. A brief analysis and exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

% Hughes, Philip Edgecumbe, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1977, 623 pages. Hughes is particularly helpful in drawing out theological implications of the text. If you can only afford one commentary, buy the set by Lane and ask someone to purchase Hughes for you as a gift.

!! This work is a superior commentary on an inferior text, the RSV. The author sees Hebrews as an answer to those influenced by the Essenes (Dead Sea Scrolls people, pp. 10-15); defends a date before the destruction of Jerusalem (pp. 30-32, 302); defends the deity of Christ (pp. 41-44); identifies Jesus as the OT Lord God (p. 68); notes chiasmus constructions (pp. 90, 409); defends the doctrine of propitiation, not merely expiation (p. 121); refers to Christ as the eternal Son (p. 134); teaches eternal security and personal responsibility (p. 139); warns that the external rite of baptism guarantees nothing (p. 151); attacks "chiliastic" (premillennial) interpretations (p. 161);

and identifies those in Hebrews 6 as those who sin against the light but finally show their true colors (pp. 216-18). He has extended notes on Melchizedek (pp. 237 ff.); "the true test" (pp. 283 ff.); the blood of Jesus (pp. 329-49); the doctrine of Creation (pp. 443 ff.); and faith (pp. 438 ff.). He gives many Roman Catholic interpretations, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas eighty-seven times.

? Hughes, R. Kent, *Hebrews, An Anchor for the Soul*, Preaching the Word, 2 vols, 1993. These vols. (557 pp.) are devoted to Charles L. Feinberg, the late Academic Dean of Talbot School of Theology and Prof. of OT. Hughes, once a student there, has 48 messages he preached at College Church, Wheaton, and gives engaging introductions to each, frequent choice quotes and illustrations (both vols. end with long indexes to illustrations), and well-studied exposition. End notes reflect use of exegetical and other sources. Hughes sees those who "fall away" (Heb. 6) as unregenerated, having been Christians in name only. Unlike Gromacki, he refers to those who shrink back in chap. 10 to the same ones. The ten messages on faith in Heb. 11 are a vital catalyst to help believers make vital surges forward.

Jones, W., *Four Lectures on the Relation between the Old and New Testaments as set forth in Hebrews*. Very little of it, and bound up with a work of an ingenious, but fanciful character.

^ Kent, Homer Austin, Jr., *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1972, 303 pages. A work which the pastor or seminary student will welcome. Adequately explains the theme of the epistle, builds exposition upon a very capable exegesis of the text, and ably elucidates the theological facets of the epistle.

!! In a careful exposition, Kent stresses the full deity of the Son (p. 44); warns against apostasy from Christ to Judaism (p. 73); explains the idea of rest (p. 88); argues that the apostasy of Chapter 6 is a hypothetical case (p. 113); stresses the unique character of the once-for-all offering of Himself for sin (p. 144); holds that the new covenant is for both Israel and the church (pp. 158-59); and includes an extensive bibliography (pp. 297-303).

? A helpful evangelical commentary especially from the standpoint of clarity on the Greek where this is crucial to the interpretation, without being technical. It is also often helpful in discussing different main views and their support on problem passages (6:4-6, those who fall away; chapter 8, the new covenant, etc.). Dr. Kent served as Dean of the Seminary and also Professor of New Testament and Greek at Grace Theological Seminary.

? Kistemaker, Simon J., *Hebrews*, Hendriksen New Testament Commentary, 1984. The author has been going on with commentaries in the series William Hendriksen began. He writes from an evangelical, reformed perspective, providing diligently studied comments competent in aspects of the Greek, giving views and reasons, writing clearly, explaining most matters well.

? Koester, Craig, *Hebrews*, Anchor Bible, 2001. This is a detailed, 604-pp. exegetical explanation for each section of verses. It gathers many of the factors that can assist in deciding the meaning, but often does not draw a clear, overall picture. In many places,

details are highly informative, in others overall resolution is lacking. One can read what "rest" is (268, 278-80), yet be left groping to grasp what it is, and the same in various details about problematic verses in 6:4-6 where clarity is obscured. For example one can have had blessings so fully ("receiving the Spirit into oneself," 6:4), and become apostate, so has such a person lost salvation once possessed? The same attention to bits and pieces, but obtuseness on an overall doctrinal perception pervades the discussion of 10:26-39. Along with much information about certain details, a good survey appears on how Hebrews has been interpreted (19ff), another on the theology of the epistle (96-129), yet leaving a lot unclear.

Knox, J. Spencer, *The Mediator of the New Covenant. Sermons on Hebrews*. 1834. Thirteen Sermons on select passages. Mediocrity highly polished.

* Lane, William L., *Hebrews 1- 8*. Word Biblical Commentary, 1987. This volume provides much in the details of the Greek text, exegesis, and bibliography. It will inform readers of a wealth of scholarly opinion and be especially helpful to teachers, preachers, and Bible class leaders who are serious about their preparation. Its bibliography rates higher than its commentary which is a bit inferior to that of Bruce.

? Lane, William L., *Hebrews. A Call to Commitment*, New International Biblical Commentary, 1988. 184 pages. Lane, known among other things for his excellent work on Mark (NICNT), has written a fairly good briefer commentary on Hebrews, informed by scholarly awareness of the literature, views and arguments and skill in the Greek text and background. The work uses the NIV and is evangelical.

Lindsay, W., *Lectures on Hebrews*. 2 volumes. 1867, 756 pages. One of those great expository works with which the Scotch ministry has so frequently enriched the Church. We wonder if anyone ever read this excellent exposition through; we should not like to be sentenced to do so.

\$ An exhaustive commentary on- the Greek text. He argues for Pauline authorship (vol. I, pp. 5-16), for Christ being addressed as God (pp. 60-65). He holds that the "Word" in 4:12 is the declaration of God (p 183). On 6:1~6 he holds that the people are unsaved, for although the features described would normally indicate a saved man, "they yet are not infallible marks of grace" (p. 264). He argues for a creation out of nothing (vol. II, p. 157).

\$ Lenski, Richard Charles Henry, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1937. 500 pages. A thorough Lutheran interpretation. He urges Apollos as author (pp. 22-24), dates Hebrews A.D. 68'-69 (p. 22), is very strong on the deity of Christ (p. 48), has an interesting treatment of the perfect tense (pp. 77-78). On 6:4-6 he holds that the writer does not say that there "actually are, or that he fears that there are, persons of this kind" (p. 180); he would identify this as the sin against the Holy Spirit (p. 181) and holds that they are Christians "in the fullest sense of the word" (p. 185). He has a good discussion of 8: 1 (pp. 248-250) and of 13:8 (p. 477).

? Lightfoot, Neil R., *Jesus Christ Today, A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews*, 1976. An evangelical professor at Abilene Christian College (Texas) wrote this very readable,

knowledgeable work, admittedly indebted much to A. B. Bruce, F. F. Bruce, and James Moffatt but also using a long list of other commentaries and literature in reference works and journals. Footnotes are frequent and often of helpful substance, drawn from sources. He concludes as Origen that only God knows who wrote Hebrews, ca. A. D. 65. He leans to the view that the “rest” in Hebrews 4 is future for Christians, that 6:4-6 refers to losing salvation at one time truly possessed, and that baptismal regeneration is correct (p. 122). On most verses he explains very well what most non-specialists but serious readers need to have explained. He uses the RSV.

Lushington, Thomas, *The Expiation of a Sinner. Commentary upon Hebrews*. 1646. This work was published anonymously and is charged with Socinianism.

M'Caul, Joseph, *Hebrews. A Paraphrastic Commentary, with Illustrations from Philo, the Targums*, 1871. Mr. M'Caul attacks the gentlemen of the higher criticism with great plainness of speech and some asperity. We hardly think his work will attain a great circulation, it has so much Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German in it, that only men of learning and leisure can use it.

? MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Hebrews*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1983 466 pages. The forty studies centralize “The Preeminence of Jesus Christ.” MacArthur wisely declines to guess the author but dates the book ca. A. D. 65 (p. x). He sees three groups: Hebrews who are truly saved, unsaved Hebrews who are intellectually persuaded but have not genuinely received Christ (2:1-3a; 6:4-6; 10:26ff.), and unsaved Hebrews who are not even convinced (9:14-15, 27-28). He is richly edifying on many passages, such as Christ's priesthood that encourages believers to come to him (4:15-5:10). The commentary flows lucidly and can stimulate pastors, Bible class teachers and any Christians. The sections on Hebrews 11 (aspects of faith) and 12 (disciplined living) are well-done.

\$ Macaulay, Joseph Cordner, *Devotional Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1948, 290 pages. Practical and devotional expositions. The book is filled with good thoughts and outlines, apt illustrations, and help for the average believer. He holds that Heb. 6:4-9 is a paradox which we cannot explain: both perseverance and apostasy are possible (pp. 87ff.).

? MacDonald, William, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: From Ritual to Reality*, 1971. A conservative exposition by a recent president of Emmaus Bible School (Plymouth Brethren). MacDonald gives fine-point outlines and explains verse by verse, understanding that the epistle is aimed at true Christians and professing Christians mingled among them. Hebrews 6:4-6 refers to professors who had not really been born again. Comments are brief.

MacLean, A., *Paraphrase and Commentary on Hebrews*. 2 volumes. 1847. One of the most judicious and solid expositions ever written.

Manchester, George Montague, *Horse Hebraicae. An Attempt to discover how the Argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews [I—IV. x i] must have been understood by those*

therein addressed. A peculiar book, altogether *sui generis*, written by a man who did his own thinking. The Duke would be an unreliable guide, but he frequently strikes out new paths, and suggests novel trains of thought.

^ Manson, William, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1951, 216 pages. A polemic in which the writer holds that the recipients of the letter were not Jews. In attempting to prove his point, he cites almost every paragraph in Hebrews and, in doing so, provides many interesting comments on the text. This is not a work for the expositor.

\$ Not strictly a verse-by-verse commentary, but an attack on the idea that the recipients of Hebrews were not Jews (advocated by Moffatt, etc.). In proving his point, however, he does cite almost every paragraph in Hebrews somewhere. He argues that there is not enough evidence to tell what group the people in Heb. 6 belong to, but they are at least putting themselves in the position of Jews who relapse to Judaism (p. 64).

+ Manton, Thomas, *By Faith: Sermons on Hebrews 11*. Taken from volumes 13-15 of Manton's *Works*, this volume contains every sermon (sixty-five in total) that Manton preached on Hebrews 11, the "heroes of faith" passage. This gifted preacher's treatment of such a practical, experiential subject cannot help but benefit a reader. Spurgeon said, "Manton is not brilliant, but he is always clear; he is not oratorical, but he is powerful; he is not striking, but he is deep."

! McCheyne, Robert Murray, *Sermons on Hebrews*, Banner of Truth, 2004, 197 pages. Twenty four sermons on Hebrews that were in McCheyne's later papers, as most of the sermons are not included in other collections. From the Banner of Truth website: "It the beginning of the twentieth century, James Macdonald of Edinburgh purchased a box of old papers which had belonged to a preacher of around sixty years earlier. The contents might have seemed of little value, but to some they were altogether priceless. They were the notebooks and sermon notes of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, the godly and devoted minister of St Peter's Church, Dundee. From these papers, lodged in the library of New College, Edinburgh, Dr Michael D. McMullen has transcribed the sermons found in this set of three volumes. They are indeed a precious treasure. Whether based on Old Testament or New, every sermon is full of Christ: the sinners need of Him, the fullness of His grace, the happiness of those who come to Him, and the danger of stopping short of genuine faith in Him. They will remind preachers and ordinary Christians alike that to preach Christ aright, one must first know Him, and live in the atmosphere of His love." Highly recommended.

\$ McFadyen, Joseph F., *Through Eternal Spirit*, 1924, 200 pages. Liberal comments on Hebrews, James, and I Peter. He refers to the author's "unconvincing Biblical exegesis" (p. 28), to contradictions in Scripture (p. 62), to Jesus as the "pioneer" (p. 77). He attacks Premillennialism (p. 86), holds that Heb. 6:1-8 teaches no second repentance (pp. 107-108), thereby contradicting Paul (p. 109).

\$ Milligan, Robert, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1875, 396 pages. Comments by an early leader of the Disciples of Christ (he was ordained by Thomas Campbell himself, p. 390). He argues for Pauline authorship (pp. 5-19), for the true believer losing his salvation

(pp. 178-180), for the true tabernacle of 8:2 being the church (pp. 218-220); and other characteristic views. He also has a strange diagram of the two covenants (p. 232).

^ Moffatt, James, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. International Critical Commentary, 1924, 350 pages. A critical commentary on the Greek text. He holds the author unknown (p. xx), date before A.D. 85 (p. xxii). He has a good section on the rhythmical cadences in Hebrews, holds that Heb. 6 means no repentance for the apostate. (p. 77), making this sin equal to the sin against the Holy Spirit (p. 79). He holds to the non-Jewish character of the recipients of Hebrews. He refers to the writer's "inaccuracy" about the altar of incense in 9:3 (p. 114).

\$ Moll, Karl Bernard, *Hebrews* in Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, 1868 (reprinted). 220 pp. A conservative Lutheran exposition. He holds author is unknown, but favors Apollos (pp. 9-10); dates it A.D. 62-67 (p. 13); holds that Christ is addressed as God in 1:8 (p. 38), has a good exposition of 4:12 (pp. 93-95). On 6:1-8 he comments that the people's Christian profession "did not take them out of the category of free moral agents," but N.T. teaching "is decidedly against the actual possibility of such apostasy" (p. 115); in another section he gives a more usual Lutheran view (p. 116).

\$ Montefiore, Hugh, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Harper New Testament Commentaries, 1964, 281 pages. Critical but perceptive comments. Lists 12 arguments for Apollos' authorship of Hebrews (pp. 9-11), dates it A.D. 52-54 (p. 28); thinks that Paul had read Hebrews before he wrote I Cor., cites 1:9 as the only place in N.T. where the Son is called "theos" (p. 47), holds that Christ is a leader who pioneers the way to salvation (p. 61), thinks that a 'writer's arguing from Biblical texts is superficial" (p. 85). On 6: 1-6 he holds that there is no forgiveness for apostasy (pp. 108-109).

^ Morgan, George Campbell, *God's Last Word to Man*, 1936, 160 pages. Not a verse-by-verse commentary, but sixteen expository studies based on selected texts in the epistle. Often overlooks difficulties in interpretation. Not Morgan's best work.

? Preached expositions with good practical applications running through Hebrews 11. Some errors can agitate readers, e. g. having Moses' birth 64 years after Joseph's death, and the rejection of total depravity (p. 151). However, there is much to edify and to stimulate Christians, even to be suggestive for messages in a great chapter.

? Morris, Leon, *Hebrews*, in Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 12, 1981. This is a substantial work (pp. 1-158) by a highly competent and prolific New Testament scholar in the evangelical realm. He is brief, aware of issues and arguments, sums things up well in several cases, and clear. For a shorter commentary this is a worthy effort which will be of service to teachers, preachers, Sunday School teachers and serious lay persons.

? Morris, Leon, *Hebrews*, Bible Study Commentary, 1983, 137 pages. A well-organized, lucid survey that gives synopses of sections and usually broad comment but dips into many of the verses for serious explanation, views on problems, and reasons. It is

primarily of help to lay persons and pastors needing a concise but competent study. Longer, more detailed works ought to be used with it.

^ Murray, Andrew, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1894. Devotional, Calvinistic, and applies the truths of the text in a pleasing, practical way.

\$ 130 warmly devotional studies. "The name of the author cannot be known" (p. 20). On Hebrews 6:4-6 he comments "It is possible to have the emotions touched and the will affected without having the heart being truly renewed (p. 209). Thus he holds that those who fall away were not truly saved.

\$ Nairne, Alexander, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, 1913, 446 pages. An interpretation of Hebrews in the light of the priesthood of Christ. He has an overemphasis on a sacramentarian view of Hebrews. Although he has a brief exposition, he has long sections on the Incarnation, priesthood, sacrifice, etc. He denies verbal inspiration (p. 56), holds that the Lord was mistaken or at least changed His mind (pp. 95-96); thinks that Paul and John contradict themselves (pp. 128-129), holds that Melchizedek is more legend than history (p. 150). The people in Heb. 6 failed to see any basic distinction between Judaism and Christianity (p. 32).

\$ Narborough, F.D.V., *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. The Clarendon Bible, 1930, 156 pages. Introduction and brief liberal notes. He holds that authorship is unknown, but Apollos is the best guess (pp. 14-16); date is shortly after A.D. 70 (p. 30); has a helpful section on the leading ideas of Hebrews (pp. 30-49); holds that the rigorism of 6:1-6 is limited to apostasy (p. 46); on 1:8 he makes the O.T. contradict the N.T. (p. 85); presents Jesus as our "Pioneer" (p. 89).

Nelson, Robert, *Comments on Hebrews*. 1868. By a thoughtful and devout man, but we cannot endorse some of his interpretations. The taint of a certain modern school appears in passages such as this: "Had Paul been preaching holiness of life as essential to seeing the Lord, would he not have been advocating the very principle on which the law was based?" We are afraid of this covert Antinomianism; its presence eats as doth a canker.

^ Newell, William, *Hebrews, Verse by Verse*, 1947. A popular commentary which preachers will find helpful. Conservative, premillennial.

! Based on the Revised Version, thus limiting its value.

\$ Genuinely helpful. He argues for Pauline authorship (pp. 492-493), defends the deity of Christ (p. 6), has a stirring treatment of 2:3 (pp. 39-41), teaches premillennialism (pp. 43, 190-191). He is often wordy and has unnecessary repetition but sometimes fails to explain passages adequately. He holds that the people in 6:1-6 tasted the gift but did not drink it (p. 186); only a professing Christian can put Christ to an open shame (p. 193).

Newton, Adelaide L., *Hebrews compared with the Old Testament*. 1872. Devout, simple, and instructive. The authoress was an invalid and died ere she had finished her work. She worked out a good idea with far more of expository matter than could have been expected of her.

\$ Neil, William, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1955, 143 pages. Brief liberal comments. Authorship is unknown, but Apollos is the best guess (p. 15); date is soon after A.D. 60 (p. 18). He holds to the universal Fatherhood of God (p. 41), refers to Satan as a myth (p. 43), seems to confuse backsliding and apostasy (pp. 69-71), calls the Melchizedek passage fantastic speculation (p. 74).

Owen, John, *Exposition of Hebrews*. 4 volumes, 1668-74. Out of scores of commendations of this colossal work we select but one. Dr. Chalmers pronounced it "a work of gigantic strength as well as gigantic size; and he who hath mastered it is very little short, both in respect to the doctrinal and practical of Christianity, of being an erudite and accomplished theologian."

+ This exposition of Hebrews is a definitive commentary on the epistle. As Thomas Chalmers noted: "A work of gigantic strength and size; he who hath mastered it is very little short, both in respect to the doctrinal and practical of Christianity, of being an erudite and accomplished theologian." Bogue and Bennett, in *History of Dissenters*, also highly commend the work, saying, "If the theological student should part with his coat or his bed to procure the works of Howe, he that would not sell his shirt to procure those of John Owen, and especially his Exposition, of which every sentence is precious, shows too much regard to his body, and too little for his immortal mind."

!! Just way too large, detailed and technical to be of any use to anyone except the most dedicated student.

? Owen, a Puritan scholar, was voluminous on just about everything he wrote, and he did many masterful works. Here, the patient will meet with ponderous discussion of connections between New Testament fulfillments in Christ and Old Testament preparation for Him. Much is rich and worthwhile if one has time to sort through the laborious discussions to follow through to what he can use. Theologically Owen has a lot to contribute. He has many points and sees things from various sides, reasons through views and arguments, and often is very helpful to the person who begins his study early enough to devote the time it takes. In Hebrews 6 and 10, Owen decides reference is to mere professors who fall away or shrink back, never having been actually born again.

? Owen, John, *Hebrews: The Epistle of Warning*. One volume abridgement of his multi-volume set on the book, 1985, 283 pages. Anytime one can get a book by Owen amounting only to 283 pages, he has made an unusual find. M. J. Tyron condensed the commentary yet retained the essence verse by verse. Owen wrestles well with such problem texts as 6:4-6, and on several passages such as this is worth the time. His was one of the great theological minds of the Puritan tradition.

Parry, Thomas, *Hebrews, in a Series of Lectures*. 1834. So feeble that we wonder how it got through the press. A sermonized paraphrase.

Patterson, Alexander Simpson, *Commentary on Hebrews*. 1856. Lectures delivered in the course of the author's ministrations. Excellent for the public; the student should consult other authors for learning; but Patterson has savor and spirituality.

\$ Peake, Arthur Samuels, *Hebrews*. New Century Bible. n.d., 251 pages A 42-page introduction to the Book and brief comments by a Methodist. On 1:8 he holds that the Hebrew text does not mean what the writer to Hebrews thought: that Christ is addressed as God (pp. 86-87); on 6:4-6 he holds that the people were Christians who could fall away in apostasy (p. 143); on 11:3 he denies creation out of nothing (p. 211).

? Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Faith that Endures. A Practical Commentary on Hebrews*, 2000, 224 pages. Many of the parts help pastors, students and lay people. The writer favors Paul as author (14-20). His perspective is that even in passages about stiff warnings, the saved always are in view (chaps. 6, 10, etc.). Those who draw back to “perdition” (destruction), a word normally of what the unsaved will face, are saved individuals; they remain saved, though they have not endured by a successful faith. They will experience the saving of their souls in an unusual, for some not an acceptable sense, finally, that of being delivered (saved) from the consequences of their wasteful lives (174). Their earlier faith had been validated by their works in the context, but they wind up not finishing well, still saved through grace. The book is lucid and profitable to help Christians see the value of going forward.

Perkins, William, *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses. Commentary on Hebrewes XI*. 1622. Good in its day, but now superseded. Very many points are discussed which would now be regarded as ridiculous: as for instance, whether a man may travel in a foreign country. It is terribly prosy.

\$ Pfeiffer, Charles Franklin, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1962, 126 pages. Brief popular exposition, suitable for laymen. He holds that author is unknown (p. 7), place to which written is probably Rome (p. 8), lists several possible interpretations of Heb. 6, but does not advocate one (pp. 51~54). He is strong on the deity of Christ (p. 21).

! Phillips, John, *Exploring Hebrews*, The John Phillips Commentary Series, 1977, 1988, 204 pages. As with all of his commentaries, good, practical, dispensation, based on the Authorized Version, but this volume is just too short at only 204 pages.

! Pink, Arthur Walkington, *An Exposition of Hebrews*. 3 vols. 1954, 1323 pages. Overly wordy and Calvinistic.

^ An exhaustive exposition which, in spite of its verbosity, contains helpful expository values.

\$ There are good things here if one can survive the endless repetitions, peculiar ideas, and staggering verbosity. He holds author was Paul (Vol. I, p; 18), proves it by numerics (p. 19), as he does other topics (p. 290); he upholds the deity of Christ (pp. 58~59), advocates a limited atonement (p. 149), regards his own opinions as far superior to those of other expositors (p. 272). In Vol. II he has 246 pages on Heb. 11 alone! He is deeply indebted to John Brown and Adolph Saphir, whom he quotes on every other page.

? This is a rich study of the English text with many suggestive channels of thought which help the student in preparing messages or lessons. Though Pink’s earlier

writings reveal a dispensational belief, his later works such as this and *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* show a switchover to an amillennial system.²¹⁷

Pridham, A., *Hebrews*. 1862. Rather mystified with expressions peculiar to "dispensational truth." whatever that may mean; but devout, candid, sober, and sound.

\$ Purdy, Alexander C., and J. Harry Cotton. *Hebrews*, in vol. XI of *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1955, pp. 577-763. A liberal interpretation. The earliest possible date is the late seventies (p. 594). They hold that it is "not impossible" that Christ was addressed as God in 1: 8 "in a poetic passage" (p. 606). On 4:12 they state that the Word of God is "clearly not the Scriptures, although the 'word of God is in them'" (p. 634). The people in 6:1-6 had "experienced, not sampled" Christianity; therefore, the writer teaches the impossibility of repentance from apostasy (pp. 651-653). They hold that the writer thought the altar of incense was inside the veil, thus "using his books carelessly" (pp. 686-687).

\$ Robinson, Theodore Henry, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Moffatt New Testament Commentary, 1933, 226 pages. Liberal, but often illuminating comments. No one knows the author of Hebrews (p. xv). Although he has some conservative-sounding comments Jesus is the theme of Hebrews (p. 1); "Pioneer" should be "author" of salvation (p. 19); yet his liberalism is clear: salvation is atonement through sympathy (p. xviii); denies the substitutionary death of Christ (p. 18); refers to the "naive story of creation" in Gen. 2 (p. 45). He holds that Heb. 6 teaches that there is no hope for the apostate (p. 76).

! Ruckman, Peter, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Hebrews*. Strongly dispensational. Ruckman will place the majority of the doctrinal applications either in Acts 2-7 or in the tribulation, which makes it easier to resolve many of the more difficult passages in the book. Few commentators, even dispensational ones, go as far as Ruckman does. Holds that Paul wrote most of the book, but probably over a period of years, and that Apollos (or another writer) may have made some contributions. Strongly supportive of Authorized Version and frequently attacks other commentaries for their weaknesses. As with his other commentaries, Ruckman provides more practical insights and applications than do most commentators. He thinks Paul may have written Hebrews, but that he definitely wrote Hebrews 13. Probably the best doctrinal commentary from a dispensation viewpoint, He offers interpretations on the "hard" passages in Hebrews that most other commentators shy away from or pass over. This will be ignored by the Scholar's Union.

Sampson, Francis, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 1856. A respectable production, but we know many which we value far more. As a set of lectures to a college class these comments would be of great value, but the author did well not to print them, although it was natural and fitting that his surviving colleague should do so.

²¹⁷ Pink was theologically unstable, switching from dispensationalism to later attacking it, from a moderate Calvinism to a more hyper-Calvinistic position, from a somewhat premillennial system to an amillennial one.

Sampson, G.V., *Translation, with Notes*. 1828. Dr. Kendrick says that Sampson is candid and sensible, but scarcely grapples with the difficult points of the Epistle. Perhaps he was not strong enough.

Saphir, Adolph, *Lectures on Hebrews. First Series. Chapters I—VII. [Second and concluding volume in preparation]*. 1874, 890 pages. Mr. Saphir has always something to say worthy of the attention of spiritual minds. His mind finds a track of its own, but he is never speculative. We always enjoy his remarks, though he is not specially terse: or brilliant.

\$ He argues for Pauline authorship (p. 18), has a powerful exposition of Heb. 4:12 (pp. 232ff.), holds that Heb. 6 refers to professing Christians (pp. 316-317). A true believer can never perish; the elect are perfectly safe (p.325).

^ Schneider, Johannes. *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 1957, 139 pages. Very helpful comments by a European Baptist. He holds that author is unknown, date is around A.D. 70 (p. 5); stresses the deity of Christ (p. 12); on 4: 12 has a good treatment of the Word of God (pp. 34ff.); holds that 6: 1-6 teaches the impossibility of a second repentance (p. 51); stresses the "eternally efficacious power" of Christ's blood (p. 83).

!! This book offers very helpful comments by a European Baptist. Schneider holds that its author is unknown; dates it around A.D. 70 (p. 5); stresses the deity of Christ (p. 12); has a good treatment of the Word of God in 4:12 (pp. 34 ff.); holds that 6: 1-6 teaches the impossibility of a second repentance (p. 51); and stresses the "eternally efficacious power" of Christ's blood (p. 83).

^ Scott, Ernest Findlay, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Edinburgh, 1922. A study of the background and teaching of the epistle which denies the Jewish character of the Jetter, questions the authenticity of Stephen's speech in Acts, ridicules the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and has little to contribute to the expository preacher.

\$ Seiss, Joseph Augustus, *Lectures on Hebrews*, 1954, 408 pages. A series of 36 eloquent, powerful sermons from Hebrews. One need not agree with every interpretation (Pauline authorship, p. 5), but the force and fervency of these messages are obvious: "The Lord snatch you as brands from the funeral pyre of souls" (p. 326). He is impressive on the deity of Christ (pp. 28ff.), the necessity of studying Scripture (pp. 138-139), the fundamental doctrines of Scripture (pp. 140ff.). He treats Heb. 6:1-8 as the unpardonable sin, loss of salvation (pp. 152 ff.).

\$ Shepardson, Daniel, *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1901. 499 pages. Practical and devotional messages on Hebrews. He dates it A.D. 67-68 (p. 52), defends the deity of Christ. (p. 75), attacks the idea of the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man (pp. 149-150), holds that it is possible that those who are truly saved may apostatize - but this is only presented as, a hypothesis (p; 258).

! Spence, H. T., *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Let Us Go Unto Perfection*, 2014, 318 pages. A mix of a doctrinal and devotional commentary, with a strong emphasis on Christian Perfection (in the Wesleyan tradition), sanctification and holiness. Not as comprehensive as we would like on some passages but still a recommended and

necessary work. Holds to Pauline authorship. I know the author personally and can attest he is a true divine, which is a rarity in this age.

Steward, George, *Argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. 1872. Unhappily the author died before he had quite completed this "argument." The work is most helpful.

^ Stibbs, Alan Marshall, *So Great Salvation: The Meaning and Message of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 1970. A capable expository study of the theme of Hebrews which admirably links precept with practice.

? This is a good book on Hebrews from the standpoint of a capable brief survey that is well-organized and helpful in following the line of thought more quickly (than in Bruce, Delitzsch, etc.)

Stuart, Moses, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 1837, 1860, 575 pages. We are constantly differing from Moses Stuart, but are bound to consult him. He is one of the greatest of American scholars, and this is one of his best comments.

\$ A conservative commentary on the Greek text. He has a 153-page introduction which investigates authorship, destination, etc. He urges Paul as author (pp. 115,156), holds that Christ is addressed 'as God in 1:8 (p. 277), translates the "Word of God" in 4:12 as the "declaration of God" (p. 328), believes that 6:1-6 is addressed to professed Christians (pp. 352-353).

Tait, William, *Meditationes Hebraicae*. 2 volumes, 1855. A noteworthy series of lectures. If Gouge, Owen, and others, had not done all for Hebrews that one could well need, this would have been of first-class value; and though we have much better it is still a worthy companion to them.

Tholuck, A. F., *Commentary on Hebrews*. 2 volumes, 1842. Delitzsch speaks highly of this work; but, for our part, we understand the Epistle better without Tholuck than with him. Clouds of smoke and volleys of hard words destroy our equanimity.

^ Thomas, William Henry Griffith, *Hebrews: A Devotional Commentary*, 1962. Forty-one devotional messages based on the theme of the epistle and stressing the need for spiritual progress in the Christian life.

\$ Thomas, W. H. Griffith, *Let Us Go On*, 1944. 185 pages. Forty-one devotional messages tracing the theme of the necessity of spiritual progress through Hebrews. Date: A.D. 63-66 (p. 10). He gives some helpful keywords for understanding Hebrews, such as "perfection," "better," etc. (pp. 12-14), has a helpful bibliography (pp. 184-185). On Heb. 6: 1-6 he holds that it is absolutely impossible to restore deliberate apostasy (pp. 73-74).

? Trotter, Andrew H., Jr. *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1997. Trotter has two sections, background issues and exegesis (vocabulary, grammar, style, and theology). The work is in a series on "Guides to NT Exegesis" for religion majors, seminarians and pastors (many pastors, however, will soon go elsewhere). Trotter offers his own

methods and principles as a handbook for interpreting the epistle in ways, he says, sensitive to its genre (diatribe, rhythm, and other rhetorical elements, cf. a list of 15, p. 67). One is exposed to much value with which he can grapple to grasp the Greek. The last chapter, 9, discusses theology such as the doctrine and use of Old Testament scripture (features of this), Christ, eschatology, and sanctification and perseverance as in the warning passages. Some will feel that things Trotter thinks irrelevant do matter, for example whether those who fall away (6:4-6) were genuinely saved or not (219), since if they were saved his remarks about them make it appear they became lost again, and such a matter is very important in one's doctrine, and it is misleading advice to say that such a matter is irrelevant.

^ Turner, George Allen. *The New and Living Way*. 1974. A brief but thorough explanation of Hebrews combining helpful word studies with a exposition of the text. Arminian.

? This work, by a conservative scholar from Asbury Theological Seminary who is Arminian in his theology, offers a good example of a serious effort to explain relevant texts in Hebrews in accordance with the belief that the truly saved can fall away and lose salvation (cf. his comments on such passages as Hebrews 3, 4, 6; cf. N. Lightfoot for similar thinking). Even if one is not of this conviction, it may be very helpful to see how Turner sets forth his case (cf. also the Beacon Bible Commentary for Arminian views).

Turner, Samuel, *Hebrews, in Greek and English; with Commentary*. 1852. Carefully done. Written for those who really wish to understand the Epistle.

\$ Vaughan, Charles John, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1891, 359 pages. A thorough commentary on the Greek text. He holds that author is unknown (p. xvii). Although he is weak in his statement of inspiration (pp. 312-316), he is strong in his statement of the deity of Christ (pp. 5-6) and His two natures (p. 56). He presents the Arminian view of Heb. 6:1-6 that the persons there described are true Christians who turn away into apostasy, which he identifies as the unpardonable sin (pp. 105-107).

\$ Vine, W. E. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1952. 166 pages. Conservative commentary, often explains the meaning of Greek words. He is strong on the deity of Christ: on 1:8 he states, "The Father here declares the Godhood of the Son" (p. 16). On 6:1-6 he holds that the people were unsaved and abandoned even their profession of faith (p. 56).

^ Vos, Geerhardus, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1956. A series of lectures portraying the central theme of the epistle.

\$ Westcott, Brooke Foss, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1889 reprint, 584 pages. The best and most thorough commentary on, the Greek text. In addition to the exhaustive exegesis, there are valuable notes on special subjects throughout the book: Melchizedek (pp. 199-203), the tabernacle (pp. 233-240), Christology of Hebrews (424-428), the use of the O.T. in Hebrews (pp. 469-495), and many others. He dates it A.D. 64-67 (p. xlii), favors the translation "God is thy throne" .in 1:8 (p .25). On 6:1-6 he holds

that divine life was given (p. 148), but all gifts were personal (p. 150); it was a past act of apostasy (p. 151), a hypothetical case (p. 165).²¹⁸

\$ Wickham, E. C. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Westminster Commentaries, 1910, 187 pages. A liberal exposition. He holds that the author is unknown, but Barnabas is the best guess (p. xii). On 1: 8 he denies that Christ is addressed as God (p. 8); on 6: 1-8 he holds that it is impossible for man, not God, to renew them, and that the passage does not touch the question of falling from grace at all (pp. 42-43). He gives a reasonable explanation of altar of incense in 9: 4 (p. 64).

Williams. H. W., *Exposition of Hebrews*. 1872. The author has evidently been a diligent reader and student. Apart from its Wesleyan peculiarities, we can commend this book as edifying and instructive, though we do not place it in the first class.

\$ Wright, Walter C., *Hebrews*, 1952, 191 pages. A popular, somewhat vague exposition. The format is confusing; at times it is difficult to tell what verse he is commenting on. He dates the Book A.D. 64 (p.185). He seems to suggest that only man is unable to renew the apostates in Heb. 6:1-8 (p. 81).

²¹⁸ Seeing this is the same man who was largely responsible for the attack on the Authorized Version through his grossly corrupt Greek text which served as the basis for the even more corrupt Revised Version of 1881, we would take any praise of any of Westcott's works with a lot of skepticism and question the orthodoxy of anyone who would praise Westcott. Naturally, the Scholar's Union would love him.

About the Author

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Roman Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He is married to his wife Teresa since 1996 and they have four children and four grandchildren.