

Hebrews

Study Guide and Commentary

John Hepp, Jr.
www.kingdominbible.com

Commentary
by
Stanley D. Toussaint
(Revised by John Hepp, Jr.)

A personal note from the writer, John Hepp, Jr. I adapted this study guide for use in the World Wide LIT (Leadership Instruction & Training) curriculum. As such it was copyrighted 1990, 2001 by Source of Light Ministries International, Inc. (1011 Mission Road, Madison, GA 30650-9399). But I kept the right to personal use, as here. This version retains the self-study approach without offering exams or teacher feedback. *It is to your advantage to follow all instructions as much as possible.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to John Hepp, Jr. for writing this study guide. Also, to Dr. Stanley D. Toussaint for the use of his class notes at Dallas Theological Seminary, which John has revised for use by WW LIT.

Also appreciated is the valuable editorial input from Billie Jean Hepp, Joy Babes, Mildred Carty, Bud Fritz, and Fred Harbaugh. Karen Papp and Carol Painter studied the course as reviewers and gave many helpful suggestions. Donna Rankin and Billie Jean Hepp did much of the typing.

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NOTE: Evangelical commentators vary greatly in their interpretation of Hebrews. In this course we teach that (1) the warning passages in Hebrews are addressed to professing believers, some of whom are not genuine believers and are in danger of apostasy, (2) the goal for believers, which is sometimes called “salvation,” is participation with Messiah in His eternal kingdom when He returns.

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GOALS

The general aim for this course is to help advanced students become acquainted with the Epistle to the Hebrews and its main teachings. The course is designed for Bible students who have finished Bible Survey (or its equivalent) and at least one Bible book study. The student is guided in studying each passage in Hebrews directly before reading the commentary on it. When you finish this course, you should

- ◆ understand the main themes in Hebrews
- ◆ know a general outline of Hebrews that will help you understand the book
- ◆ know the practical value of many of the teachings in Hebrews

ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	(<i>Anno Domini</i>) of the Christian era
B.C.	Before Christ
ch.(chs.)	chapter(s)
KJV	King James Version
etc.	and so forth
Mt.	Mount, Mountain
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version, 1984
p.(pp.)	page(s)
v.(vv.)	verse(s)
√	(designates a question serving as basis for examination)

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIBLE BOOKS

1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Heb.	Hebrews	Phil.	Philippians
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Hos.	Hosea	Philem.	Philemon
Col.	Colossians	Isa.	Isaiah	Prov.	Proverbs
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	Jer.	Jeremiah	Ps.	Psalms
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Josh.	Joshua	Rev.	Revelation
Dan.	Daniel	Judg.	Judges	Rom.	Romans
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Lam.	Lamentations	1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes	Lev.	Leviticus	2 Sam.	2 Samuel
Eph.	Ephesians	Mal.	Malachi	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
Exod.	Exodus	Matt.	Matthew	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
Ezek.	Ezekiel	Mic.	Micah	1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Gal.	Galatians	Nah.	Nahum	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Gen.	Genesis	Neh.	Nehemiah	Zech.	Zechariah
Hab.	Habakkuk	Num.	Numbers	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai	Obad.	Obadiah		

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to the WW LIT course on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews will impress you with the superiority of Jesus Christ and of the covenant He ministers. This is not an easy course because (1) Hebrews has some profound aspects, (2) in every lesson you will practice the important habit of doing direct Bible study before you read the commentary.

Use of Materials

Follow this study guide step by step throughout your study. It is designed to be used with the King James Version of the Bible but can be used with other versions. The commentary printed in the study guide is an adaptation—with additions—of class notes written by Dr. Stanley D. Toussaint, Chairman and Professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. Unless otherwise stated, his Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

Units

The course is divided into four units, each with its own examination. Look now at the list of contents to see what is included in each unit.

Features

Among the helps you will find in most lessons:

- Just below the title, lesson objectives given in question form
- Reading and study assignments in the Bible
- Reading and study assignments in the commentary
- Answers to the questions, for you to check your own answers

Questions

The questions in the lessons are designed to help you learn, not to test you. Many of them require you to do your own Bible study before reading commentary. After commentary sections there are “more questions” to emphasize important points. Some questions are checked (√) and serve as basis for the unit examinations. Nearly all questions are answered in the back of this study guide. Do not send your answers to your WW LIT center but save them to study for your unit examinations.

Readings and Reports

The principal way to get acquainted with a Bible book like Hebrews is to read it often. Three times in this course you will be instructed to read the whole Epistle of Hebrews and to make a different list for each reading. The lists you make are required but will not be graded. We want you to make them so that you will read actively, thinking about what you are reading. Do each reading aloud and without interruptions, which for Hebrews can be done in less than an hour.

Examinations (not provided for this version)

There are four unit examinations, based on lesson objectives and questions marked √. There is room on the examination pages for you to write all the answers. You must answer from memory.

With prayer to the true God who has revealed Himself in Christ, begin lesson 1.

AN OUTLINE OF HEBREWS
John Hepp, Jr. and Stanley D. Toussaint

PROLOGUE (Theme), 1:1-4

- I. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON, 1:4 to 10:18
 - A. His superiority to angels, 1:4 to 2:18
 - 1. Superior in His person, 1:4-14
 - 2. The danger of drifting, 2:1-4
 - 3. Superior in His work, 2:5-18
 - B. His superiority to Moses, 3:1 to 4:13
 - 1. Superior in His person, 3:1-6
 - 2. The danger of disbelief, 3:7-19
 - 3. Superior in His work, 4:1-13
 - C. His superiority to Aaron, 4:14 to 10:18
 - 1. Introduction, 4:14-16
 - 2. Superior in His person, 5:1 to 7:28
 - a. His appointment, 5:1-10
 - b. The danger of degeneration, 5:11 to 6:20
 - c. His order, 7:1-28
 - 3. Superior in His work, 8:1 to 10:18
 - a. A better place, 8:1-5
 - b. A better covenant, 8:6-13
 - c. A better sacrifice, 9:1 to 10:18
- II. OUR RESPONSE, PERSEVERING FAITH, 10:19 to 13:17
 - A. Exhortation to faith, hope, and love, 10:19-25
 - B. The danger of despising, 10:26-39
 - C. Faith demonstrated in sacred history, 11:1-40
 - 1. An explanation of faith, 11:1-3
 - 2. Examples of faith, 11:4-38
 - 3. The extension of faith, 11:39-40
 - D. Faith recommended for us, 12:1-29
 - 1. The examples of patient endurance, 12:1-3
 - 2. The endurance of discipline, 12:4-13
 - 3. The ethics of those who endure, 12:14-17
 - 4. An explanation for the ethics, 12:18-24
 - 5. The danger of denying, 12:25-29
 - E. Faith manifested by love and fidelity, 13:1-17

CONCLUSION, 13:18-25

Unit One

Lesson 1

Introduction and Hebrews 1:1-4

Have you read
“Important Instructions”?

What are the theme and two purposes for Hebrews? the probable location of its readers? Do we know its author? Why is God’s final revelation better than earlier ones?

Hebrews is a beautiful and powerful book. Also, it is saturated with Old Testament concepts and provides keys for understanding them. Many modern Christians, unfamiliar with such concepts, are confused by some of the arguments in Hebrews. Therefore, it is especially important to get a good start in studying this book. In our first unit (lessons 1-3) we will analyze only the first two chapters.

1. The main way to understand any Bible book is to read it repeatedly, observing what it says. Read the entire book of Hebrews now, looking for its main characteristics. (For example, how does it present Christ and what kind of warnings does it have?) Read aloud and rapidly to get an overall impression. You should be able to do this in less than an hour.

After you finish reading Hebrews, write at the top of a sheet of paper, “Reading Report 1 - Observations” and your name. Then write down at least three things that have impressed you about this book. This report will not be graded but must be turned in before you can receive credit.

Read the following commentary, which gives an introduction to Hebrews, then answer the questions after it. In all commentary sections you will notice many Scripture references; look them up as needed for understanding.

INTRODUCTION

General Observations

Hebrews is a book about God: His rights as Creator, His revelation, His purposes, and especially His Son. It exalts His

Son on every page and in unique ways; more than any other book it tells about

- the meaning of the Son’s suffering and sacrifice
- the Son’s solidarity (unity) with His people both now and in the coming kingdom

- the Son's current activities as High Priest mediating (keeping in operation) the new covenant, God's current working arrangement with His people
- the need for God's people to take God seriously and keep on living with faith in His Son.

In connection with its main emphases, Hebrews often refers to other themes of the Old Testament Scriptures; for example:

- the role of angels as God's messengers (chs. 1-2,12,13)
- God's promise to Abraham (chs. 2,6,7, 11)
- various features of the old covenant (God's earlier working arrangement with Israel), such as, its priesthood and sacrifices (chs. 7-10,12,13)

Hebrews bases its argument on a series of Old Testament passages. For example, on four Old Testament verses about Melchizedek it bases much in chapters 5-10. In doing so, Hebrews looks past the human writers to the divine Author; it treats every word of Scripture as divine and reliable; it reveals that many passages are at least in part messianic (that is, referring to the coming King, Messiah); and it shows that all such Scripture must be fulfilled both for Messiah and His companions.

Therefore, in studying Hebrews expect to learn much about God, His earlier revelations, and His revelation in His Son. If you let it, this book will transform your thinking and acting.

Authorship of the Book

Some Bible books provide the names of their human authors; many do not. There is no requirement that to be inspired a book must have a known author. Who wrote the

book of Hebrews? No certain answer can be given to this question. The Church Father Origen wrote, "As to who actually wrote the epistle, God knows the truth of the matter."

Many suggestions have been offered. Undoubtedly, the best known of these is that the apostle Paul wrote Hebrews. Several evidences are used to prove this view. For example: (1) Paul's companion Timothy was associated with the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 13:23); (2) the nation of Israel is used as an example both in 1 Corinthians 10, written by Paul, and in Hebrews 4:11; (3) both Paul and Hebrews emphasize the new covenant.

There is other evidence claimed for Pauline authorship. However, the arguments against this view are nearly overwhelming. For example, the mention of Timothy in Hebrews does not help the view but hinders it; because Paul normally mentions a person's proper name first and then a description, as in 1 Thessalonians 3:2: "Timothy, our brother, and minister." In contrast, Hebrews 13:23 says, "our brother Timothy," putting the description (brother) first.

In writings known to be his, Paul emphasizes Israel's idolatry and wickedness; Hebrews emphasizes their unbelief.

Furthermore, the author's name is not stated in Hebrews; Paul, in contrast, always states his name (see 2 Thess. 3:17). This does not mean that the author of Hebrews was hiding his identity; it is obvious from Hebrews 13:18-24 that the readers knew who he was.

A major objection to Pauline authorship is Hebrews 2:3-4, where the writer appears to place himself outside the apostolic band. The Lord's message, it says, "was confirmed unto us by them that heard." In contrast,

Paul always included himself among the apostles, all of whom had seen the Lord.

Another objection is the source of Old Testament quotations in Hebrews. Here they are always from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. In contrast, Paul quotes from various sources, including the original Hebrew.

Until now there is no clear evidence for anyone who has been suggested as author. Our conclusion is that the author was not Paul but that, as Origen said, he is known for certain only in heaven.

Destination of the Book

Where did the book's recipients live? We will survey only the two most popular views.

Some hold that the book was written to Jews living in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Palestine. An argument for this view is the author's assumption that the readers understand priestly rituals. But several facts oppose this view. For one thing, the readers' generosity described in Hebrews 6:10 and 10:32-34 hardly fits the picture of the church in Palestine and Jerusalem as given in Acts after chapter 6. Second, Hebrews 12:4 says that the readers have not resisted unto blood. This would not be true of the church in Jerusalem; Stephen and James are well known early martyrs there (compare Acts 26:10). Third, Hebrews' many quotations of the Old Testament are all from the Greek Septuagint. This seems strange if the readers are Palestinian Jews familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. Fourth, though the temple is still standing, it is never mentioned; only the tabernacle is discussed. Finally, Hebrews 2:3 implies that none of the readers have seen or heard Christ in person.

A variation of this view holds that the first readers were former members of the Qumran community, which had separated from most of Jewish society and lived near the Dead Sea. Though this variation avoids some of the problems just listed, it still cannot explain why Hebrews consistently uses the Greek Septuagint.

A more likely view suggests that the book is addressed to Jews in Italy, probably Rome. Several facts support this view. First is the greeting in Hebrews 13:24b: "They of Italy salute you." The preposition translated "of" should be "from" and probably implies that they have been separated from Italy. If so, the Italians away from home are sending back greetings. A second consideration is that the Book of Hebrews was known very early in Rome; Clement of Rome quoted from it some time before his death in A.D. 95. Third, the difficulties described in Hebrews 10:32-34 may easily have resulted from the emperor Claudius's expelling the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49. According to Suetonius, Claudius did this because of riots among the Jews having to do with a certain "Chrestus," which may refer to Christ (*cristos*). While no one can be certain, it appears most likely that the recipients lived in Italy.

Another important fact is that Hebrews is not a general or circular epistle, designed to be passed around to various groups. Rather, it is addressed to specific people in one locality (compare 5:12; 12:4; 13:7,17-19,22-24).

The Time of Writing

Obviously Hebrews was written before A.D. 95; Clement of Rome, who quoted from it, died in that year. It also predated the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70,

because the priestly service was still functioning (see 8:4; 9:6; 10:1-2; 13:10). The Neronian persecutions, in which Christians were martyred, began in 64, and the book predates even these (see 12:4). A date of 62 seems reasonable. One dares not move the date much earlier than this, for it appears from Hebrews 2:3-4 that the readers are from the second generation of Christians, not the first.

The Readers' Nationality

Nearly all commentators on Hebrews agree that the readers were Jews. Though they are never called Jews or Israelites, it is evident that they were well acquainted with the Old Testament and its rituals.

Furthermore, these readers were inclined to go back to Judaism, and the writer pleads with them not to do so (see 13:13). This is seen throughout the book.

These Jews were probably Hellenistic, that is, favoring the Greek language and culture. Evidences of this are: (1) the quotations are all from the Greek Septuagint, and (2) the writing has a Hellenistic flavor. This shows that both the writer and his readers preferred Greek. If they had been Aramaic Jews, he would have known that this style would offend them.

The Readers' Spiritual Condition

The readers are addressed as believers in Jesus (3:1; 4:16; 5:12; 10:19-22, 32-34; 12:7; 13:1,20-22). All agree on this point. The warning passages, however, present a problem. They indicate that the Hebrews have failed to go on to maturity and challenge them to do so. What are these warnings designed to do? (1) Keep them from losing rewards? or (2) Keep them from

leaving Christianity to go back to Judaism, and thus missing final salvation?

As we consider the warnings, we will show that their purpose is the second one, that the readers are professing believers but not all genuine believers. Some are in danger of denying their profession of Christ and lapsing back into Judaism.

Why were some of the professing Hebrews tempted to abandon Jesus? There were several reasons. For example, most of their nation had rejected Jesus when He considered them sinners, failed to restore their promised kingdom (Acts 1:6), and died a shameful death. To side with Him was costly, separating believers from most of their nation. Yet the Book of Hebrews shows that they must side with Him.

The Purposes of Hebrews

One purpose often seen in the book, is to encourage the believers to mature (see 5:12-14; 10:24; 12:1-2; 13:15-17,20-22).

Another purpose is to warn the readers against the danger of disowning Christ and lapsing into Judaism (see 2:1; 3:12-14; 4:1,11; 6:8-9; 10:22-25,28-31,35; 12:3,12-17,25; 13:13). Abandoning the truth after knowing it is called apostasy—definitely a danger for some of the readers. All of them are exhorted to do what they can to prevent anyone from falling.

The Plan

In Hebrews 13:22 the author calls this book a “word of exhortation.” There is a very similar phrase in Acts 13:15 describing Paul’s sermon there. Because of these expressions, Hebrews is often described as a “homily” (sermon). Certainly the book does not have the normal form of an epistle, and its exhortations do seem fitting to a sermon.

In order to bring the readers to spiritual maturity and to discourage apostasy, the book emphasizes the superiority of Christ. Thirteen times we read the adjective *better*. Furthermore, the work of Christ is eternal (see 5:9; 6:2; 9:12,14,15; 13:20) in contrast to the repetitious and temporary elements of the old covenant. Christ's sacrifice was made "once" and "once for all" (see 7:27; 9:12,26-28; 10:10) and has brought about a new and eternal arrangement between God and man: the new covenant. This covenant is far superior to the old covenant (the law of Sinai) made with Israel through Moses.

So Hebrews is a homily with exhortations and warnings. How do these warnings

fit into the argument (that is, the book's progress of thought)? Some commentators take them to be strictly parenthetical, not essential to the argument. It is far better to see most of them as an essential part of the argument. Consider, for example, the first warning (2:1-4). It shows why chapter 1 has dealt with the superiority of Christ to angels. The reason is not because Jews have a tendency to worship angels, which they do not, but because it is more serious to neglect the Son's Word than the word spoken by angels. Similarly, all of the warnings grow out of the preceding doctrinal discussions.

MORE QUESTIONS

(Answer questions 2-6, then check in Answers, beginning on page 81.)

- 2.√ What is our conclusion as to who the author is?
3. List five arguments against the belief that Paul wrote Hebrews.
- 4.√ What country did the readers probably live in?
5. How are the warning sections usually related to the argument of the book? (See the last paragraph of the commentary.)
- 6.√ What were two purposes for writing this epistle?

As stated before, you will actively study each passage in Hebrews before you read the commentary on it. You should get in the habit of always studying the Bible directly before you read men's opinions.

Hebrews was written for Hebrew people and must be understood from their point of view. Yet, these Hebrews belonged to the same church of Jesus Christ as we Gentiles. Therefore, you should study Hebrews as written directly to you.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4, then answer questions 7-8. Check your answers as usual.

7. The first sentence in this epistle (to the first period) is very long in the King James Version, just as in the Greek. This sentence is a prologue (introduction) for the entire book and indicates its main theme.

- a. How many verses does it cover?
 - b.√ What is its subject and main verb (giving most of the book's main theme)?
 - c.√ God's previous revelation was "in sundry times and in divers manners" (1:1), that is, bit-by-bit and using various methods. But "in these last days" (1:2) His final revelation is better. Why?
8. Verses 1-3 give seven facts about the Son, some introduced by words like "whom," "by whom," and "who." Summarize each of these seven facts in one to five words.

Studying verses 1-4 directly should have prepared you for the commentary that follows. As you read it, watch for helpful explanations of the seven facts you listed for question 8. After you read it, there will be more questions.

Prologue (Theme), 1:1-4

Often the theme of a book is found in its opening verses. That is true here. In the Greek text verses 1-4 are one long sentence, the main clause of which is "God...has spoken to us in His Son." This main clause is the theme of Hebrews.

Verse 1 clearly teaches the doctrine of progressive revelation, that is, that God has told us His truth little by little. Not only did God speak to the Old Testament prophets in many portions and ways; He also spoke in many places. Finally He revealed Himself by His Son (v. 2). Through such a person He could give us not only His words and His works but His very character.

This revelation has taken place in "these last days"; it is final. In Old Testament prophecies the "last days" or "latter days" often referred to two periods related to the future kingdom on earth: (1) the time just before that kingdom would begin or (2) the time of the kingdom itself. The writer of Hebrews is using it in the first sense. Jesus had distinguished these same two periods—using well-known Jewish expressions—as "this age" and "the age to come" (Matt. 12:32, NASB). His future coming with His angels, when He will sit on His throne and

rule (Matt. 25:31), will take place "at the end of the [present] age" (Matt. 13:37-43). Those who follow Him in this age will receive eternal life in that age to come (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30). Did "the age to come" begin in Acts? No, Ephesians 1:21, written at the end of the Acts period, still speaks of the same two periods: "this age" and "the one to come" (NASB). The "age to come" has still not come.

Hebrews confirms that we are now in the last age before the Lord Jesus will return to rule (see Heb. 1:13; 9:26,28). Though some two thousand years have passed since this homily was written, the apparent delay will seem like nothing in comparison with the unending age to come.

In verses 2-3 seven important statements are made about Christ.

1. He is the appointed Heir of all things (see Ps. 2:8). Everything was made for Him.

2. Through Him God made the world ("worlds," KJV). The word translated "world" in 1:2 is actually "ages." He created not only material things but the periods of time in which they exist.

3. He is the radiance ("brightness," KJV) of the Father's glory. The word translated

“radiance” has the idea of shining out (compare John 1:14; 14:9; Col. 1:15). He reveals the Father as sunlight reveals the sun.

4. He is the exact representation (“express image,” KJV) of God’s nature. The word translated “exact representation” refers to the impression made by a die (wood or metal designed to leave an impression) on a coin or a seal. Just as the image on a coin corresponds with the die that made it, so the Son corresponds to God. Whoever sees the Son sees the Father.

5. He upholds all things by the word of His power (compare Col. 1:17; Ps. 119:90-91). The Greek verb here has the idea of carrying forward. The Son is not like an Atlas holding the heavens on his shoulders; rather, He is moving all things forward to their designed end.

6. He has made purification of sins (“by himself purged our sins,” KJV). This emphasis on purification suits the Book of Hebrews. Romans stresses justification; Hebrews stresses sanctification.

7. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The main verb of verse 3 is “sat”; its emphasis is twofold. First, it shows that Christ’s sacrificial work is completed; and second, it indicates that His work was accepted by God the Father, who invited Him to sit there (see Heb. 1:13; 10:11-12).

To restate several of these ideas in another way: The Lord Jesus is the Prophet who has given the Father’s final and ultimate message (v. 2), the Priest who has cleansed from sin (v. 3), and the King who will reign (v. 3).

What should we learn from Hebrews 1:1-4 to affect our lives? First, that God has spoken! The true and living God, who made

all things for Himself, is separate from His creation. We cannot see Him nor hear Him; His mode of existence is different from ours. Yet He has revealed Himself to mankind; in different ways He has spoken. The book of Hebrews builds firmly on this divine revelation, looking back to things God said earlier and looking forward to things He has promised.

Second, we should learn that Jesus, the Son, is God’s final Word. This is the main theme of Hebrews. In a unique way Hebrews looks at the climax of God’s message, a climax that consists not of words only but of the divine-human Person called Jesus. The better we know that Person, the better we hear God. This final Word does not contradict God’s earlier words; it fulfills them.

Third, we should learn that God works in history. God’s Word is not merely philosophy or good advice; it relates to and determines history. Hebrews points out big turning points in history. There was a time when God appointed the Son to be Heir, a time when through the Son He began to make the ages. By His word the Son moves history along to God’s predetermined goal. Also, He has joined Himself to human history. He has Himself become a man and has made purification for sins. As a man He has now become greater than the angels, has obtained a better name than theirs, and has sat down at God’s right hand.

Fourth, it was the Son who made purification of our sins. No one else could have done this. It is impossible to improve on what He did. As we will see, His sacrifice has put into effect a glorious working arrangement between God and men—the new covenant.

MORE QUESTIONS (Answer, then check in Answers.)

9. You have just read Dr. Toussaint's explanations of the seven facts about the Son in Hebrews 1:1-3.
 - a. Write down any of his explanations that were especially helpful to you.
 - b. Try to summarize the main teaching of each fact in your own words.
 - c. Write at least one way in which this information about the Son should affect your life.
10. After the Son made purification for our sins, He "sat down" (1:3), which the priests of Israel could not do when on service. Why was it proper for the Son to sit down?

Lesson 2

Hebrews 1:4-14

Regarding the seven Old Testament passages quoted in Hebrews 1:5-13: (a) What question introduces the first and last of them? (b) Why are they quoted? (c) What "salvation" do they look forward to? What name did Jesus acquire that shows He is greater than the angels? What does that name mean? When and for how long will the Son inherit His worldwide kingdom?

In the outline we have included Hebrews 1:4 both in the Prologue and Part I. Read Hebrews 1:4-14, answering the following questions. Then check your answers.

1. Hebrews 1:4 forms the bridge to the first main contrast in Hebrews, which fully begins in 1:5.
 - a. Who are contrasted?
 - b.√ What name has Jesus obtained, showing His superiority?
- 2.√ In Hebrews 1:5-13 there are seven quotations from the Old Testament. Notice that there are three quotations about the Son (vv. 5-6), then one about the angels (v. 7), then three more about the Son (vv. 8-13). The first and the last are introduced with the same question. What is that question?

In this lesson is a chart of these quotations, numbered 1 to 7. Find the chart now, and print it or copy it. Observe how it is constructed. For each quotation the second column gives its verse reference in Hebrews 1; the third column gives its Old Testament source. For example, the first quotation is in Hebrews 1:5 and quotes Psalm 2:7. You will fill out the fourth and fifth columns.

The Seven Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews 1:5-13				
	Verse(s)	OT Source	Main Teaching	Observations
1	Heb. 1:5	Ps. 2:7		
2	Heb. 1:5	2 Sam. 7:14		
3	Heb. 1:6	Deut. 32:43 or Ps. 97:7		
4	Heb. 1:7	Ps. 104:4		
5	Heb. 1:8-9	Ps. 45:6-7		
6	Heb. 1:10-12	Ps. 102:25-27		
7	Heb. 1:13	Ps. 110:1		

3. Now, fill in the fourth column of the chart, which is headed “Main Teaching.” Do this by rereading each quotation in Hebrews, then trying to summarize its main teaching in your own words. For example, after reading the first quotation, you should write your summary of it to the right of “Ps. 2:7.” You will probably write something like this: “God begot Jesus as His Son.”
4. The first quotation is in verse 5. It is from Psalm 2, which along with Psalm 1 introduces the whole Book of the Psalms. Psalm 1 looks at a single godly individual and finds its fulfillment especially in the future Messiah (Anointed One), since it describes Him perfectly. Psalm 2 looks at an international scene to be completely fulfilled when Messiah begins His worldwide kingdom. These two themes—individual and international in respect to Messiah—are seen throughout the psalms. Read Psalm 2, then answer.
 - a. What are three titles the Ruler is called in this psalm?
 - b. His sonship emphasizes heirship. What is this Son to inherit? What is He told to do in order to receive His inheritance?
 - c. “This day have I begotten thee” may have more than one level of meaning in Jesus’ case. For example, it may refer in part to the day of His baptism, when He was anointed as Messiah (Christ). What did the Father call Him on that day (Matt. 3:17)?

NOTE: In the next question we will capitalize the title “Son” as in Hebrews 1:5, whether it refers to Jesus or to others.

5. The second quotation is also in verse 5. It is from 2 Samuel 7:14, a part of God’s covenant with David. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16. There you will see that the title “Son” of God applied to David’s son Solomon as well as his descendant Jesus, and apparently to both of them in the same sense. God’s representative ruling over God’s people was called God’s “Son.” Other countries of the ancient Near East used this title with the same meaning. Look at Psalm 89:19-26 to see that David—and, in fact, each succeeding ruler over Israel—had this title. The ruler in this psalm is not just the future Messiah; Messiah does not have the descendants mentioned in verses 29-33.
 - a. In what sense did Solomon become God’s “Son”?
 - b. Read 1 Chronicles 22:6-11 and 28:2-7. Who was called God’s Son in those passages?
 - c.√ Since Hebrews 1 quotes 2 Samuel 7:14, the title *Son* probably means the same for Jesus as it did for David and Solomon. If so, what does it mean there?
6. The third quotation is in verse 6. It comes from the Greek version of Deuteronomy 32:43 or Psalm 97:7. Neither passage has it exactly, but the former is closer. Hebrews 1:6 takes us to the future day when the Son comes back to reign. The Greek says lit-

erally, “And when He again brings the Firstborn into the world.” In other words, “again” goes with “brings,” not with “and.”

- a. “Firstborn” does not necessarily refer to the one born first. It can also, and here does, mean the *highest* of all, as in Psalm 89:27. In that psalm it is applied, at least in part, to someone who was born last in his family! To whom? (See whom the psalm is talking about, v. 20. For evidence that this “firstborn” was last in his family, see 1 Sam. 16:11-13.)
 - b. According to Hebrews 1:6, what will the angels do when the Son returns to reign?
7. The fourth quotation is in 1:7. It is from Psalm 104:4. Of the seven quotations this is the middle one and the only one describing the angels. God changes them in form to winds (another meaning of the word translated “spirits”) or to a flame of fire, when convenient. What does this show about the angels? (Are they independent? Do their activities stay the same?)
 8. The fifth quotation is in 1:8-9. It is from Psalm 45:6-7. It describes the Son and His future throne in contrast to the angels just described.
 - a. What is the Son called in this quotation?
 - b.√ How long will His kingdom last?
 - c. Why has God anointed Him with gladness more than His fellows (v. 9)? (His “fellows” refers to those who share with Him, apparently in His rule.)
 9. The sixth quotation is in 1:10-12. It is from Psalm 102:25-27. This also refers to the Lord’s eternal kingdom, as you will see in the commentary.
 - a. What will He do to the world He created?
 - b. What will never happen to Him?
 10. The seventh quotation is in 1:13. It is from the well-known messianic Psalm 110, first verse. The Son is not ruling yet but waiting at the Father’s right hand.
 - a. Whose throne is the Son sitting on now? (See Rev. 3:21.)
 - b. What is another name for His own future throne, as seen in Luke 1:32-33?
 - c.√ How long must He wait for His own kingdom to begin? (Heb. 1:13)
 11. Hebrews 1:14 gives a summary about the angels.
 - a. What kind of persons are they?
 - b. What are they sent forth to do?
 12. Hebrews 1:14 also looks at “salvation” in a way that will continue in this book.
 - a. What is the time of this salvation? (past, present, or future?)
 - b. Which of the following passages look at the same aspect of salvation: Romans 5:9-10; 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9; Acts 15:11?

As you read the following commentary on Hebrews 1:4-14, write in the last column of the chart further observations about each of the quotations. (Later you will summarize them.)

PART I. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON

1:4 to 10:18

His Superiority To Angels, 1:4 to 2:18

The writer of Hebrews uses two general proofs of the Son's superiority over angels. In chapter 1 he uses Old Testament Scriptures to show He is better in His person. In chapter 2 he shows He is better in His work: He and those He leads will rule over creation.

Remember that Jesus' title *Christ*, which in Greek literally means "Anointed," refers to Him as the promised King (Luke 23:2). In this commentary we will often change from this title to a synonym, *Messiah*, which still retains the royal meaning.

Superior in His person, 1:4-14

Hebrews 1:4 begins to emphasize the Son's person, showing what He has become. He "has inherited" (NASB) a more excellent name than the angels, which verse 5 will show to be the messianic title *Son*. The verb translated "has inherited" ("hath by inheritance obtained," KJV) is used eighteen times in the New Testament. Each time it means to come into possession of something not possessed before (see 1 Cor. 6:9,10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Heb. 1:14; 6:12; 12:17). In other words, this name "Son" was new for Him. He did not become Son in the sense of Messiah until He became a man.

This does not mean that He first came into existence when He was born; He existed eternally (see 1:2,10-12). Yet, His incarnation as a man was a drastic change, and He received new names to fit His new condition. This fact helps explain the future tense to Mary, that her Son "shall be called the Son of the Highest" (Luke 1:32).

Similarly, Acts 2:36 says that "**God hath made...Jesus...both Lord and Christ**" (emphasis added). And Philippians 2:9-11 says that because of His obedience to death God "**hath...given** Him a name which is above every name," the name "Lord" (emphasis added). He is the only man who fully deserves these titles.

In verses 5 to 14, seven Old Testament passages are quoted to prove that the Son is superior to angels in His person.

The first of these (v. 5) is Psalm 2:7; here He is crowned Son of God. Psalm 2 is an enthronement psalm, as can be seen by reading the entire psalm. (Some of the language is used in other enthronement psalms for kings of the ancient Near East.) In it God is giving Him the nations—previously rebellious—and all the earth as His inheritance to rule. Thus, His title "Son" anticipates (looks forward to) His rule in His future kingdom on earth (compare Luke 1:32; Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 13:33). Though angels as a group are called "sons" in the Old Testament (in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Gen. 6:2,4), no single angel is ever called "son."

The second quotation (v. 5) is taken from 2 Samuel 7:14; 23:5; and 1 Chronicles 17:13—each passage a portion of the Davidic Covenant (compare Ps. 89:3,27, 34,35; Luke 1:32-33,69). Actually, 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles refer to David's immediate son, Solomon, as well as to his distant "Son," Jesus.

The third quotation (v. 6) is provided by the Septuagint at Deuteronomy 32:43. This Old Testament chapter contains the Song of Moses and concludes on a majestic eschatological note, that is, one dealing with the last times after the present order has passed.

This passage in Hebrews 1:6 is also similar to Psalm 97:7.

There is a problem as to where the adverb “again” belongs in the introduction to this quotation. Should the sentence begin “And again, when He bringeth” (KJV) or “And when He again brings” (NASB)? It should be the latter, for two reasons: (1) the location of “again” in the original text favors its going with the verb; (2) the verb “brings” in the original is subjunctive, implying that this coming of Messiah is still future in respect to the time of writing Hebrews. Thus, the third quotation shows that the angels will worship Him when He comes back to rule.

The Lord Jesus is referred to as the “firstborn” (“first-begotten,” KJV) because He is the principal Heir. A firstborn son always received twice as much inheritance as other sons. Therefore, “firstborn” figuratively meant “highest.”

The fourth quotation (v. 7) is from Psalm 104:4. The emphasis in the quotation includes the temporary ministry of the angels as well as their nature. God did use wind and fire to manifest Himself, and angels carried out this service; but this ministry was brief and passing. This relation of angels to nature is not explained in the Old Testament, even in Psalm 104:4. Yet, they had a part in such occasions as giving the law (Acts 7:53), with its smoke, fire, trumpet, and other manifestations. So the Jews came to realize that angels take many forms.

The fifth quotation (vv. 8-9) is from Psalm 45:6-7. All of Hebrews 1:7 about the angels is in contrast with all of verse 8 about the Son. The beginnings of the verses can be translated, “On the one hand [v. 7]...but on the other hand [v. 8]...”

In Psalm 45, written in celebration of a royal wedding, the psalmist addresses the groom, who is the Messiah. He speaks of the Messiah ruling as God’s Anointed and as “God” (compare Isa. 9:6), with a scepter of righteousness. Though the prophecy speaks of His rule as already present—even when the psalm was written—its fulfillment is still future. It is common for Bible prophecies to speak about the future as though it were present.

The “companions” (“fellows,” KJV) referred to in verse 9 are the same as the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14), the “sons” of 2:10, and the “partakers” (same Greek word as “companions”) of 3:1, 14.

The sixth quotation (vv. 10-12), from Psalm 102:25-27, continues words addressed to the Son as in verses 8-9. The psalmist calls the Son “Lord” and says that He created the universe. A better passage can scarcely be found to describe the unchangeable character of the Lord’s divine nature. It also anticipates His rule as Messiah in Jerusalem. Notice in Psalm 102 the verses previous to those quoted in Hebrews. Verse 16 refers to His building up Zion and appearing in His glory. Verse 22 pictures the kingdoms gathering to serve Him. All of this will take place in His future visible kingdom. It is then that He will “fold up” the present heavens and earth and change them (2 Peter 3:10-13).

The seventh and final quotation (v. 13) comes from Psalm 110:1. The Son is invited to sit at God’s right hand until the time comes for Him to rule. Contrast His being seated (v. 13) with the angels’ being sent (v. 14). As far as we know from Scripture, angels are never seated in God’s presence.

Verse 14 summarizes, showing that

angels are “sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation” (NASB). This angelic ministry takes place in the present, but the salvation is obviously future; the heirs “will inherit” it. This is in harmony with the quotations in 1:5-13. As we have seen, these quotations clearly anticipate the future reign of Messiah on this earth in fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants and promises. In this light reread again especially verses 5, 6, 8-9, and 13. This salvation will be defined in Hebrews 2.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 1:5-14? First, that angels are important but should not be worshipped. The Bible often refers to activities of those spirit beings called angels. More powerful and knowledgeable than human beings, angels have played many roles under God’s direction, such as in giving the old covenant. Hebrews shows their importance by comparing them to the Son, first in person (ch. 1) and then in work (ch. 2). God sends them

to help us. We should believe what He tells us about them and thank Him for sending them. But we should not worship them.

Second, we have seen that in His divine-human person the Son is greater than the angels and worthy of all worship. Hebrews proves this by quoting seven of God’s earlier words, asking, “To which of the angels did God ever say?” No angel has become God’s “Son” (Heir of all). All angels will publicly worship Him at His second coming; His throne will be eternal; He will change His creation but will not be changed Himself. Therefore, we must worship Him now.

Third, we are looking for our salvation, the Son’s coming kingdom. The Son is not ruling yet; He is waiting at God’s right hand for His enemies to be made His footstool. When He does begin to rule, we “shall be heirs of salvation” (1:14), that is, salvation in all its fullness. We should not live for this age but for that age.

MORE QUESTIONS

13. Why can we change the word *Christ* to *Messiah* as we read Hebrews?
14. Summarize at least four of the main evidences from Hebrews 1:5-13 that the Son is greater than the angels in His person.
- 15.√ Regarding the seven Old Testament passages quoted in these verses:
 - a. What was the purpose of quoting them?
 - b. What future “salvation” do these passages look forward to?

Lesson 3

Hebrews 2

What is the first warning? What are four evidences that the “salvation” of Hebrews 2:3 is future? How does Hebrews 2 prove that man will rule in the world to come? What will the Son’s sufferings enable Him to accomplish for many sons?

Hebrews 1:1-4 (the prologue) has exalted the Son as God’s final revelation. Hebrews 1:4-14 has contrasted the Son to the angels in respect to His person. Hebrews 2 will continue that contrast in respect to His work (2:5-18). Before doing so, however, it flashes the first big warning (2:1-4).

1. Read the first warning, 2:1-4. In verse 1 the last words in Greek mean, literally, “lest we drift away” (like a boat from a secure place).
 - a.√ Give a title to this warning, according to your first impressions. Then learn the one in the Answers.
 - b. The word “therefore” (2:1) bases this warning on what has just been said, probably on the whole contrast in chapter 1. State in a few words what that contrast proved.
 - c. These verses compare what “we have heard” (v. 1) to what people heard earlier. What two messages (through whom?) are compared?
- 2.√ The message “we have heard” (2:1) and which we should not drift away from, is the message about “so great salvation...spoken by the Lord” (2:3). What evidence have we just seen that this salvation is still future?
3. Using Hebrews 2:3-4 as your basis, see if you can decide when the author of the book lived and when the miracles took place.

As you read the following commentary, notice especially the five arguments that the “salvation” in Hebrews 2:3 is still future.

The danger of drifting, 2:1-4

This is the first warning passage. You should note that it is closely tied to the preceding verses by the words “for this reason” (“therefore,” KJV) in verse 1.

The warning is against drifting. The New American Standard Bible correctly translates, “lest we drift away” (rather than “lest we let slip,” KJV). This verb, used

also in the Septuagint in Proverbs 3:21, describes a boat moving past its fixed mooring place—the place where it should be tied up. Here the warning is against being carried away from the gospel of Christ by apostatizing and going back to Judaism.

This warning is restated in verses 2-3 in such a way that we clearly see its connection with chapter 1. There the Son was contrast-

ed to the angels and proved to be superior to them in His person. Now there is a “much more” argument, based on the “word” spoken by the angels and the word spoken by the Son. The angels’ word put into force God’s law (the old covenant) at Sinai (see Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17).

Hebrews 2:1-4: The Danger of Drifting	
Old Covenant Message	New Covenant Message
IF <i>If the word spoken through angels proved unalterable</i>	MUCH MORE <i>what we have heard... spoken through the Lord</i>
<i>and every transgression . . . received a just recompense</i>	<i>How shall we escape if we neglect...?</i>

The Son’s word, as we shall see, put into force God’s new covenant. If the old covenant message demanded obedience, how much more, the new covenant message! If disobedience to the law brought judgment, how much more, disobedience to the Lord!

This message we must not neglect concerns “so great salvation” (v. 3). Salvation has many aspects; we cannot assume that it means the same in every passage. In the New Testament it is mostly used in the following aspects:

- Past, referring to justification (Rom. 8:24; Eph. 2:5,8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5; and others)
- Present, referring to the process of sanctification (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; and others)
- Future, referring to glorification in the future kingdom (Matt. 10:22; 19:25; 24:13; Mark 10:26; 13:13; Luke 9:24; 18:26; Acts 15:11; Rom. 5:9,10; 13:11; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:8,9; 2 Thess.

2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 4:18; 1 Pet. 1:5; 4:18; Rev. 12:10; and others)

So what “salvation” is referred to in Hebrews 2:3? We will give five evidences that it is the future aspect.

1. Its meaning was established in the preceding paragraph. Consider the fact that the writer of Hebrews has a tendency to use “hook” words. That is, he often links one paragraph to another by a common word. For example, the word “Melchizedek” is repeated at 6:20 and 7:1, linking the paragraphs that end and begin there. And this very word “salvation” links this warning paragraph (2:1-4) to the preceding paragraph (see 1:14). Since it means future salvation in 1:14, there is no reason to think it means anything different in 2:3.

2. Christian salvation is future elsewhere in Hebrews. Counting 1:14 and 2:3 there are six references to Christian “salvation” in Hebrews. Two of them (1:14; 9:28) must refer to the future, and the rest of them (2:3,10; 5:9; 6:9) can.

3. This salvation is equated to the kingdom, which is still future. Hebrews 2:3 says this message was at first spoken by the Lord. This refers to the Lord’s constant proclamation that the kingdom was near (see Matt. 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9, 11; 16:16). Since the kingdom did not begin, it will come in the future—as He later said (see Luke 19:11-12,15; 22:16,18,29-30). The Lord often pictured the great coming kingdom as a time of salvation (see Matt. 5:3,5, 10,20; 7:13,14,21; 8:11; 13:43; 19:23-30; 25:21,23,31-34,46). In fact, Matthew 19:23-30 specifically identifies entering the future kingdom with being saved.

This message agrees with the Old Testament, which often speaks of the future king-

dom as the time of “salvation” (see Ps. 118:14-15,21; 132:13-18). For example, Isaiah 11 describes that future kingdom, then Isaiah 12 shows how men will praise God in that kingdom (“in that day,” v. 1). They will say that He has become salvation (v. 2) and that men with joy will draw water out of the wells of salvation (v. 3).

The same meaning for salvation is reflected in Zacharias’s prophecy in Luke 1:68-79. Salvation includes all that Messiah will do for His people (vv. 69-70, 77), including deliverance for Israel from her enemies (vv. 71,74) and fulfillment of other covenant promises (vv. 72-73).

4. The signs, wonders, and miracles that confirmed this message about salvation (2:4) belong to that future kingdom. Using the same word translated “miracles” in 2:4, Hebrews 6:5 calls them “powers of the world to come.” They show the changes that will come “in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory” (Matt. 19:28). “In the regeneration” means “at the renewal of all things” (NIV). Jesus’ miracles prove that He is the One who can renew all things. Such miracles were His response when John the Baptist sent to ask if He were the coming One, the Messiah (Matt. 11:3-5).

5. The writer himself defines his subject as “the world to come, about which we are speaking” (2:5, NIV).

Therefore, the writer uses “salvation” to mean the future kingdom with all its blessings. The readers, who have made a profession of Christianity, can lose all this. If they now reject this salvation and return to Judaism, they must face “recompense,” here meaning divine retribution (active punishment from God). Their punishment will be greater than the punishment of those who

disobeyed the law “put into effect through angels” (Acts 7:53, NIV). Such punishment will not be inflicted on a true believer, however; his sins will never be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ (see Heb. 8:12; 10:17-18).

As we have seen, the message of salvation spoken by the Son and His apostles was accompanied by God’s own miraculous testimony (2:4). His testimony is called by four names: (1) “signs,” as pointing to the deeper meanings of miracles, (2) “wonders,” referring to the amazement they produce; (3) “miracles,” referring to their powerful spiritual causes; and (4) “gifts of the Holy Spirit,” suggesting different manifestations by the same spiritual Agent.

We have seen that these were “miracles of the coming age” and therefore miracles of the Messiah. They were also “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12), which ceased when the apostles were finished. This passage in Hebrews looks at them as past; we should not expect them again until the Son returns to begin His kingdom.

What lessons should we learn from Hebrews 2:1-4? First, that the Son’s message concerns the future great salvation in His kingdom. He and His apostles at first announced that it was near, then said it would come at His return. Hebrews 2:5 calls it “the world to come.” That world is the kingdom promised in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) and will be a time of blessing such as we cannot imagine today. It is worth waiting for.

Second, God gave abundant evidence that the Son’s message was God’s message. He confirmed it with miracles showing His own power and purposes. As we would expect, He enabled Messiah (the Son) to do all kinds of miracles needed for Messiah’s

kingdom and to empower His apostles to do the same. Because of such evidence we are confident. But we cannot insist on seeing the same miracles today.

Third, in spite of such evidence there is a danger of drifting away. We must pay close attention—not neglect—what God has said through His Son. There is no other safe harbor for our boat.

MORE QUESTIONS

- 4.√ Summarize the five arguments that the “salvation” in Hebrews 2:3 is still future. Then learn the four indicated in Answers.
5. In 2:5-16 Hebrews contrasts the Son’s work with that of the angels. It begins by showing that not angels but man (that is, mankind) is destined to rule in the world to come. Now read Hebrews 2:5-8. “Whereof we speak” (v. 5) means “which we are speaking about.”
 - a. How does Hebrews 2:5 make it clear that in the previous verses (such as, 1:6,8-13,14; 2:3) the main theme was not the Son’s present position but His future kingdom?
 - b.√ How does Hebrews show that rulership in that future world is not the destiny of angels but of men? (Verse 5 is not the proof but prepares for it.)
6. Hebrews 2:9-16 shows that only one man—namely, Jesus—has yet been crowned with the glory God designed men for. Read those verses. “It became him” (v. 10) means “it was fitting for God.” The main verb repeated in verse 16 is not “took on” but “takes hold of [in order to help].”
 - a. In leading many men (“sons”) to that glory, what did the Son have to do?
 - b. What did this suffering do for Him (2:10) and for them (2:14-15)?
7. Hebrews 2:17-18 further explains why the Son had to experience suffering. The reason given anticipates what will later be the longest part of the book. Read those two verses. “Succor” (v. 18) means “help.”
 - a. What did His suffering qualify Him to be and do?
 - b. Since Jesus was divine, do you think He was really tempted to do wrong? (Give proof for your answer.)

As you read the following commentary, notice three secondary reasons and one main reason why the Son was made lower than the angels.

Superior in His work, 2:5-18

In chapter 1 the evidence used to prove the superiority of Christ to angels was a string of Scripture passages. Here it is His authority to be exercised over the earth as

Leader of redeemed humanity. Actually, the author tells us that he is talking about the same subject: “the world to come, concerning which we are speaking” (2:5).

“The world to come” was a common topic of thought for Hebrew people in New Testament times. The word translated “world” literally meant the inhabited earth (as in Luke 2:1). To Hebrews “the world to come” meant the future “days of the Messiah, when He shall reign on the earth” (quoted by Buxtorf, who is quoted by Barnes on Heb. 2:5). A typical statement said, “In the world to come the holy blessed God will vivify the dead [that is, make them live] and raise them from their dust” (Sohar, folio 81). In other words, the world to come will be the future kingdom of Messiah, which the godly dead will enter by physically coming back to life. Notice that the author of Hebrews does not define “the world to come”; he knows the readers will understand. Neither does he attempt to prove that there will be such a world; he assumes its coming. But he does prove that when it comes it will be under the control of man rather than angels.

His proof is simple: (1) God has given man the authority to rule this earth, but man has failed. (2) Jesus, the ideal man, will one day bring the whole world into submission to Himself and to other “sons.”

This proof begins at verse 6 and centers on Psalm 8. The first words might give the impression that the writer does not know the Old Testament very well: “But one has testified somewhere.” Of course, he knows who said it and where it is found, but his emphasis is on what was said.

The verses quoted, Psalm 8:4-6, anticipate the time when Messiah will reign as Leader of redeemed humanity. They picture man as fulfilling God’s original purpose in making man: “let them have dominion... over all the earth” (Gen. 1:26). But Hebrews 2:8b-9 contrasts the situation

prophesied in Psalm 8 with the present: what the psalm predicted has not yet happened, and therefore must happen in the world to come.

The two verbs for “see” should be noticed. The verb in 2:8b describes the general exercise of sight, while the verb in verse 9 emphasizes a single act of sight. The first looks around and does not see the psalm fulfilled yet; the second is directed to Jesus, the only man yet crowned.

Thus, Hebrews has proved that not angels but men are to rule in the world to come. Since man does not yet have the complete dominion pictured in Psalm 8, he will get it—through the Son—in that coming age. Other New Testament passages (such as, Matt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 15:25-28) also refer to that future glory. Romans 8:18-25 says that nature itself will be delivered (v. 21) and that our bodies will be redeemed (that is, raised in glory, v. 23).

Hebrews 2:9 is one of the few New Testament verses where the death of Jesus Christ is related to humans individually. By God’s grace He tasted “death for everyone.” This looks at every single human being.

The point of 2:10-18 is that the Lord did not become a man and suffer to save angels but in order to minister to mankind. It begins with the word “for” (v. 10) because it is an explanation of God’s grace just mentioned. “It became Him” means it was fitting for God the Father; it was He who perfected Jesus as Savior.

How could God make perfect (KJV) one who was already perfect? He did not change Him morally but in experience, not in His deity but in His humanity. Until the Son completed His earthly work, including His suffering, He was not ready to be the Savior. It is interesting that His cry from the cross,

“It is finished” (John 19:30), is closely related to the verb “make perfect” in Hebrews 2:10.

The word translated “author” (“captain,” KJV) in verse 10 is the same one used in 12:2. It describes Messiah as the Pathfinder or Pioneer of salvation, that is, the one who opens the path leading to that goal. Jesus leads the way to the glory of rulership in the world to come, which (as in 1:14 and 2:3) is again called “salvation.”

Verses 11-13 show why this Leader is suited to lead us to that glory. He not only has power to sanctify us (that is, set us apart for that glory); He also relates to the Father in faith as we do. He is our Brother.

In verses 12-13 the writer uses three Old Testament quotations to illustrate the Lord’s association with man. The first is Psalm 22:22, a messianic Psalm (see Ps. 22:1). In it the exalted Messiah speaks, after His sufferings, in the midst of His congregation, the body of the redeemed ones.

Verse 13 contains the second and third quotations: Isaiah 8:17 and 8:18. In Isaiah 8:17 the prophet says he will put his trust in the Lord. Just as Isaiah did, so also the Messiah as a human rests His faith in God. In Isaiah 8:18 Isaiah says that he and his children are a living picture of God’s message. So likewise, Jesus is identified with His family.

This part of the argument is summarized in verse 14: The Son has shared in flesh and blood with the other “children” who are to inherit salvation (1:14; 2:10). Furthermore, His humanity has made it possible for Him to cancel the power of Satan. The great evidence of Satan’s power is death; by His own death and resurrection the Son has overcome Satan’s power (see Matt. 16:18).

It is very important to note that the verb translated “might render powerless” (NASB) does not mean “destroy” (KJV). Rather, it means to make without effect, take away power (see Luke 13:7; Romans 3:3,31; 4:14). Satan’s power is still seen, but it is made without effect for believers in Christ Jesus. How did Jesus accomplish this? By partaking of flesh and blood just as the “children” already did, then passing through the experience of death.

Verse 15 points to the terrible mastery the fear of death holds over the world. “All their lives” emphasizes a continuing condition. At no stage in life do they find an escape from the dread of death.

Verse 16 reminds us of the reason why the Lord Jesus had to do the things just mentioned. It is because He gives help to the seed of Abraham. Abraham is mentioned here because the divine blessing must come through him (Gen. 12:3). His “seed” means his spiritual descendants—those who share his faith—as it does in Galatians 3:29, where it says that such people are heirs according to God’s promise. It is they, not the angels, who will inherit the world to come.

With a “therefore” (v. 17; “wherefore,” KJV) the writer introduces the conclusion of the whole paragraph of 2:10-18. Because of His humanity Jesus became a merciful and faithful High Priest. Verse 17 emphasizes His work of making men acceptable to God—making “propitiation” (NASB; “reconciliation,” KJV). This noun “propitiation” looks at the Son’s death as it concerns God; it means God is satisfied with it. Verse 18 stresses His ability to give power for living.

To summarize, Hebrews 2:10-18 provides three secondary reasons for the Son’s incarnation and sufferings. He became a man, suffered, and died so that

1. God might perfect Him (v. 10b)
2. He might take away Satan's power over men (v. 14)
3. He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest to make propitiation for sins (v. 17).

All three of these accomplishments enable Him to fulfill an even greater purpose: to lead many sons to the glory of the world to come. Verse 5 had stated that the glory of ruling in the world to come is not designed for angels, implying that it is designed for men. Verses 6-9 had proved that point by quoting Psalm 8 and observing that it is not fulfilled yet; only one man has been crowned. Verse 10 had explained that God's design for "many sons" will be accomplished through this one Leader who is now perfected. So this Lord Jesus who became a man to save men will one day rule over the whole world—and His companions will share in His reign. This is the reason He was for a little while made lower than angels. His work is greater than theirs.

What lessons should we learn from Hebrews 2:5-18? First, that God has subjected to humans the world to come. God

speaks of such future certainties as though they were past. Hebrews 2 finds the proof of mankind's future rule in the statements of Psalm 8, which are "not yet" true. If God's purposes for man have not yet been accomplished, they will be fulfilled in the world to come. We who are the future rulers should live accordingly.

Second, God's Son suffered in order to bring many sons to that future glory. This section gives several reasons for the Son's suffering: to taste death for us, to be perfected, to make the devil powerless and deliver us. These are all aspects of the main purpose: to bring many sons to the glory of the world to come. This is the Son's work that the angels cannot do. He is our Leader guiding us to glory. What an honor now! What a hope for tomorrow!

Third, our Leader is truly human and has experienced human life. In order to lead us, He took to Himself the flesh and blood that we already shared. He calls us brothers. He had to live by trusting God. He is like us in every way except sin. He suffered and died. What love He showed for us!

ANOTHER QUESTION

8. In commenting on the Son's work, Hebrews 2 shows why the Son was made lower than the angels and suffered.
 - a. What are the three secondary reasons?
 - b.√ What is the overall reason that shows the need for the others?

Now, prepare for the unit examination by making sure you can answer all the questions marked √. Check yourself by answering the "objective questions" at the beginning of each lesson. Then practice by answering the following sample review questions. The first eight questions are multiple-choice and require that you put the letter for the best answer on the line before the number.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- ___ 1. Which statement best expresses the theme of Hebrews?

- a) God has spoken in His Son.
 - b) God has spoken many times.
 - c) Jesus is the brightness of God's glory.
 - d) Jesus is better than the angels.
- ___ 2. What is the question introducing the first and last quotations in Hebrews 1:5-13?
- a) Whom did God ever call "Son"?
 - b) What saith the Scripture?
 - c) Where does it ever say?
 - d) To which of the angels did He ever say?
- ___ 3. In Hebrews 1 Jesus' better name is a) Christ b) Lord c) God d) Son.
- ___ 4. In Hebrews 1 this name refers to His
- a) divine nature b) right to rule c) human humility d) divine love.
- ___ 5. According to Psalm 110, when will the Son inherit His kingdom?
- a) at His birth into the family of David b) at His resurrection from the dead c) at Pentecost d) when His enemies become His footstool
- ___ 6. How long will His kingdom last? a) forever b) 7000 years c) 2000 years d) 1000 years
- ___ 7. What is the "salvation" looked at in the Old Testament quotations of Hebrews 1:5-13?
- a) heaven b) God's rule in men's hearts c) Christ's rule over the church d) Christ's future rule on earth
- ___ 8. To prove that man will rule in the world to come, Hebrews 2 shows that
- a) seven Old Testament passages say so
 - b) Jesus is greater than the angels in His person
 - c) Psalm 8 predicts such rule but is not fulfilled yet
 - d) Jesus for a while was made lower than the angels
- 9-10 What were the two main purposes for writing Hebrews?
- 9.
- 10.
11. What was the main purpose for quoting the seven Old Testament passages in Hebrews 1:5-13?
12. What title did we give to the first warning in Hebrews?
- 13-16 What are four evidences that the "salvation" in Hebrews 2:3 is future?

- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
17. According to Hebrews 2, what is the main reason the Son became a man and suffered?

Have you prepared for the examination as instructed? Have you done well on the sample review questions? If so, take unit 1 examination from memory. Do not forget to send in your first reading report.

Unit Two

Lesson 4

Hebrews 3

What is the second main contrast? the second warning? the evidence, according to Hebrews 3:14, that some will share with Messiah? What is that sharing called in the second warning section? What are four ways the Son is better than Moses?

In Hebrews 1-2 we had the first main contrast in this book, between Jesus and the angels. They were the supernatural spokesmen for the old covenant, and He was the Spokesman for the new covenant. In Hebrews 3:1 to 4:13 we have the second main contrast, between the founders of the two covenants. As in the previous contrast, Jesus will be seen as better both in His person and in His work.

1. This next section of Hebrews discusses a divine promise that was turned down by Moses' generation but will be fulfilled by Jesus. God invites us to enter His "rest." Read Hebrews 3:1 to 4:13, listing all the facts you can find (at least six) about this rest. Then see Answers.
2. Reread Hebrews 3:1, which forms a bridge to this contrast and the next one. The title "Christ" is not in the Greek; He is simply called "Jesus." "Of our profession" means "whom we confess" (NIV), that is, whom we publicly acknowledge as Lord.
 - a. What does this verse call the readers? (The name it uses assumes but does not guarantee that they were all Christians.)
 - b. The two titles for Jesus in this verse reflect the two main contrasts still to come. What are the titles?
3. Reread the first part of this contrast: 3:1-6.
 - a.√ With whom is Jesus compared here?
 - b. "Apostles" are God's delegates, sent to represent Him (and, in this case, to establish His covenants). Both Moses and the Son were such apostles. How were they alike (v. 2)?
 - c.√ How is the Son superior to Moses? (See if you can find four ways in vv. 3-6. Three are fairly easy; another one is implied in 5b. Then learn those given in Answers.)
 - d. As proof that we are the Son's house, what two things must we hold fast unto the end?

Read the commentary that follows, thinking why you prefer Jesus as apostle over Moses.

His Superiority To Moses, 3:1 to 4:13

The second main comparison in Hebrews is of the Son to Moses, God's servant through whom He gave the first covenant.

Superior in His person, 3:1-6

The "therefore" of verse 1 still looks at Jesus as a man made like His brothers, as in chapter 2. But how great a man! Greater than Moses.

The readers are described in 3:1 as "holy brethren [brothers], partakers of a heavenly calling." The writer of Hebrews considers the vast majority of them as God's children. But he will again show (in 3:6, for example) that the status of some is doubtful. "Brothers" are not always believers in the New Testament (see Acts 2:29; 22:1; 23:1). They may even be "holy" (set apart)—like the Israelites that God set apart from other nations and brought out of Egypt with Moses—yet unbelieving.

The Israelites in Moses' day had a "heavenly calling"—that is, an invitation from God—to enter Canaan, but did not enter. Likewise, the readers have been invited to the great salvation and glory of the world to come, as we have seen in chapters 1 and 2 (see 1:14; 2:3,5,8,10). How will they respond?

In 3:1 Jesus is said to be both "Apostle" and "High Priest." The word *apostle* refers to someone sent with delegated authority (see Matt. 10:1-2), that is, authority that really belongs to the sender. All true prophets were apostles, because they were sent from God with His authority. Since the Lord Jesus was also sent from God to man (see John 3:34; 5:36-37; 20:21; Gal. 4:4), He is the Apostle of new covenant faith. As such He is com-

pared in Hebrews 3-4 to Moses, who was sent as God's apostle to Israel with the law.

A priest, in contrast, goes from man to God. Under the new covenant Jesus also fulfills this office; He represents believers before God. As such He will be compared in Hebrews 5-10 to Aaron, first high priest under the old covenant. Hebrews 3:1 introduces both of these comparisons. The comparison to Moses begins at once.

It is important to note the word "confession" ("profession," KJV) in verse 1. It implies that the main issue in this book is what people believe, not just what they do.

In verse 2 the similarity of Moses and Jesus is pointed out. Both were faithful to the One that appointed them (see Num. 12:7; 1 Cor. 4:2).

In verses 3-6 we see the following four superiorities of Jesus to Moses:

Jesus' first superiority is outlined in verses 3-4: He is the Builder, who has more glory than the house He built. Moses, of course, is part of the house. Verse 4 implies

Hebrews 3:1-6: Jesus Superior in Person to Moses

Moses	Jesus
1. Part of the house (v. 2)	Builder of the house (vv. 3-4)
2. A servant (v. 5)	A Son (v. 6)
3. IN the house (v. 5)	OVER the house (v. 6)
4. He testified to a coming reality. (v. 5)	He is the fulfillment. (v. 5)

that Jesus, the Builder, is God.

The other three superiorities are seen in verses 5-6. These verses move from the building of the house to the ways in which Moses and Jesus are related to the house. Verse 5 says that Moses gave "a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after"—that is, of the things later spoken by the Son about the great salvation in the

world to come (see 1:2; 2:1,3,5). In short, Moses' ministry pointed to and would be fulfilled by the Son's better ministry.

Verse 6 helps identify the Son's house, showing that we also are part of it. Apparently His house includes the redeemed of all ages (11:40; 12:22-23; Gal. 3:16,29). The last part of verse 6 warns, "whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (NASB). Does this mean that one can lose his salvation? No, it simply means that by continuing in faith we give proof that God has chosen us (see 3:14; 1 John 2:19; Col. 1:23). One who abandons his profession of faith in Christ demonstrates that he has never really been born again. Theologians state this in technical language: "Perseverance is a mark of election," meaning that by continuing faithful we give evidence that God chose us.

What is the "hope" true believers rejoice in? Hope always has to do with the future (Rom. 8:24-25). Our hope is the salvation-glory of the world to come, as seen in Hebrews 1-2. We can read about this same hope of future glory, thought of as salvation, in Romans 5:2, 9-10.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 3:1-6? First, that every one of

God's servants can be faithful. Moses and the Son were both faithful to Him who appointed them. Even though the Son is far greater than Moses, Moses was also important. Being part of the Son's house does not take away our importance as individuals. At whatever level we function, God wants us to be faithful—to keep on fulfilling the purposes He made us for.

Second, we should see the Son whenever we read the Old Testament. Moses' books (Genesis through Deuteronomy) are the foundation for all the Old Testament. Since Moses testified about the Son's later revelation, the whole Old Testament glorifies the Son. We should see this when we study.

Third, being part of a group who confess Jesus does not guarantee salvation. Notice how the author warns the Hebrews. They are "holy brethren who share in the heavenly calling" and even confess Jesus as Apostle and High Priest. Yet, they are God's house only if they "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Let us be sure not to trust in our group membership or even in a moment of confession. True believers continue their confidence and hope in Christ. This does not earn salvation for them, but it does prove that they have saving faith.

MORE QUESTIONS

4. The commentary says that our hope is "the salvation-glory of the world to come, as seen in Hebrews 1-2." Look up the promise in Romans 5:2, 9-10 and tell how it says the same thing.
5. Not everyone who hears the Son will share with Him. Read Hebrews 3:7-19, the second main warning. "Provocation" (vv. 8,15) means "rebellion." "Wilderness" (vv. 8,17) means "desert." "Tempted" (v. 9) means "tested." Verse 16 should have two questions: "For who provoked Him?...did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?"
 - a. What does this passage warn us not to do?

- b.√ Give this second warning your own title. Then learn the one in Answers.
 - c. According to the Psalm (95) quoted, how did Israel test God in the desert?
 - d. What was (or was to be) the “rest” they were not allowed to enter?
 - e. What should we do daily as long as it is called “Today”?
6. Hebrews 3:14 can be translated, “For we have become Messiah’s partners if we maintain firm until the end the confidence we started with.” “Partners” is the same word in Greek as “fellows” in 1:9, referring to those who will share in the Lord’s rule.
- a. In Hebrews 3:14 the author has switched from “entering into rest” to an expression that means the same. What expression?
 - b.√ How do we know if we will share with Messiah? (What evidence should we show?)

Read the commentary that follows, thinking about the serious nature of disbelief.

The danger of disbelief, 3:7-19

In chapters 3 and 4 Hebrews is contrasting the Son to Moses. This section follows the same pattern as the section that contrasted Him to the angels:

1. It shows He is greater in His person and position (3:1-6).
2. It pauses to warn the readers (3:7-19).
3. It shows He is greater in His work (4:1-13).

The second warning, which we now consider, concerns the danger of disbelief (3:7-19). We are using “disbelief” to mean serious unbelief.

The background of this passage is Israel’s experience at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14). Because of what happened there, Moses could not bring his people into the Promised Land. But Jesus is the new Moses who, as chapter 4 will show, does bring His people into rest.

The “therefore” of verse 7 looks back and looks forward. It looks back to Jesus’ personal superiority over Moses—already proved—and introduces another “much more” argument. If disobeying Moses brought calamity (Num. 14), how much

more will disobeying the Son bring calamity!

“Therefore” also looks forward to a conclusion—what we should do—in verse 12. We should “take care” (“take heed,” KJV), a warning we will examine later. All the words in between—that is, 7b-11—are parenthetical (see the diagram).

Now let us consider this parenthetical section (3:7b-11) between “therefore” and the conclusion. This section quotes some of

Parenthetical Quotation in Hebrews 3

v. 7a	(vv. 7b-11)	v. 12
Therefore	(as the Spirit said in Psalm 95)	Take care

King David’s words from Psalm 95, words inspired by the Holy Spirit. Psalm 95 is in two parts. The first part is a call to worship (95:1-7a). The second part (95:7b-11), the part quoted in Hebrews 3, is a warning against disobeying God. The psalmist warned them not to repeat what had happened to Israel centuries earlier, in the “provocation...in the wilderness” (v. 8,

KJV). He mentioned two events. The first, related in Exodus 17, took place at Meribah (meaning “quarrel”) and Massah (meaning “test”) soon after the Exodus. The second event, described in Numbers 14, took place at Kadesh Barnea, where the wilderness sojourn should have ended. Their forty years’ wandering, which followed, was a result of Israel’s provoking and testing God, and their own hardness of heart.

Back to Hebrews 3. In verse 8 the literal Greek says “in the provocation” (as in KJV), meaning “when they provoked Me” (NASB). Israel’s rebellious spirit, provoking God and putting Him to the test, came to a climax at Kadesh Barnea. As a result, God swore that they would not enter His rest (v. 11).

Verses 9-10 show that one can see God’s works and yet not know His ways—as was true of Israel. How serious!

Finally we get to the warning in 3:12. Notice the following. (1) “Any one” (NASB; KJV has “any”) looks at individuals in the group (see also v. 13). Among the “brethren” some individuals are in danger of not entering the promised rest. (2) The danger is that of “departing” (KJV). The NASB has “falling away,” but the Greek verb implies stronger action. This verb, used in 1 Timothy 4:1, is built on the same stem from which the noun *apostasy* is derived. It describes a deliberate, decisive departure. (3) The departure is from “the living God.” The danger, in short, is apostasy and not just unworthiness—not just missing the Lord’s high standards but giving up one’s profession of Christ.

Now we are better prepared to understand verse 13. Instead of “falling away” or departing from the living God, the body of believers is to “encourage” (KJV has “ex-

hort”) one another. This is the same command as in Hebrews 10:25. The Greek tense of the verb “encourage” implies the need for doing this continually.

But what is meant by “Today”? It is the present time of opportunity, of invitation to enter the “rest.” And as at Kadesh, our decision will be final; there will be no “tomorrow.” When Israel attempted to reverse its decision the very next day, it was too late (see Num. 14:40-45).

In Hebrews the emphasis is once again on the failure of certain individuals in the group (“any one of you”). The entire body of professing believers is not in danger, only certain ones.

Verse 14 explains the need for the warning. It is the same teaching as in verse 6 (also Col. 1:23; 1 John 2:19; Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23; Luke 8:13): we show that God has chosen us when we continue in the faith. The elect will endure (see Rom. 8:29-30).

Are not believers eternally secure? Of course. “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?” (Rom. 8:33). Nevertheless, we dare not overlook the other side of this coin: that the elect do continue in their faith. There is no other absolutely certain human evidence of who they are.

“Partakers of Christ” (3:14) refers to those who share with Messiah in His coming kingdom. The same people were referred to by the same Greek word for “partakers” in 1:9 (“companions,” NASB; “fellows,” KJV). Later they were called “heirs of salvation” (1:14; 2:10) and “many sons” that God brings to the “glory” (2:10) of “the world to come” (2:5).

Verses 16-18 give three reasons why the endurance of faith is needed. (1) A beginning does not guarantee success (v. 16).

(2) Unbelief angers God (v. 17). (3) Disobedience results in judgment (v. 18).

Verse 19 is a summary statement: Israel's disobedience was caused by unbelief. They started with God but didn't really believe in Him. In unbelief they looked back longingly to Egypt (Num. 14:3-4; Acts 7:39; Heb. 11:15) and looked ahead fearfully to the difficulties before them (Num. 13:31 to 14:20). God brought them to the door, but they would not enter. Because this unbelief had rebellion in it, we are calling it "disbelief."

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 3:7-19? First, even people familiar with God's works may be in danger of hardening their hearts. God favored Israel above all nations. He revealed His power and love, delivering them from Egypt and

sustaining them in the desert. They seemed to follow Him at first but let sin harden their hearts. As a result, they did not learn God's ways. Let us exhort anyone who through sin today may be hardening his heart.

Second, we must fear disbelief because it is exceedingly sinful. Disbelief results from sin and leads to more sin. It amounts to departing from the living God. In Israel's case it angered God and caused Him to refuse them entrance into the promised rest. It can do the same today.

Third, those who both start and continue with God are Messiah's partners. These are the "many sons" who will share the glory of Messiah's rule during the world to come (1:9; 2:5,10). If we know we will rule with Him then, it becomes easier to suffer with Him now.

ANOTHER QUESTION

7. Why is disbelief such a great sin?

Lesson 5

Hebrews 4:1-13

What is the "rest" in Hebrews 3-4? (Give four arguments.) Can you give the outline of Hebrews, with subdivisions and references, through 10:18?

1. The negative warning in chapter 3 changes into a more positive emphasis in 4:1-13. These verses show us Jesus' work as Apostle of the new covenant—particularly the goal He will take us to. Read the first two verses of chapter 4, then answer. "Come short" (v. 1) is left indefinite in Greek, which does not have "of it." Instead of "gospel" (v. 2), read "good news."
 - a. According to 4:1, what are we in danger of missing?
 - b. Hebrews 4:2 says that the "good news" was preached to us as well as to the Jews that came out of Egypt with Moses. This seems to mean that the message was essentially the same to both groups. (Verse 6 says it was "first preached" to

them.) Yet, the message did not profit them because of their lack of faith. What good news did they hear but not believe?

2. Read Hebrews 4:3-11, which mixes encouragement with exhortation. This paragraph shows that the “rest” Israel rejected but that Messiah will give is the same as God’s rest after creation. “If they shall enter” (vv. 3,5) means “they shall not enter,” as in 3:11—which has the same Greek words. “Jesus” (v. 8) is the Greek name for Joshua, Moses’ successor. “Let us labor” (v. 11) means “let us make every effort.”
 - a.√ There is an expression used several times in Hebrews 3:11 to 4:11 that identifies what we will do when we share with Messiah. What is that expression? (It was what Israel missed.)
 - b. Hebrews 4:3 shows that, indeed, some of us can be sure of entering that rest. Who can be sure?

3. Read Hebrews 4:12-13. “Quick” (v. 12) means “living.” These verses remind us that our true attitude cannot be hidden from God. The same Word that invited us into God’s rest (that is, the Word made visible and touchable in the Son) also penetrates to our innermost being and lays us bare to God’s judgment. What difference does this make to you?

Remember that the objectives for each lesson are indicated by questions just below the lesson number. As you read the commentary, watch for answers to the first objective for this lesson, that is, the meaning of “rest.”

Superior in His work, 4:1-13

Hebrews now resumes the contrast of Jesus with Moses. It shows that He will give the rest Moses did not give. The thought begins with the word “therefore” (4:1). This means that we are similar to Israel at Kadesh Barnea (3:15-19); let us not do what they did.

“Lest...any of you should seem to come short” (4:1) does not mean that some only give the appearance of coming short. The verb translated “seem” sometimes describes the actual situation (as in 1 Cor. 11:16; Luke 8:18). Therefore, it is right to translate, “**be found** to have fallen short” (NIV, emphasis added). Coming short is a real danger.

“Coming short” (see the same verb in 12:15) accurately describes Jews who failed to hold to their confessions of faith in Jesus

and turned back to Judaism. They would indeed come short of the promised rest.

The good news of entering God’s rest had been preached to the readers of Hebrews just as it had been in Moses’ day (4:2). What had been offered in Moses’ day? In some sense the Promised Land, because that was what they did not enter (4:6).

But when verse 3 says that believers do enter, can that also refer to the Promised Land? Logically it should, since the good news is the same for us as for them (4:6). Someone might object that the present tense of the verb “enter” means that we have already entered. But this objection is mistaken. The present tense is often used of something certain to happen in the future. This is called “futuristic present.” For example, read Luke 20:35-36 with its

futuristic presents written with all-capital letters. These verses look at those who will take part in the resurrection as already having done so:

They...neither MARRY, nor ARE GIVEN in marriage: neither CAN they DIE any more for they ARE equal unto the angels; and ARE the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Now read the same thing with the futuristic presents changed to future:

They...WILL neither MARRY nor BE GIVEN in marriage: neither WILL they BE ABLE TO DIE any more: for they WILL BE equal unto the angels; and WILL BE the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Similarly, the beginning of Hebrews 4:3 could be rewritten,

For we who have believed WILL ENTER the rest [just mentioned].

This leaves open the possibility that the rest still means the Promised Land under certain conditions. The following verses show that this interpretation is correct.

Verses 4-10 show that the promised rest is related to God's rest in Genesis 2:2 and is, in fact, an extension of it. Notice the main points of the argument.

Verse 4 quotes Genesis 2:2 to show that God rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath, from His works of creation. Verse 5 quotes Psalm 95:11 to show that He refused to let Moses' generation enter His rest. This refusal implies (according to vv. 6-7) that from the beginning He intended for man to enter (see Matt. 25:34); otherwise, He would have said nothing about entering. Therefore, He long afterward (in David's time) mentions another day of opportunity: "Today."

It is important to notice that God's people had not yet entered God's rest—that rest was still future.

But didn't Moses' successor Joshua give Israel that rest? Verse 8, by saying "if Joshua had" (NASB, NIV), makes it clear that he did not. (KJV keeps the Greek form of his name, "Jesus.") Joshua did lead Israel in the conquest of the Promised Land, but it was no longer God's rest. That opportunity had passed. When Israel had refused, God had withdrawn His offer. This means that the Promised Land could be God's rest only under certain conditions, only as the center of His eternal kingdom. In Joshua's day it was still a picture of that rest (Josh. 1:13,15; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; Deut. 12:10) but was not the rest itself.

Verses 7-8 also show that the promise was not fulfilled in David's day either! David's appeal in Psalm 95 was for his people to enter a future rest.

The conclusion to this paragraph is in verses 9-10. Verse 9 says that the promised rest still "remains" today; that is, it still exists as our hope (see the same verb in 10:26). That rest is a promise for the future, though we can prepare for it now (see Heb. 11:39-40).

The word translated literally as "Sabbath rest" (NASB) in verse 9 is the Greek word *sabbatismos*, used only here in the New Testament. This word reflects a view held by many Jews at that time, that the Sabbath will come to fulfillment in the kingdom age. Human history will correspond to God's creation week: after "six days" (in this view symbolizing six thousand years) of labor there will be "one day" (that is, one thousand years—a millennium) of rest. This does not mean that His kingdom-rest will come to an end. In the creation account

(Gen. 1-2) each day has an ending except the seventh; so that future Sabbath will not end but will introduce God’s eternal day.

Thus, as Paul says in Colossians 2:16-17, “sabbath days...are a shadow of things to come.” For the first two centuries of church history, most if not all Christians shared the Jewish belief just described. They looked forward to a literal Millennium, during which the Promised Land will be the center of Messiah’s worldwide government. They took at face value such prophecies as Isaiah 2:1-4. (For further study, see John 5:16-17 and discussions of the Sabbath in theological dictionaries.)

Verse 10 concludes the argument of verses 4-10 by showing why “sabbath-rest” is a good name for what “remains” for God’s people. It does this by comparing thoughts from the two Old Testament passages being considered: (1) Psalm 95:11, used in most of this section (chs. 3-4) about the Son and Moses; and (2) Genesis 2:2,

Greek form is indefinite (see the same form in John 16:2 and Matt. 23:20-22). But when such a person does exist, it can be said that he has rested as God did on the first Sabbath.

What kind of works did God rest from on that first Sabbath? Good and productive works, works of creation. So God’s rest cannot picture a sinner’s ceasing from wickedness—or even from his own “good works”—in order to find justification. Instead, it pictures what awaits the saints (the “people of God,” v. 9) in the coming kingdom. If so, the “rest” is the same as the future salvation (1:14), the glory of the world to come (2:5,10). Today we must continue to “labor” (6:10) and “strive” (12:4), but the promised rest will come.

It is evident that none of us has yet rested in the way God did at the end of creation week (Gen. 2:2). But as surely as He finished His work, then rested and rejoiced in it, so shall we at the end of this age. Let us be diligent to enter “that [future] rest” (v. 11).

What will happen to true believers who died when this rest was not being offered? God will raise them from the dead so that they can take part, too.

In 4:11-13 the warning of 3:12-13 and 4:1 is repeated. Once again the emphasis is on individuals (“anyone”) in the group who, like the Israelites of Kadesh Barnea, were so close and yet so far.

The “for” beginning verse 12 shows that it explains the need for the warning of verse 11. Those who reject God’s rest will face His judgment.

Meaning of the “Rest” In Hebrews 3-4

Because of the difficulty of this subject, let us restate our understanding of the “rest”

Hebrews 4:10: Describing Christian Hope	
The Person	What That Person Does
<i>He who enters God’s rest</i> (words adapted from Ps. 95:11)	<i>“rests from his own work” just as God did.</i> (words quoted from Gen. 2:2)

used in the current paragraph (4:4-10). By adapting key words from Psalm 95:11 it pictures a person: “he who enters God’s rest” (NIV). Then, by quoting from Genesis 2:2, it gives, in effect, a definition of that rest: “rests from his own work, just as God did” (NIV).

“He who enters God’s rest” does not refer to any definite person or time; the

referred to in these chapters. On the surface it would seem that three “rests” are in view:

1. Canaan rest, that is, the “rest” that Moses’ generation missed (see Heb. 3:11,18-19). The following generation entered the land under Joshua and obtained “rest” (Deut. 12:9; Josh. 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1) but not the rest promised to the earlier generation (see Hebrews 4:8).
2. Sabbath rest, which was God’s rest on the seventh day after creating everything (see Heb. 4:4,10; Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 20:11).
3. The rest promised to believers today (see Heb. 4:1,3,6,8-11).

But though these three may look different, Hebrews 3-4 considers them basically the same. The good news about entering was preached both to Moses’ generation and to us (4:2). Hebrews 4:4-10 specifically identifies our rest and Canaan rest as God’s Sabbath rest. Israel missed the opportunity to enter that rest—even under Joshua—but “after so long a time” (4:7) there is “another day” of invitation (4:8).

What is this promised rest to which we are invited? Many take it to be eternal blessing in heaven. But this view cannot explain (1) how our promised rest is related to the one Israel missed nor (2) why sometimes the rest has not even been offered (between the times of invitation).

A second view is that the promised rest is the present experience of rest and peace available to Christians who attain it. Advocates of this view often call this experience “faith/rest,” in which believers rest from fleshly labors. But again, (1) how is this

related to the rest Israel missed? And (2) how does this view fit with the strong danger implied in 4:11-13? Does failure to enjoy faith/rest condemn a Christian to serious punishment? Also, (3) how is our resting from fleshly labors similar to God’s resting from His works of creation?

The best view says that the rest being discussed in Hebrews describes the Lord’s coming kingdom centered in the Holy Land. Consider some of the many evidences supporting this interpretation. The first four are the strongest.

1. By using Psalm 95 as its basis, Hebrews 3:7 to 4:13 shows that the “rest” is the same in both passages. Psalm 95 in detail, including its warning, is seen as directed to us. Therefore, since the “rest” it says Israel missed in Moses’ generation involved the Holy Land, so does ours. The same good news about entering was, much later, preached to us as well as to them (4:2).
2. The fact that the invitation ceased and was later renewed (“another day”) shows that the “rest” must be a goal of history rather than a continuous condition. Hebrews 4:7-8 says that because those first invited did not enter, “after so long a time” David spoke of “another day,” that is, a second distinct period, of invitation. Whether that new invitation began in David’s time or at some other time, it was still distinct from the first invitation. Neither Moses nor Joshua had given such rest. It was not something always available and always offered, like justification or going to heaven. Rather, it is something long-anticipated, like the coming kingdom.

3. By identifying this “rest” with God’s Sabbath rest (especially in 4:4-10), Hebrews points directly to the kingdom. The Sabbath is a shadow of what is to come. And the special Greek term in Hebrews 4:9 (*sabbatismos*) reflects the Jewish and New Testament view that the Sabbath will be fulfilled in the kingdom. This same interpretation of the Sabbath and the rest is found in Christian literature written as early as the beginning of the second century (*Epistle of Barnabas*).
4. By using “partakers of Christ” as equivalent to entering the “rest” (3:14), Hebrews echoes what it said earlier about the kingdom. The same word here translated “partakers” was used in 1:9 referring to those who will share with Messiah in His kingdom. Later these people were called “heirs of salvation” (1:14; 2:10) and “many sons” that God brings to the “glory” (2:10) of “the world to come” (2:5).
5. The description in 4:10 of the person “who enters God’s rest” has not been fulfilled yet. Such a person “rests from his own work just as God did.”
6. The Old Testament describes the kingdom in terms of a glorious rest (see Ps. 132:12-14; Isa. 11:10; 14:3; 32:18; Ezek. 34:15).
7. Psalm 95, the Old Testament basis for Hebrews 3:7 to 4:10, is an enthronement psalm looking ahead to Messiah’s reign.
8. Hebrews 4:1 says that a “promise” is left to enter that rest. A promise refers to the future (see 4:8; 11:39).
9. Hebrews 4:9 says that this rest “remains,” which also refers to the future.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 4:1-13? First, that God has ordained that believers will enter His rest. This means that we will enjoy with Him the new creation when it is complete. We will rest from our works as God did on the first Sabbath. It will be a Sabbath-keeping far greater than the original Sabbath. Israel was required to keep the Sabbath partly as a sign of that future rest God is preparing. We take pains to enter that rest when we make sure we believe God’s Word through His Son.

Second, we can fool men but we cannot fool God. The same Word that invites us to God’s rest will also judge us. It penetrates to our deepest motives.

Third, the Son’s work is greater than Moses’ work. He will give the rest that Israel missed under Moses and even under Joshua. Let us be sure we benefit from His work.

MORE QUESTIONS

4. When Israel refused to enter God’s rest, His offer was withdrawn. Though Joshua later took them into the Promised Land, it was no longer “God’s rest. How does Hebrews prove this? (4:8)
5. Read Isaiah 2:1-4 and tell where Messiah will rule.

6. Look again at the explanation of Hebrews 4:10. According to this verse, what will be true of us when we enter God's rest?
7. What word in verse 11 indicates that we have not yet entered the rest?
- 8.√
 - a. What meaning for the "rest" in Hebrews 3-4 have we presented?
 - b. What are the four strongest arguments for that meaning? Say them in your own words.
- 9.√ Look at the outline of Hebrews on page 6. Then copy and memorize the "Prologue" line, the first division line (I. The Superiority...) and the three subdivisions (A,B,C) of division I, all with references.
10. Are you certain that you will join God in His glorious rest?

Lesson 6

Hebrews 4:14 to 5:10

What is the third major contrast in Hebrews? What were two qualifications Jesus fulfilled in order to be High Priest? What does Hebrews 4:14-16 encourage us to do?

In chapters 1-4 the Son has been compared to the angels and to Moses. Next (in 4:14 to 10:18) He is compared to Aaron, the first high priest of the old covenant. After a majestic introduction to this subject (in 4:14-16), we will again consider His person (chs. 5-7) and His work (8:1 to 10:18).

1. Read the introduction, in 4:14-16. "Into" (v. 14) should be "through." Verse 14 begins the contrast of Jesus and Aaron. Aaron once a year passed through the parts of a man-made tabernacle to reach God's earthly throne. Jesus passed through the heavens themselves, to reach God's heavenly throne.
 - a. Indicating the theme of the next chapters, verse 14 repeats four key words from 3:1b. What are they?
 - b. Why is our High Priest able to sympathize with us (and therefore help us)?
 - c. What do you think it means that God's throne is here called "the throne of grace"?
 - d.√ To summarize, what does Hebrews 4:14-16 encourage us to do?
 - e.√ To review, what is the third major contrast in Hebrews?
2. In regard to our High Priest's person, the first consideration is His appointment to the priesthood, in 5:1-10. Read those verses, then answer.
 - a. Hebrews 5:1 mentions the reason for having a high priest. What is it?

- b.√ Hebrews 5:1-3 shows one qualification for becoming high priest; verse 4 shows another. What are they?
- c. Hebrews 5:5-10 shows, in reverse order, how the Son fulfilled both these qualifications. What words quoted from the Old Testament clearly show that God called Him?
- d. The Son's sufferings were real and sometimes severe. The example given here seems to be His extreme agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when in His human weakness He cried out to be spared, and received strength (v. 7). What did He learn and what did He become through such suffering?

Now, read the commentary that follows, thinking why you are grateful for such a High Priest.

His Superiority To Aaron, 4:14 to 10:18

Having contrasted Jesus to Moses in chapters 3-4, Hebrews now contrasts Him to Aaron, first head of the Levitical priesthood. This comparison is very long, five and a half chapters, showing its great importance.

Introduction, 4:14-16

These verses anticipate the practical value of the next section. We have a priest at God's throne: Jesus, God's Son. Therefore, we should not abandon our allegiance to Him but should through Him constantly find the divine help we need.

The Lord Jesus has a better position than Aaron or Aaron's successors ever had, because He has passed through the heavens and taken His place at the Father's right hand. This concept is developed more fully in 8:1-5 and 9:11-12, 23-24.

One of the key verbs in Hebrews is *have*. It is used over and over (see 4:14-15; 5:14; 6:18-19; 8:1; 10:19,34; 12:1,28; 13:10,18). In this passage what we have is a great High Priest (v. 14), great in His position and mercy (compare 2:17).

It is important to observe from verse 14 that the issue is not simply conduct but "confession" (NASB), translating the same Greek word as in 3:1. Some of the readers were in danger of doctrinal apostasy, of

throwing off their profession of Christ and lapsing into Judaism. Apparently (vv. 15-16) they were undergoing heavy pressure to leave Christianity. Verse 15, introduced by "for," explains why they should hold their confession. They should hold it because believers have this High Priest in heaven who truly understands their temptations since He experienced them.

What does it mean that Jesus was "tempted in all things"? Not that He had every possible temptation. Though fully human, He did not have a sin nature, which in our case produces some of our temptations. Neither did He experience the frustrations of a blind person or the pressures of marriage. What does it mean, then? Probably, that He felt the full force or measure of temptations. He bore 100% of testing, a rating no other human could attain without sinning. It may also mean that He experienced temptations of every general type.

Verse 16 tells what is the evidence that a person holds fast to his confession. "Let us come" is Greek present tense to indicate continual action. Continual coming to Him in prayer is the clearest demonstration of our faith in Christ. Faith has confidence ("boldly") to come near to God's throne. This throne, in contrast to verses 12-13, has

become a throne of grace, where mercy and grace are given out. Under the old covenant it was death for anyone other than the high priest to enter the Holy of Holies; now it is disaster to remain outside.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 4:14-16? First, that through our High Priest we have access to God's throne and His resources. Our High Priest is one of us; His name is Jesus. And He is one with God, being His Son. He has passed through the heavens to reach God's throne and sit there. Because of Him we now have confidence to approach that throne. Let us approach it constantly.

Second, we should think of God's throne as the throne of grace. The High Priest seated there has shared our experiences and is now our Representative. We can go to that throne not only when all is well but also in time of need. Let us approach with assurance of getting help.

Superior in His person, 5:1 to 7:28

As in earlier contrasts, Hebrews will first compare Jesus to Aaron in His person, then in His work. In regard to His person, the first concern is to show on what basis He became a priest. Hebrews 5:1-10 gives the prerequisites for priesthood (vv. 1-6) and how Jesus filled them (vv. 7-10).

There are two prerequisites for becoming a priest: (1) he must participate in human feelings and weaknesses (vv. 1-3) and (2) he must be divinely appointed (vv. 4-6).

The second requirement, given in verse 4, looks back to Exodus 28:1 and 1 Chronicles 23:13. Several men attempted to take upon themselves this priestly office and were severely judged for it: Korah (Num. 16), Saul (1 Sam. 13), and Uzziah (2 Chron. 26).

In verses 5-6 two Old Testament quotations prove that the priest for the messianic kingdom was also to be chosen by God. The first of these is Psalm 2:7, and the second is Psalm 110:4. In both of these psalms as a whole, the One seen as priest turns out to be the King (Messiah) Himself. In Psalm 2:7 He is called "Son," implying that as priest He has direct access to God as Father. In Psalm 110:4 the emphasis is on the duration and order of His priesthood. This second quotation will become the basis for much of the following discussion.

Verses 7-10 show that the Lord Jesus meets perfectly the two prerequisites for the priesthood. In verses 7-9 He is portrayed in His manhood meeting the first qualification. It seems that His "loud crying and tears" (v. 7) look back to Gethsemane. His prayers in Gethsemane did not keep Him from dying. What, then, did they accomplish? At least He "was heard" and strengthened (v. 9; Luke 22:43). And if the translation "out of death" (NASB margin, v. 7) is correct rather than "from death," it may mean that His prayers were a means to His deliverance by the resurrection. In that case, His resurrection proved that He was heard.

The emphasis in these verses is that "He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (v. 8). Not that He learned to be obedient—which He already was—but what the path of obedience is like.

Verse 9 is introduced with "And having been made perfect." Having completed His ministry and suffering on this earth, He was fully qualified to be High Priest. The same Greek verb (to perfect) has the same meaning in 2:10 (translated "make perfect") and 7:28 (translated "is consecrated"). Therefore, He has become the source or cause of eternal salvation for those who obey Him.

Although “source” is different from the word translated “author” in Hebrews 2:10, the concept of the two verses is similar. In both verses “salvation” refers to the goal to which He leads us, that is, the glory of the world to come (the future kingdom).

Verse 10 shows that Messiah fits the second qualification for a priest. The verb “being designated” (“called,” KJV) is used only here in the New Testament. Messiah has been named or designated by God to be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

What practical lessons can we learn from Hebrews 5:1-10? One is that the ability to give great service may have to be earned

through great sacrifice. To become High Priest, the Son shared our weaknesses. He learned obedience; He prayed with loud crying and tears. Such experience enables Him to deal gently with the ignorant and misguided. We cannot expect to help others as He does unless we suffer as He did.

Another lesson: It is God who promotes to true spiritual leadership. There are men who make themselves priests. But even Messiah did not promote Himself to such an honor; He waited for God to give it. Likewise, it is all right for us to desire a leadership position but wrong to grasp it ahead of God’s time.

MORE QUESTIONS

3. According to Psalms 2 and 110, Messiah was to be a special kind of priest. What kind?
4. What does it mean that He was “perfected”?
5. Now, read rapidly through the entire book of Hebrews, preparing to make the following list. When you finish, write your name and “Reading Report 2 - Prayer in Hebrews” on a paper. Then list at least five lessons that you saw about prayer. Remember that “drawing near” to God refers to prayer.

Lesson 7

Hebrews 5:11 to 6:20

What is the third warning? What prompted it? Which of the six “foundation” teachings has to be from the Old Testament? Who are described as having fallen away (6:6)? What did God swear to Abraham that gives us hope?

1. Before continuing his argument about Messiah’s priesthood, the author pauses for a third warning, in Hebrews 5:11 to 6:20. This long warning, though important, is parenthetical—that is, it interrupts and does not advance the book’s main argument.

Similarly, the Hebrews' condition was not advancing God's work in them. Read the whole warning quickly.

- a.√ What title would you give this third warning? (Learn the one we give.)
 - b. As already stated, this warning is parenthetical. But though it does not advance the main argument of the book, it brings us back to the same point in that argument. The final eight or nine words in this warning (in 6:20) are the same words that were used just before it (in 5:10). Write them.
2. Reread 5:11-14. "Dull" (5:11) means "sluggish"; the same word is translated "slothful" in 6:12. "Strong meat" (5:14) is "solid food."
 - a.√ What reason does 5:11 give for the warning that follows.
 - b. In 5:12-14 there are two illustrations of the Hebrews' lack of progress. The first one is that they should be teachers by now but seem to need to relearn the ABCs ("first principles") of God's revelation. What is the second illustration?
 3. Read the next part of the warning, in 6:1-12. The chapter division is misleading. Though there is progress, there is no new direction in the thinking. "Principles" (v. 1) refers to "elementary teaching." "Baptisms" (v. 2) means "washings," as it does in 9:10. "Meet" (v. 7) means "fit."
 - a. In 6:1-2 there is a third illustration of the Hebrews' lack of progress: they want to keep on building the foundation rather than complete the structure. The six parts of the "foundation" (elementary teaching) are probably old covenant teachings, which led to Messiah but were incomplete in themselves. List them.
 - b. Verse 3 says, "this will we do, if God permit." What will we do (v. 1)?
 - c. It is impossible to go on to perfection with the persons described in the following verses (4-6). What are such persons compared to in verses 7-8?
 - d. Why is the author convinced that the Hebrews he writes to are not that kind of people (vv. 9-10)?
 - e. Yet, because of their sluggishness in learning, he is fearful that some of them might abandon their hope in Christ. What are needed in order to inherit God's promises?
 4. Read the last part of the warning, in 6:13-20, which shows how sure God's promise is. It is worth waiting for.
 - a. How and to what man did God show that His purpose ("counsel") would not change?
 - b. What two things did He thus guarantee to do?
 - c. This sure hope is our refuge in an alien world—our rock of safety within the port (that is, in God's presence). Who is the "forerunner" who has already taken our ship's cables to that rock?

Read the commentary that follows, considering your own spiritual progress.

Beginning at Hebrews 4:14 we have been seeing the contrast of Jesus with Aaron, the high priests of the two covenants. In chapters 5-7 they are contrasted as to their persons. The first consideration has been how the Son qualified to be a priest, 5:1-10. At this point the author breaks off his argument in order to give the third major warning of the book: *the danger of degeneration*, 5:11 to 6:20.

First, he complains about the problem of his readers' dullness, 5:11-14. They are not growing spiritually; they are dull in hearing (v. 11). The word translated "dull" here is translated "slothful" ("sluggish," NASB) in 6:12, and also means "lazy." The verb "are" ("have become," NASB) is in the Greek perfect tense, implying that this has become their fixed spiritual condition. The writer fears that this dullness may lead to degeneration, that is, a general spiritual breakdown of the readers.

The doctrine of Melchizedek and his relationship to Messiah is both full and difficult (v. 11). It is especially hard to explain because the majority of the readers are immature (v. 12).

In verse 12 their immaturity is described in two ways: (1) needing to be retaught "the first principles of the oracles of God," (2) needing to feed on milk rather than solid food. The "first principles" were spiritual ABCs, elementary principles of religion like those taught under the old covenant (Gal. 4:9-10; Col. 2:16-22). They were shadows anticipating far better realities under the new covenant (Col. 2:17). There was nothing wrong with such teachings except that they were strictly for beginners.

Verses 13-14 point to two evidences of maturity, lacking in the immature. One is the ability to discern, that is, to see that one thing is better than another (see 1 Cor. 2:15). The other evidence is spiritual exercise. Discernment does not come from "book learning" but from the practice of training one's spiritual senses.

After complaining about his readers' dullness, the author proceeds to the second part of the warning section: the possibility of their falling away, 6:1-8. He asks his readers to leave the old covenant shadows and go on to maturity in Messiah (6:1). They have not gone on to maturity because they have never fully left Judaism. The verb "leaving" needs particular emphasis; it has the idea of forsaking, leaving some things behind to go on to others.

What is the "maturity" ("perfection," KJV) they should go to? The Greek word is from the same stem as the word translated "mature" ("of full age," KJV) in 5:14. In 6:1 it seems to carry two ideas at the same time: (1) the completeness of Messiah in contrast to the incompleteness of the old covenant (see 1:1-2; 7:11,19,28; 8:6,13; 9:9,11; 10:1,14); (2) the maturity a Christian may attain in his walk with Messiah. So the readers are to leave the incompleteness of the old covenant and move on to a mature walk of faith in Messiah.

"Foundation" Teachings: Hebrews 6:1-2

1-2. Repentance from dead works (see 9:14)	Faith toward God
3-4. Instruction about washings ("the doctrine of baptisms," KJV)	Laying on of hands
5-6. Resurrection of the dead	Eternal judgment

Another question is the meaning of the six “foundation” teachings in 6:1-2. They are listed in three pairs, repentance and faith being the first pair. The reader must leave all six in order to reach maturity.

Do these describe old covenant teachings, new covenant teachings, or both? One of them is the key to answering that question. All but the third one seem to be taught under both covenants. But that one, “washings,” seems to be only an old covenant teaching. New covenant baptism is a different word and always singular; whereas the plural word used here definitely means Jewish ceremonial washings in Hebrews 9:10 and Mark 7:4. (For examples of such washings see Exodus 29:4-6; 30:18-21; Leviticus 6:27; 8:6; and Numbers 19.) Therefore, this third teaching suggests that all six were old covenant doctrines and practices that had prepared for the coming of Messiah. In their old covenant form they were “elementary teaching about Messiah” (v. 1; “the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” KJV), identical to the “elementary principles” in 5:12 and the “milk” in 5:12-13. Devotion to such teachings was hindering the readers from going on to maturity in Messiah.

These teachings were in some ways similar to those in other religions. Compare Galatians 4:8-9, where Paul marvels that Gentile believers would “turn back again” to old covenant “elemental things” (same word as in Hebrews 5:12). What the Galatians had followed in paganism was like the ABCs taught in the old covenant.

This brings us to the description of persons who “have fallen away” (6:4-5). These persons have had five privileges and have made a wrong response. They have

1. been enlightened
2. tasted the heavenly gift

3. been made partakers of the Holy Spirit
4. tasted the good word of God
5. [tasted] the powers of the age to come
6. fallen away [their wrong response]

Notice that these people have passed through all six steps—not just five. They have already “fallen away.” The grammatical form and relationship for “fallen away” is the same as for the other steps. It is not conditional, as the King James Version wrongly implies (“if they shall fall away”). In the original there is no doubt.¹

Notice also that the five privileges listed can describe truly converted persons, but not necessarily. In three of the five they have “tasted,” which is often—though not always—contrasted to drinking (see Matt. 27:34; John 2:9). A person can be enlightened by seeing that Jesus fulfills the old covenant, and yet not be converted (see Heb. 10:26; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; John 16:8-11). Convicted by the Holy Spirit, he can taste “the heavenly gift” and yet not repent (Matt. 12:31-32). He can taste “the good word of God” (defined in Jeremiah 24:6-7 and 29:10 as God’s promise of the kingdom) by hearing the gospel. He could taste “the powers of the age to come” if he saw Jesus’ miracles (usual meaning of “powers”), and yet remain rebellious.

Notice that this description does not mention forgiveness of sins, the salvation of the soul (v. 9), new life, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, nor other characteristics of a true Christian.

Who, then, are these privileged persons who have “fallen away”? Let us briefly

¹ In the Greek all five stated verbs are aorist articular participles joined by coordinating connectives—*te, kai, kai, kai* (and, and, and, and)—and going with a single article *tous* at the beginning of the list.

consider five views. We will use “saved” in the meaning of “justified.”

First, some take them to be saved persons who lose their salvation. But that is not possible. If it were, such people could never be saved again; “it is impossible to renew them again to repentance” (v. 6; see vv. 3,6 in KJV). On the contrary, the New Testament teaches that those God elects are eternally secure (Rom. 8:29-30).

A second viewpoint says that they are saved persons who fall into sin and then mistakenly think they must be saved again. Such people, says this view, would in effect crucify Christ afresh each time they trust Him for salvation; therefore, being saved over and over again is impossible. But this view does not fit the attitude of the first readers of Hebrews. They were not constantly trying to be saved over again; their problem was the opposite. They were in danger of leaving Christ completely (see 2:3; 3:12; 4:10; 7:11; 10:26-31).

A third suggestion is that “fall away” is hypothetical—an imagined action that no one can really do. The purpose of the author, says this view, is simply to illustrate that apostasy is impossible. But this makes little sense. Why base a warning on something that cannot happen? Besides, as we have seen, the persons described have “fallen away” as surely as they have “tasted.”

A fourth interpretation says that these are true believers whose sin makes them lose their rewards. In this view verses 7-8 describe their works: good deeds that deserve reward (v. 7) or bad deeds that are burned at the judgment seat of Christ (v. 8). But this view (1) does not agree with the other warning passages in Hebrews and (2) misses the emphasis here on repentance and faith (see v. 6), not on works. Verses 7-8 do

not describe works but the total response of an unbeliever to God’s Word.

A fifth view says that these are professing Christians who abandon Christ to return to Judaism. Consider the evidence for this interpretation. (1) It gives genuine meaning to the words “crucifying again” and “putting to an open shame” in verse 6. By going back to Judaism these people in a sense do crucify Christ all over again and put Him to an open shame. (2) This view fits with verses 7-8. In spite of the labor spent on the land (“earth,” KJV), it is “close to being cursed” (“nigh unto cursing,” KJV). This land pictures a person with no good response to God and about to be cursed. (3) This view makes the contrast between verses 8 and 9 clear. In contrast to people who are like land to be burned (v. 8) are others who will enter the kingdom (v. 9). Their works are those God expects from those who will enjoy that coming “salvation” (see discussions of 1:14; 2:3,5,10; and 5:9). (4) This view is similar to the other warning passages in Hebrews.

The description in Hebrews 4:4-6 was true of some who resisted the Holy Spirit in New Testament times. Consider Judas. He tasted all that the Son had to offer and apparently did miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 6:7-13), yet proved to be an apostate.

Such people have committed an unpardonable sin. When someone fully convicted by the Holy Spirit finally decides to reject the gospel, repentance becomes impossible (v. 6; Matt. 12:28-32). He cannot be saved because he has turned down the best God can offer (see Heb. 12:15-17; 2 Pet. 2:19-21; 2 Chron. 36:13).

This third warning section is a long one. First, the author has complained about the

problem of his readers' dullness, 5:11-14. Second, he has considered the possibility of their falling away, 6:1-8. Third, he shows that he is persuaded of better things in their case, 6:9-12. We will add a few more comments on this third section.

It is clear from verse 9 that the writer is convinced that most of the readers are saved. The word "beloved" occurs only here in the entire Book of Hebrews. Perhaps the writer feels that the preceding warning has been very severe and, therefore, wants to reassure his readers with this loving term.

Verse 10 explains why he has such confidence. He refers to their acts of kindness without naming those acts; perhaps they are the same as those mentioned in 10:32-34.

In verse 11 he states what he wants for the readers. He expresses his feeling with a powerful verb. He wants them to attain a hope so pure and strong that it results in full assurance. It should be noted that hope has many fruits: endurance (1 Thess. 1:3), joy (Rom. 12:12), and confidence (Heb. 6:11).

What is "hope"? It is desire with confident expectancy (looking forward to something). Omit either desire or expectancy, and hope ceases. When one has genuine hope, he will with it also have perseverance, joy, and confidence.

In 6:11 the writer wants "each one" to come to this hope. To do so, each must have diligence, that is, enough determination not to return to Judaism. This is why verse 12 warns against being "sluggish" ("slothful," KJV), the same word used in 5:11 ("dull"). The thought is the same: spiritual dullness may come just before apostasy.

Instead of sluggish, the readers are to be like the examples of faith yet to be mentioned in chapter 11. Hebrews 6:12 clearly looks forward to Hebrews 11; three key

words are used in both places: "faith," "patience," and "promise" (see 10:36,39; 11:9,13,17,26,27,33,35-39; 12:1-3).

The "promises" mentioned in Hebrews 6:12 look forward to the coming of God's kingdom on this earth (see 4:1; 6:15,17; 7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:36; 11:9,13,17,33,39). That kingdom is what we hope for.

The fourth and last part of this warning passage reminds us of the certainty of the promise, 6:13-20. If the readers are to have full assurance, they need to know that God's promise is sure. This promise to them is the same as the one He made to Abraham (compare 2:16; Gal. 3:29). Not only was Abraham assured of the certainty of God's promise; he also illustrates, as few others do, the endurance of hope (Heb. 6:12).

Two factors guarantee that the promise is certain: God's oath to Abraham (vv. 13-18) and the exaltation of God's Son (vv. 19-20). When Abraham offered up Isaac, God swore by Himself (Gen. 22:16). His reason for this oath was "to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose" (v. 17; "the immutability of his counsel," KJV). In other words, for the sake of all the heirs—including us—He solemnly reaffirmed His covenant to bless and multiply Abraham. That covenant will be completely fulfilled in a worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness.

In verses 19-20 our condition is compared to that of a ship prevented by wind from entering its harbor. It sends the ship's cable to be secured in the harbor, by means of a boat that Hebrews apparently calls the "forerunner." So our "forerunner" Jesus has already entered our promised destination "within the veil" (vv. 19-20). Thus, "the hope set before us" (v. 18) is our expectant

desire to join Him in God's presence—that is, in His coming kingdom.

What lessons should we learn from Hebrews 5:11 to 6:20? First, that lack of spiritual progress is a warning sign. Consider the Hebrews to whom this book was written. They were slow to learn, immature, needing to be taught the elementary truths all over again. This was a sign that they had possibly rejected God's final word in Christ. Instead, they needed to show faith and patience. So do we.

Second, it is possible to participate in great spiritual experiences, yet fail in life. This is the danger warned about in Hebrews 6:4-6. Again consider the condition of the Hebrews to whom the book was written. They had experienced the full force of

God's goodness but had not moved on to maturity. Some of them were in danger of falling away while crucifying God's Son again in their thinking; they were liable to judgment like land that yields only useless thorns and thistles. Many professing "Christians" today run the same risk.

Third, God has taken extraordinary measures to reassure us. If we have the faith of Abraham, we will inherit God's promise to Him. That promise is to bless and multiply, an unchangeable purpose that God not only revealed but also swore by Himself to accomplish. Such assurance gives us a place of refuge, an anchor for our souls, a rock of hope to which Jesus has secured us, in God's very presence.

MORE QUESTIONS

- 5.√ How do we know that the six "foundation" teachings are from the old covenant? (One of them is the key.)
6. We have just considered five views as to who "have fallen away" in Hebrews 6:6.
 - a. How do we know (from the grammar) that there are people who have actually fallen away?
 - b. What is impossible for them?
 - c.√ Who are they?
 - d. Which of Jesus' twelve apostles seems to fit this description?
- 7.√ When Abraham offered his son Isaac to God, God did something that gives us hope even today. What did He do? (See the last part of the commentary.)
8. Have you left the elementary teachings of religion? Are you going on to the maturity found in Christ? Do you have the faith and patience that will inherit God's promises?

Be sure you can answer all questions marked √. For example, be sure you can give the second and third contrasts and warnings, the four best evidences for the meaning of the "rest," and the required parts of the outline. Check yourself by answering the "objectives" questions. Then take unit 2 examination. Remember to enclose reading report 2 with it.

Unit Three

Lesson 8

Hebrews 7-8

Tell about Jesus' priestly order: (a) what it is, (b) how it is better, (c) how Hebrews proves it is better. How does changing to another priest like Melchizedek affect the law? What does this change guarantee for us? What two aspects of Jesus' priestly ministry are emphasized in chapter 8?

After the third warning, Hebrews 7 resumes the contrast between Jesus and Aaron, high priests of the new covenant and the old covenant. They are contrasted in respect to their persons (5:1-10 and ch. 7) and their work (8:1 to 10:18). As to Jesus' person, we saw in 5:1-10 that He was appointed High Priest after fulfilling the qualifications. Now in chapter 7 we will see that He belongs to a better order of priesthood. Chapter 8 will begin the contrast as to His work, showing where He ministers and what He ministers.

1. Hebrews 7 says a lot about a king-priest named Melchizedek (Mel-KIH-seh-dek). He met Abraham, who was returning home after defeating the four kings from the East and rescuing Lot. Our only information about the historic Melchizedek is in Genesis 14:18-20. Read the Genesis passage in its context. What did Abraham and Melchizedek give each other?
2. Read Hebrews 7:1-10, which shows that Melchizedek was a type of Messiah and was superior to Abraham and Levi.
 - a. Hebrews 7:1-3 is one long sentence saying that "this Melchizedek...abideth a priest continually." Verse 3 does not mean that he actually had no father or mother, but that none were mentioned in the Genesis record of him as priest. List at least three ways in which he was "made like unto the Son of God."
 - b. Hebrews 7:4-10 shows that Melchizedek was greater than Aaron's forefather Levi. How does it show this?
3. Read Hebrews 7:11-28, which shows the advantages of having another priest like Melchizedek. The words in parentheses in verse 11 should be "for on the basis of it the law was given to the people" (NIV). "Testament" (v. 22) means "covenant," a solemn agreement and contract between two parties.
 - a.√ Since the priesthood has changed, what has happened to the law? (vv. 12, 18-19)
 - b. Not only did God change the priesthood; He did so in a way that guaranteed a better covenant (vv. 20-22). What did He do for Jesus that He did not do for Aaron?
 - c.√ Since our priest will never die again, what can He accomplish for us? (vv. 23-25)
 - d. In Hebrews 5-7 you have been considering an argument about our priest's person. Reread 7:26-28, then choose the answer that tells how those verses relate to the

- argument. 1) They deal with a different subject. 2) They add much information. 3) They sum up the argument. 4) They give an illustration.
- e. Do you have such a priest?
4. Read Hebrews 8, which briefly states two aspects of our High Priest's work.
 - a. Where is He fulfilling His ministry? (This is the first aspect of His work.)
 - b. What had been the purpose of the earthly tabernacle, according to verse 5?
 - c. What is His ministry, according to verse 6? (This is the second aspect of His work.)
 - d. How is the new covenant better than the old covenant? (Tell where God puts His laws, two results, and on what basis.)
 - e.√ To summarize, what two aspects of Messiah's ministry are treated in Hebrews 8?
 - f. Put in writing your own response to these two aspects of Messiah's work.

Read the commentary that follows, thinking of the advantages of having such a priest.

The writer of Hebrews is presenting Jesus, God's Son, as a priest superior to Aaron both in His person and in His work. First, he has given an introduction to this subject (4:14-16). In chapter 5 he has begun to contrast their persons (chs. 5-7), first looking at how the Son met the qualifications for priesthood (5:1-10). He has broken off his argument in order to warn his readers of the danger of degeneration (5:11 to 6:20). Now he returns to this contrast of their persons, showing that Jesus is of the priestly order of Melchizedek, which is superior to the Aaronic order (ch. 7).

Hebrews 7 develops a logical argument, with the usual major premise (main assumption), minor premise, and resulting conclusion. The major premise (vv. 1-10) is that Melchizedek's order is greater than Aaron's order. The minor premise (vv. 11-17) is that the Son is of Melchizedek's order. So the conclusion (vv. 18-25) is inescapable: as a priest the Son is greater than Aaron or anyone in the Aaronic order.

The "order of Melchizedek" was just mentioned at the end of the warning passage

(6:28). The "for" in 7:1 indicates that the paragraph of 7:1-10 will show the importance of that order, especially the fact that it is "forever." It is interesting to observe that this entire paragraph is based on just three verses in Genesis: 14:18-20.

The main point of verses 1-3 is clearly seen in the Greek text and the King James Version: "This Melchizedek [v. 1]...abides a priest perpetually [v. 3]." "Perpetually" means "without ceasing."

These verses bring out some other facts about Melchizedek. Verse 2 states that his name means "king [*Melchi*] of righteousness [*zedek*]." And this king of righteousness was also king of "peace" (the meaning of Salem, that is, Jerusalem). He illustrates the close relationship the Scriptures teach between righteousness and peace (see Heb. 12:11; Rom. 5:1; James 3:17; Isa. 32:17). Even the order of his names is important: first is righteousness, and then its result, which is peace.

Verse 3 makes some startling statements about Melchizedek: "without father, without mother...having neither beginning of

days, nor end of life...abides a priest perpetually." None of this would be true about Aaronic priests.

Such statements make one wonder if Melchizedek was a brief appearance of God, a theophany, the Messiah-to-be before His incarnation. Evidently not. (1) The Genesis account gives no indication that he was more than human. (2) He is never called "the Angel of the Lord," as Old Testament theophanies are usually called. (3) He did not reveal himself as God, as theophanies usually do. (4) Hebrews 7:3 says that he was "made like" the Son of God, which would be meaningless if he already was God.

In what sense, then, does Melchizedek abide forever? Only in the picture the Scripture draws of him. As priest he was quite different from Aaron. His genealogy was unimportant and therefore not given ("without father, without mother"). Neither is there a record of his death; in the record he abides perpetually as a priest (compare v. 8).

To summarize, verses 1-3 show three similarities between the Lord Jesus and Melchizedek: (1) Their names and titles are similar (see Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Eph. 2:14). (2) Both are different from other priests. (3) Both abide forever.

To appreciate verses 4-10, we must remember that Abraham's descendant Levi was the forefather of Aaron and all the Aaronic priests. In this sense "Aaronic priesthood" and "Levitical priesthood" are synonyms. The argument in verses 4-10 has this meaning: Melchizedek is (1) greater than Abraham and therefore (2) greater than Levi and therefore (3) greater than the Levitical priesthood.

What proves that Melchizedek is greater than the patriarch Abraham? Two actions at their historic meeting (v. 1): (1) Abraham paid him tithes (vv. 4-6); (2) he blessed Abraham (vv. 6-7).

What did this meeting have to do with the Levitical priesthood that was still future at that time? Since Levi was then "in Abraham's loins" (to be born from him later), Levi "paid tithes in Abraham" (vv. 9-10). In other words, he participated in his forefather Abraham's act that recognized the superiority of Melchizedek and his order. Therefore, Abraham's act was also the act of Levi and the priesthood descended from Levi. Romans 5:12 has the same kind of argument, for Paul says that all the race acted in our forefather Adam when he sinned.

Thus, Hebrews 7:1-10 has shown from Scripture that the priestly order of Melchizedek is superior to that of Aaron. Next, verses 11-25 will show what another "Melchizedek" means for us.

Verse 11 assumes that the reader will recall the earlier quotation from Psalm 110:4 (see Heb. 5:6,10 and 6:20). According to Psalm 110:4, God would establish an eternal priesthood based on the order of Melchizedek; "another" (a different) priest would arise like him. This reveals that God never intended for the Levitical order to be permanent. Why not? Because it could never bring perfection.

This change of priesthood necessitates another great change, of the law that depends on it. Speaking of the Levitical priesthood, verse 11 says that the law of Moses was given "on its basis" ("under it," KJV). This means that the law depends on priests that can carry out its provisions. It cannot exist without the priesthood; they are inseparably bound together. Therefore, if

the Levitical order is temporary, so must be the law of Moses.

Verses 13-14 apply this fact to God's Son. It is well known that Messiah must come from the royal tribe of Judah, a different (v. 13; "another," KJV) tribe from Levi. This disqualifies Him for the Levitical priesthood; yet, God has promised to make Him priest (Ps. 110:4). Therefore, the priesthood must change. When did this change take place? Since it was by His sufferings that Jesus became qualified as priest, we may assume that the priesthood was transferred to Him when He finished those sufferings on the cross. It was at that moment that the veil of the temple was torn, the Levitical priesthood came to an end, and the "New Melchizedek" began.

In contrast to the temporary quality of the Levitical priesthood (described in vv. 11-14) is the indestructible (eternal, cannot-be-destroyed) quality of the order of Melchizedek (vv. 15-17). This is Jesus' priestly order.

Verses 18-19 climax this part of the contrast between the two priesthoods. The Levitical priesthood is ineffective, but Jesus' priesthood makes it possible for believers to draw near to God. The New American Standard Bible shows this (emphasis added):

FOR, ON THE ONE HAND,
 there is a **SETTING ASIDE** of a former
 commandment because of its weak-
 ness and uselessness (for the Law
 made nothing perfect),
 AND ON THE OTHER HAND
 there is a **BRINGING IN** of a better
 hope, through which we draw near to
 God.

Because of this better hope, Christians have faith to draw near to God.

Verses 20-22 refer to the divine oath used in making Messiah priest (as seen in Ps. 110:4). The Aaronic order had no oath. The oath in Messiah's case guarantees a better covenant, to be discussed in chapters 8-9.

The word translated "testament" is used for the first time in verse 22. It is important to understand that here and in later passages it means what we now call a "covenant" (as in the NASB). A covenant is a solemn agreement and contract between two parties. In English "testament" used to have the same meaning as covenant; it could also mean a will or a formal statement of beliefs. It has now lost the meaning of covenant. The Greek word also had either meaning, but in the Old Testament background for Hebrews it was used often and exclusively in the sense of covenant. "Old Testament" and "New Testament" now refer to the two parts of the Bible.

The theme of verses 23-25 is the permanence of the believer's new priest. He is an eternal priest. Therefore, He is able to save "forever" (v. 25, NASB) or "to the uttermost" (KJV), that is, completely. It is not certain which meaning of the Greek is correct, but either meaning gives the same result. Whatever is needed for salvation He secures through constant intercession (see Exod. 28:9-29; Matt. 14:23; Luke 22:31-32).

In summary, it may be noted that Hebrews 7:11-25 presents four superiorities of the priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus. (1) It is based on an indestructible life (vv. 11-17). (2) It is founded on a better hope (vv. 18-19). (3) It is grounded on a divine oath (vv. 20-22). (4) It is made possible by an eternal priesthood (vv. 23-25). God had

anticipated all of this when He spoke of another priest like Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:26-28 has two functions. First, it summarizes all that has been said about Jesus as superior to Aaron in His person. In short, He is perfect forever. At the same time, these verses bridge to the next topic. Other priests, because of their defects, had to offer sacrifices for themselves (see Lev. 4:1-3; 16:6); but the perfect priest offered Himself for the sins of men—a sacrifice He made once for all.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 7? First, that in Bible stories there may be levels of meaning below the surface. For example, the king-priest Melchizedek was important not only for what the original story said about him but what it did not say. Even its silence about his father, mother, successors, birth, and death help make him a picture-in-advance, called a “type,” of the Son of God as priest. We should be alert to such types though cautious to make sure they are intended.

Second, having a priest like Messiah puts us under a better law. God appointed Him priest on the basis of His powerful life rather than physical requirements. In this qualification our priest is like Melchizedek and better than Aaron. God changed to a better priest in order to change to a better law, the new covenant. This better law, that gives us better hope and brings us to God, needed a better priest to keep it in operation and fulfill its purposes. We need and by faith can have such a priest.

Third, as priest Jesus will save us completely. We can count on Him to represent us before God under all circumstances and forever. Nothing will ever hinder His effective intercession for us.

Superior in His work, 8:1 to 10:18

Now the emphasis turns from Jesus’ priestly person to His priestly work. In contrast to Aaron He ministers in a better place (8:1-5), mediates a better covenant (8:6-13), and has offered a better sacrifice (9:1 to 10:18).

First, Jesus ministers in a better place, 8:1-5. It is not difficult to determine “the main point” (NASB; KJV has “the sum”) of all that has been said (8:1). It is the kind of priest we have and the place where He ministers (see 4:14; 7:26). His place is at the right hand of the Father’s throne in heaven, which at the same time is in the true tabernacle, as verse 2 affirms. This is a key verse, for it contrasts the true or genuine tabernacle in heaven with the earthly one, where Aaron served.

Verse 3 anticipates Hebrews 9:12-14. This verse says that both earthly and heavenly high priests must have something to offer. Chapter 9 tells us that Messiah offered His own blood.

Once again, verse 4 emphasizes the place where He ministers. It is not on earth, where other priests function. Those priests, according to verse 5, serve in an earthly copy of the heavenly tabernacle. To prove this, the writer quotes Exodus 25:40, which reveals that Moses on Mount Sinai was shown a pattern to follow. The pattern may have been the heavenly tabernacle itself (see 9:23-24). The earthly tent Moses made was merely a copy of the genuine one he saw while on the mount.

Second, Jesus not only ministers in a better place, but He ministers a better covenant, 8:6-13. He is its “mediator” (v. 6), which means He keeps it in operation. The new covenant is better because it “has been enacted on better promises” (v. 6; “was

established upon better promises,” KJV). To prove this, verses 8-12 quote a long passage: Jeremiah 31:31-34. Three better promises are given. (1) “I will put my laws into their minds” (v. 10). (2) “All shall know me” (v. 11). (3) “I will remember their sins no more” (v. 12).

Verse 7 is an excellent verse to use in Jewish evangelism. It is the same type of argument as was used in 7:11. If the Mosaic law had been intended as a permanent covenant, why did God promise another covenant to take its place?

The reason He promised another covenant is that He found fault with “them” (v. 8), that is, with the people of Israel under that covenant. God did not find fault with the law but with the people (see v. 9b; Jer. 7:23-26). He had to give a different law that could change the people. The same idea is found in Romans 7:1 to 8:4.

The key word in verse 13 is “new,” meaning a new kind of covenant. The point is obvious: the law was only a temporary provision, which has now been displaced by something better (see Gal. 3:19 to 4:7).

The last clause of verse 13 implies that the temple was still standing when this homily was written.

One further question that should be considered is the relation of this new covenant to Israel and to the church. In the Jeremiah passage quoted in verses 8-11, God promises, “I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (v. 8; compare v. 10). Yet, there is no evidence that such a covenant has yet been made with the nation of Israel. We conclude that it will be made with Israel when “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

Since we are not Israel, does the new covenant affect us? Certainly it does. It is

the covenant Messiah put into effect with His death, and in the Lord’s Supper we celebrate both His death and His covenant. It is the covenant He now ministers from heaven, as we have just seen (8:6). It is the covenant that Paul—and all the apostles—served (2 Cor. 3:6). As we shall see in 10:15-18, the same Jeremiah passage quoted here is a marvelous witness by the Holy Spirit to us. The new covenant covers far more than Israel.

What practical lessons should we learn from Hebrews 8? First, that our High Priest represents us in God’s real dwelling in heaven. This has been the main point in chapters 1-7 of Hebrews. Though He offers no more sacrifices for sin, our priest offers our own sacrifices and gifts to God. He serves at a better place than the priests under the law, who served at an earthly sanctuary picturing the real one. Their service was designed to be temporary and has now ceased. We should not turn from our priest in heaven to manmade priests on earth today.

Second, our High Priest has full access to God. He is not just in the heavenly courts but seated on the heavenly throne, God’s throne over the universe. Since He represents us, we are welcome there too.

Third, our High Priest ministers the new covenant, in which God is changing our character. The old covenant—written on stones—was inadequate because the people could not keep it. Now God writes His laws into our hearts and minds, making us fully His people. This is possible because He has done away with our sins and never calls them to mind. We should cooperate with His covenant by responding to all God says, and should expect it to change us.

MORE QUESTIONS

5. There is little in the Old Testament about Melchizedek. Why does Hebrews say so much about him?
- 6.√
 - a. How does Hebrews 7:4-10 prove that Jesus' priestly order is better?
 - b. In what main way is it better?
7. What are three "promises" that are better in the new covenant than in the old?
8.
 - a. How do we know that the new covenant is in operation for the church today? Give four arguments.
 - b. How do you know that it is in operation in your life?

Lesson 9

Hebrews 9

In the tabernacle arrangement, what showed that the first covenant could not give access to God? How did Messiah secure this access for us? What did His death accomplish in respect to (a) the new covenant? (b) the heirs who lived under the old covenant? When He appears again, what will He give those who look for Him?

Still considering our High Priest's work, the emphasis turns to His sacrifice.

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-10, which shows that old covenant sacrifices could not give access to God. "Censer" (v. 4) should be "altar of incense." Verse 10 is clearer in the New International Version, regarding old covenant gifts and sacrifices: "They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order."
 - a.√ What fact showed that no one—not even the high priest—had the right to approach God?
 - b. Why could old covenant activities not cleanse the conscience? (v. 10)

NOTE: Hebrews 9:11-28 contrasts Messiah's sacrifice to those of the old covenant. Before reading the entire passage, consider the general meaning of verses 15-20. The New American Standard Bible makes them clearer (notice the two covenants):

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the

first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For...Moses...took the blood of the calves and the goats...and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU.” (emphasis in NASB, indicating a quotation)

These verses show that both the “first” and the “new” covenants were inaugurated (that is, put into force) with the “death” of the one who made them. The death of the covenant maker inaugurating the first covenant was not real but symbolic; it was pictured by the death of animals, as seen in Exodus 24:4-8 (see also Gen. 15:7-21). But the death of the covenant maker inaugurating the new covenant was real. It also redeemed those who were sinners under the first covenant, so that they could come under the new covenant and receive the promised inheritance (v. 15). Read 9:11-28 and answer the following question.

2.
 - a.√ What does Jesus’ sacrifice inaugurate?
 - b. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He used some of the same words quoted in verse 20. Those words, from Exodus 24:8, originally referred to the inauguration of the first covenant by the death of animals. Using them to refer to His own death meant that by it He would inaugurate the new covenant. Look up Matthew 26:28 and tell which words He used.
3. Now read Hebrews 9:11-28 again, saying “Messiah” every time you see “Christ,” as we are doing.
 - a.√ In order to give access to God, what can Messiah’s sacrifice cleanse? (vv. 11-14,23)
 - b.√ As you have already seen, what does His sacrifice inaugurate? (vv. 15-24)
 - c. How often does He have to make this sacrifice? (stated three times in vv. 25-28)
 - d.√ When He appears the second time, what will He come to do? (v. 28)
 - e. Now summarize: According to Hebrews 9, in what three ways is Messiah’s sacrifice superior to those of Aaron? (See parts a, b, and c of this question.)

Read the commentary that follows, considering Jesus’ work as High Priest.

Hebrews is showing that Jesus is superior to Aaron in His work as priest (8:1 to 10:18). It has considered His better place of ministry (8:1-5) and the better covenant He ministers (8:6-13). Now it looks at His better sacrifice (9:1 to 10:18). It begins by

showing the insufficiency of old covenant sacrifices (9:1-10).

Hebrews 9:1-10 deals with the service for God in the old covenant tabernacle. The passage begins (vv. 1-5) by sketching the arrangement of the tabernacle proper, that is,

the tent where God “dwelt” with Israel (Exod. 25:8). What was mentioned in passing in 8:1-5 is now developed more fully. The adjective “earthly” (v. 1; “worldly,” KJV) implies that the earthly tabernacle, although useful, was only temporary.

You may have wondered why the writer of Hebrews did not talk about the temple, which existed when he wrote, but about the tabernacle, which had not existed for centuries (9:2; compare 8:2,5). There may be three reasons for this. (1) He wanted to emphasize the temporary nature of the earthly tabernacle. God did not order Moses to build a permanent sanctuary but a temporary one. (2) He desired to look back to the original pattern in some detail. (3) It is also possible that he wanted to show disappointment with the current earthly priesthood and its function in the temple.

In verses 2-5 the writer lists four pieces of furniture in the two rooms of the tabernacle. According to the New American Standard Bible, these were the lampstand, the table with the sacred bread, the golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant. In this connection there is a problem: where was the golden altar of incense? Verses 3-4 seem to locate it in the Holy of Holies “behind the second veil,” where priests could not enter (vv. 6-7) and where the ark (God’s throne) was. The Old Testament, however, locates it in the first room, the Holy Place (Exod. 30:6-10; 40:17-28), where the priest was to burn incense on it daily (Exod. 30:7-8). The solution is that this altar belonged to the Holy of Holies but was kept in the Holy Place for daily use. The Holy of Holies “had” it (v. 4), but it was not kept there.

In 9:6-10 we read about the priestly service in the tabernacle. A key verse here

is verse 7, for it lists five limitations of the old covenant sacrificial system:

1. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies
2. Only once a year
3. Only with sacrificial blood
4. Only effective for one year
5. Only for sins of ignorance

In connection with the last “only” it should be observed that no sacrifices were available for the intentional sin of Numbers 15:27-36 (see Deut. 17:12-13).

Verse 8 is a logical conclusion from verse 7: direct access to God was impossible under the old system. That is the main point of verses 1-10.

“Conscience” is an important word in verse 9. The old covenant system of sacrifices could never reach inside man and purify his conscience. It could never make him “perfect.” Its regulations, involving food, drink, and washings, could only affect the external (v. 10).

In contrast to old covenant sacrifices is Messiah’s all-sufficient sacrifice (9:11 to 10:18). His sacrifice is of such quality that it gives access to God (9:11-14); it inaugurates the new covenant (9:15-24); it is made only once (9:25-28); and by cleansing the conscience it accomplishes God’s will (10:1-18).

The first paragraph dealing with Messiah’s sacrifice emphasizes its quality (9:11-14). In contrast to animal sacrifices, He secures eternal redemption. The climax is in verse 14, which implies three superiorities of His sacrifice in its character. (1) Messiah offered Himself; whereas animals were offered as unwilling victims. (2) He was without blemish inwardly as well as outwardly; whereas animals were only clean externally. (3) He offered Himself through

His eternal spirit; whereas animals could not do this. In this verse “spirit” probably means His own human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. This seems best because the emphasis is on the voluntary nature of His sacrifice.

The second paragraph shows that His death inaugurates the new covenant (9:15-24). This paragraph begins by explaining why a new covenant is necessary: in order that God’s called ones can receive the eternal inheritance promised to them (compare 2:16). Verse 15 can be diagrammed this way (emphasis added):

And FOR THIS REASON He is
 the mediator of a new covenant,
 IN ORDER THAT
 (since a death has taken place for
 the redemption of the transgres-
 sions that were committed under
 the first covenant)
 THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN
 CALLED MAY RECEIVE THE
 PROMISE of the eternal inheritance.

In other words, the new covenant will bring the heirs their inheritance. But they could not qualify for this covenant. Their sins under the first covenant had to be dealt with first, by death (see Rom. 3:25).

In verses 16-17 there is a problem as to how to translate the Greek noun *diatheke*. Should it be “will” (as in KJV) or “covenant” (as in NASB)? This word is used often in Hebrews. The King James Version (1) sometimes translates it as “testament,” which could refer to a will (7:22; 9:15,16,17, 20), and (2) sometimes as “covenant” (8:6,8, 9,10; 9:4; 10:16,29; 12:24; 13:20). The New American Standard Bible, however, always translates it as “covenant.”

On the surface it seems that 9:16-17 is talking about a will; its maker must die. However, it seems best to translate it “covenant.” (1) The context is not discussing wills but covenants (see the diagram of v. 15, above). (2) As an illustration of the rule stated in verses 16-17, verse 18 explains how the “first covenant” was made. This refers to the law and was clearly a covenant, not a will (see Exod. 24:1-8). If so, in what sense must the covenant-maker die before the covenant becomes valid? In the sense that he must represent his own death by making a sacrifice, as in Genesis 15:8-18.

Therefore, just as the Mosaic covenant was ratified by blood (v. 18), so was the new covenant. This was what Jesus meant by speaking of “the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20) and “My blood of the covenant” (Matt. 26:28). When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we celebrate His inauguration of the covenant.

As we have seen, the first covenant had shadows and symbols of heavenly things (8:5; 9:9). But to inaugurate that covenant, the earthly tabernacle had to be cleansed by the blood of animals. For the new covenant it was the heavenly tabernacle that required cleansing. Messiah’s sacrifice doesn’t just affect temporary symbols; it prepares “heaven itself” (v. 24) to be part of the eternal kingdom. The new covenant is universal in scope.

It is interesting that the plural word “sacrifices” is used for the one-time death of Messiah (v. 23). This may be because all of the old covenant sacrifices are fulfilled in His.

Another interesting point is that the heavenly tabernacle did require cleansing. It has been suggested that this refers only to dedicating it. However, in the old covenant

parallel the tabernacle was dedicated with oil, not with blood (see Exod. 40:9). Blood was used to cleanse it. On the yearly Day of Atonement the mercy seat, the Holy of Holies, the altar of incense, and the brazen altar were cleansed by blood (see Lev. 16:11-20; Exod. 30:10). The blood was applied not because these things were “sinful” but because man’s sin had defiled them. Similarly, heaven had to be cleansed from Satan’s defiling influence (see Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10; 1 John 2:1; Col. 1:20) and from man’s sin. This was the reason Messiah applied His “blood” to the heavenly tabernacle.

In this discussion of Messiah’s sacrifice, the third paragraph (9:25-28) emphasizes its permanence. It needed to be made only once (vv. 25-26). But the results have just begun. On the annual Day of Atonement the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifices but then came out again, to bless the people (compare Lev. 9:23). Likewise, our High Priest will return from the heavenly sanctuary to bless us. Notice the similarity and contrast in verses 27-28. The similarity: other men and Messiah die once. The contrast: other men meet judgment after death, but Messiah will bring salvation. Notice also that, as usual in Hebrews, salvation is future. He will come so that we may be His partners in the eternal kingdom, the glory of the world to come.

When He comes the second time, it will be “without sin” (v. 28). This means, as in the New American Standard Bible, “not to bear sin.” He bore sin when He appeared the first time.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 9? First, that ceremonies for the

body cannot cleanse the conscience. The first covenant had such external activities constantly but could never open the way to God’s presence—a lesson the Holy Spirit plainly taught. We must never let such ceremonies replace our direct dealings with God.

Second, Messiah’s sacrifice gives access to God. It gives such access because it cleanses the conscience, whereas old covenant sacrifices could cleanse only the body. His sacrifice can cleanse the conscience not just because of His good intentions but because the life He offered was so valuable. We dishonor Him if we try to add to His sacrifice or doubt its power.

Third, Messiah’s sacrifice puts the new covenant into force. As covenant maker He had to die. By His death He enables God’s people, His called ones, to come under the covenant that will give them their promised inheritance. He brings them under this covenant by dealing with their guilt under the first covenant. By His death He also purifies heaven, preparing it for the eternal kingdom. We should rejoice that we will soon receive our inheritance, which is that kingdom.

Fourth, Messiah’s sacrifice is finished and permanent. It dishonors Him to think that He must continue His sacrifice or that church ceremonies can add to its value. But though the sacrifice is complete, its results will continue. Just as for a man death is not the end but the prelude to judgment, so Messiah’s sacrifice guarantees that He will return bringing salvation to those who look for Him. We should share these facts with the lost.

MORE QUESTIONS

4. Why couldn't old covenant sacrifices make men perfect in God's sight?
5. Hebrews 9:15 speaks of the heirs who lived under the old covenant.
 - a. Why do they need the new covenant?
 - b.√ What did the death of Messiah do for them?
6. What is the relation of the Lord's Supper to the new covenant?
7. Do you qualify for an eternal inheritance from God?

Lesson 10

Hebrews 10

What were two purposes of repeated old covenant sacrifices? What is the main lesson Hebrews 10 draws from Psalm 40? Why can God see us as perfect? What are the three parts of the exhortation beginning at 10:19? What is the fourth warning? What proves that this warning is to unregenerate people?

Hebrews 10:1-18 concludes the contrast between Jesus and Aaron; the rest of the chapter begins to emphasize our response to God's grace.

1. Read Hebrews 10:1-18, which shows that God's will is accomplished not by repeated animal sacrifices but by the one sacrifice of Messiah's body. Messiah's words in verses 5-7, commented on in verses 8-9, are quoted from Psalm 40:6-8. "Remission" (v. 18) means "forgiveness."
 - a.√ What were two purposes of old covenant sacrifices, according to verses 1 and 3?
 - b. What would have happened if those sacrifices had actually cleansed the worshipers?
 - c.√ Verses 5-14 are based on Psalm 40. What main lesson do they draw from this psalm?
 - d. Verses 11-14 (especially v. 14) show why our High Priest could sit down to wait for His rule to begin. Why?
 - e.√ Verses 15-18 show from Jeremiah 31 the basis for the new covenant, that is, the reason why God can see us as perfect. Why can He?

Read the commentary that follows, making your own practical lessons.

The entire argument concerning Jesus' greatness (1:1 to 10:18) comes to a climax in Hebrews 10:1-18. That argument has contrasted Jesus to the angels (chs. 1-2), to Moses (chs. 3-4), and to Aaron, the priest (4:14 to 10:18). Like the other comparisons, the comparison with Aaron looks at their persons (chs. 5-7), then their works (8:1 to 10:18). Their priestly works include their place of ministry (8:1-5), the covenant they minister (8:6-13), and their sacrifices (9:1 to 10:18). Old covenant sacrifices could not give access to God (9:1-10), but Jesus' sacrifice is of better quality and does give access (9:11-14). It inaugurates the new covenant (9:15-24) and is permanent (9:25-28). The final paragraph shows that by cleansing the conscience it accomplishes God's will (10:1-18).

The "for" beginning Hebrews 10:1 introduces the reason why the once-for-all death of Messiah was necessary. That reason is that old covenant sacrifices were insufficient: they could not make the worshipers perfect.

Verse 2 clearly implies, like verse 11 and 7:28, that the temple was still standing when this was written.

Verse 3 implies a contrast that is almost startling: between remembering sins each year and God's remembering sins no more (8:12; 10:17). The old covenant Day of Atonement annually reminded the Israelite of his sins. In contrast, under the new covenant the Christian remembers Messiah (see 1 Cor. 11:24-25).

A conclusion from Hebrews 10:1-4 is introduced by "therefore" in 10:5. If animal sacrifices could not remove sins, God had to do something. What He did is expressed in Psalm 40:6-8, quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7. In this psalm David prayed for God's deliver-

ance. When he approached the Lord he recognized that animal sacrifices were insufficient; he must give himself to obey God's will. Of course, this picture was ultimately fulfilled by Messiah.

There is a problem in part of the quotation as found in verse 5. In Greek this verse quotes the Septuagint saying, "a body Thou has opened [dug]," whereas in the psalm (translated from Hebrew) we read, "My ears Thou hast opened." Some say that the Septuagint looks back to the ritual described in Exodus 21:6: a master would pierce his willing slave's ear, thereby pinning him to the door, to symbolize permanent slavery. There is a better explanation: the "ears" in Psalm 40 stand for the whole body, a part for the whole. When God created—in the womb—someone's ears, He created the whole body.

In the psalm David submitted himself to do God's will: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart" (40:8, NASB). These words became the Son's words, perhaps the last He spoke before He entered Mary's womb.

Verses 8-9 are the writer's commentary on Psalm 40:6-8. At least three points are made here. (1) The old covenant sacrificial system was never meant to be God's final solution to the problem of sin. (2) The answer to the problem of sin was to be by the One who would perfectly carry out God's will. (3) The one perfect obedience took the place of the sacrificial system.

The writer relates the theology of verses 1-9 to the Lord Jesus in verses 10-14. The "will" mentioned in verse 10 is the will of God carried out perfectly in Messiah's earthly life and death. What was that will? Not to continue sacrifices and offerings but to make men perfect.

Two contrasts are drawn in verses 11-12. (1) The old covenant priest stood daily, but Messiah sat down. There were no chairs in the tabernacle furniture. Messiah is seated because His sacrificial work is finished and accepted. (2) The old covenant priest made repeated sacrifices, but the Lord Messiah made one sacrifice.

Verse 13 restates the thought of Psalm 110:1, quoted in Hebrews 1:13—that the Son is now sitting at the Father’s right hand, waiting for His own kingdom to begin. He has all authority, as every Christian recognizes, but will not exercise it all until the proper time comes (Ps. 2:8).

Verse 14 is the conclusion to verses 1-13. What the law could not do (see 10:1; also 7:19; 9:7), He did: “He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” This was God’s will that He accomplished.

It seems too good to be true that we are perfect forever in God’s sight. What evidence do we have that He sees us this way? The most important witness is the Holy Spirit through God’s Word. This is the point of verses 15-18.

Verses 16-17 are arranged in an order of climax. Verse 16 promises that God’s laws will become part of us, then verse 17 prom-

ises that God will no longer remember our sins. It might seem that the climax is inverted, but it is not. For God Himself to forget our sins is astounding!

The final conclusion is found in verse 18. The argument is the same type as in 7:11 and 8:7. Jesus’ new covenant sacrifice has brought the forgiveness impossible under the old covenant. There is no further need for the old; the new has taken its place.

What are some practical lessons from Hebrews 10:1-18? First, that true believers are “perfect forever” in God’s sight. This was God’s will that Messiah came into the world to accomplish. He did not come to make another external religion with sacrifices and offerings for sin. We who accept Him are perfect because we have been forgiven for all sins, past, present, and future. There is nothing we can add to make us more acceptable. Now we can live as God’s children.

Second, we must serve God with our whole body, not just our mind. Even Messiah needed a body to accomplish God’s will. He accepted the body God gave Him, then sacrificed it to save us. We should have the same attitude.

MORE QUESTIONS

2. Read Hebrews 10:19-25, where we see that our response to God’s grace should be faith based on hope and leading to love. In the New International Version verse 19 begins, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter . . .” In verse 23 the word “faith” should be “hope.”
 - a. What two things give us confidence to enter God’s presence?
 - b.√ Verses 22-25 have three exhortations beginning “Let us” and stressing faith, hope, and love. What are they? (Learn them in the right order.)
3. Read the fourth major warning of the book: Hebrews 10:26-39. Willful sin (v. 26) is deliberate sin resulting from rebellion, as seen in Numbers 15:27-36. “Despised” (v. 28) means “rejected.” “Done despite” (v. 29) means “insulted.” Verse 33 is clearer in

the New International Version: “Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.” “Spoiling of your goods” (v. 34) means “seizure of your property.” “Perdition” (v. 39) is “destruction.”

- a. ✓ Can you give a title to this warning? You can see possible words to use in verses 26, 28, and 29. (Learn the title we give.)
- b. Here is a valuable study method, though some find it difficult. See if you can find at least four similarities between this warning and Hebrews 6:4-20. For example, each of these warnings begins with warning (see 6:4-8; 10:26-31) but then adds consolation (see 6:9-20; 10:32-39). Other things to notice: Does the sinner in question have hope? What attitude is needed in view of the danger? What sustains us? What is the threatened punishment?

Read the commentary that follows, thinking of practical ways to do what Hebrews says to do. From here on, we will not indicate lessons you should learn from each study. It is your turn to do that.

PART II, OUR RESPONSE

PERSEVERING FAITH

10:19 TO 13:17

Exhortation to Faith, Hope, and Love,
10:19-25

The remainder of Hebrews calls on us to respond to God’s grace. The entire response is summed up in the exhortation of 10:19-25. These verses have three calls, each beginning with “let us” and dealing consecutively with faith (v. 22), hope (v. 23), and love (v. 24). We are called to persevering faith based on hope and leading to love.

The first call (vv. 19-22) is to faith. This paragraph can be titled “The Call to Freedom of Approach.” Verse 19 speaks of the believer’s confidence (“boldness,” KJV) to enter God’s dwelling place because of Jesus’ blood. By His blood He has provided (1) a new and living way to God, through the veil of His own torn body, and (2) Himself as High Priest over God’s house. Our confidence to enter is in contrast to the terror

produced by the law, which will be described in 12:18-21.

We enter with “our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience” and “our bodies washed with pure water” (v. 22). The fact that His death cleansed our conscience was the point in 9:11-14 and again in 10:1-18. But what is the meaning of our body being washed? Many think it refers to literally cleansing the body in water baptism. That cannot be its primary meaning, because (1) the parallel statement about our hearts is not literal; (2) baptism is “not the removal of dirt from the flesh” (1 Peter 3:21); (3) John 13:10 (“he who is bathed,” NASB) uses an equivalent form of the same Greek verb to describe spiritual cleansing; (4) we are bathed not by baptism but by “regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

The meaning of “bodies washed” becomes clear by considering the Old Testament background for the whole paragraph. It looks back to Leviticus 16:2-6. The high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement only after he had bathed

and offered a sin offering. So we in Messiah may approach God's throne with confidence. Perfect cleansing in Messiah makes this possible.

The second call (v. 23) has to do with hope, that is, confident expectation regarding the future. (KJV has no manuscript evidence for translating it "faith.") This hope has been referred to in nearly every chapter; it is to share with Messiah in the glory of the world to come, the salvation He will bring in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. Also notice in this verse the renewed emphasis on "confession" (as in 3:6,14; 4:14). The writer of Hebrews is very concerned about doctrine—what we believe and tell others. This verse can be titled, "The Call to Firmness of Confession."

The third call (vv. 24-25) deals with love. We are to "stimulate" ("provoke," KJV) one another to love and good works. The word translated "stimulate," actually a noun in Greek, expresses forceful action; it is translated "sharp disagreement" in Acts 15:39 (compare Prov. 27:5-6; 1 Cor. 13:5). Though Christians should not meddle (1 Pet. 4:15), neither should they leave each other alone; they should strongly encourage each other to love. This paragraph can be called "The Call to Fellowship for Encouragement."

Verse 25 makes it clear that failure to join with the assembly of believers indicates a spiritual problem. It could, in this case, even be a manifestation of apostasy (compare 1 John 2:19; Heb. 3:13).

Notice that "as ye see the day approaching" (v. 25) refers to the Lord's coming as "the day" every Christian is waiting for (1 Thess. 1:10). The author feels this is so well known that the readers need no explanation.

The Danger of Despising, 10:26-39

Now we come to the fourth warning passage in Hebrews. We saw the danger of drifting in 2:1-4, of disbelief in 3:7-19, and of degeneration in 5:11 to 6:20. This one is the danger of despising (see KJV in vv. 28 and 29).

Verse 26 makes it clear that this is willful sin, the same kind as in Numbers 15:30-36. In Hebrews this sin involves the deliberate rejection of the gospel, as verses 28-29 explain.

Before the writer explains what he calls willful sin, in verse 27 he presents the consequences of such sin. He quotes from Isaiah 26:11, where the context shows that the wicked are in mind. That is why the warning is about "the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." These words hardly apply to genuine Christians. The consequences of willful sin are awesome.

Verse 28 looks back to Deuteronomy 13:8 and 17:2-6, both of which passages required the death penalty for apostates. What makes us certain that those are the passages in mind in verse 28? (1) The sin is the same: apostasy. In verse 28 the sin is to "set aside the Law of Moses" ("despised Moses' law," KJV; see the use of the same verb stem in 7:18 and 9:26). In each of the Deuteronomy passages the sin is leaving the law of Moses in order to worship other gods. (2) The penalty is the same: death. (3) The reference to two or three witnesses looks back to Deuteronomy 17:6. (4) "Without mercy" reflects Deuteronomy 13:8.

This tragic sin is described in three ways in verse 29. First, this sin means that a person "has trampled under foot the Son of God." This verb "trampled" is used in Matthew 7:6 to describe what hogs might do to

pearls. This sin is like crucifying the Son of God again, as mentioned in Hebrews 6:6.

Second, such a person “has regarded [considered] as unclean the blood of the covenant” (“counted the blood of the covenant...an unholy thing,” KJV). This means more than to outwardly show disrespect; it describes an inner attitude and viewpoint. (We will consider the meaning of “by which he was sanctified” later.)

Third, this person “has insulted the Spirit of grace” (“hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace,” KJV). The Greek verb, used only here in the New Testament, means to mock or insult. One can scarcely find a better description of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10). The noun form of this verb was the awful sin of insolence (bold lack of respect for God). In the Septuagint this verb is used only in Leviticus 24:11, where it describes blasphemy of God’s name.

Notice that the “severer punishment” (“sorer punishment,” KJV) awaiting the sinner of verse 29 must be worse than physical death (compare Deut. 17:2-6).

The two quotations in verse 30 come from Deuteronomy 32:35-36. They are part of the song Moses told Israel to pass on to future generations (Deut. 32:1-43). Two ideas are found in these quotations. (1) Judgment is promised against those who do not know the Lord. (2) The Lord will deliver His people. The thought of fearful and final judgment is emphasized by the last verse of the paragraph (v. 31).

Let us restate some reasons why we know that the “willful sin” is committed by a lost person. (1) No hope is held out for forgiveness of this sin. It is a sin against God’s final revelation and final sacrifice (see v. 18). (2) The one guilty of this sin

will suffer the fury of fire that will consume adversaries (v. 27). (3) The Old Testament background in Deuteronomy 13:6-11 and 17:2-6 is of those who abandon the Lord to worship idols. (4) The descriptions of this sin in verse 29 fit the attitudes and actions of the lost. (5) The “severer punishment” awaiting this sinner is worse than physical death (v. 29). (6) The thought of verses 30-31 is of God’s judging the wicked in a final sense. (7) The argument of chapters 5-10 supports this view. These chapters say that the old covenant priesthood and sacrifices could not bring genuine salvation and sanctification. They were fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah. Therefore, to deny Jesus is to damn one’s own soul.

Can a true believer commit this willful sin? It might seem so; this sinner is called “sanctified.” He “has regarded [considered] as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified” (v. 29). Consider some explanations of “he was sanctified.”

(1) Some conclude that this is indeed a believer that God elected but who will be lost. It is not possible, however, for God’s elect to be lost (Matt. 24:24; Rom. 8:33). Others teach that he is a believer but that the danger is either (2) nonexistent or (3) not serious. These views overlook the plain meaning of the warning.

Yet others say that the one “sanctified” in verse 29 is not the sinner but (4) the Son of God or (5) the covenant. These are possible grammatically, but elsewhere in Hebrews (2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14; 13:12) “sanctify” always describes other believers.

(6) Perhaps the sanctification here is provisional. This would mean that Messiah’s atonement has “provided” sanctification that this person has not received. But is

“provisional sanctification” found elsewhere in the Bible?

(7) Perhaps the sanctification here is external. This would mean that he has been set apart merely by associating with believers. External sanctification is indeed taught in the Scriptures (for example, 1 Cor. 7:14; compare “holy brethren” in Heb. 3:1). But the sinners in Hebrews are abandoning fellowship with believers (compare 10:25). Is this a warning not to leave such external sanctification?

None of these views is entirely satisfactory. The best possibilities are 4, 5, 6, or 7.

The contrast that follows, in verses 32-34, is similar to the one in Hebrews 6:8-9. After a very severe warning, the writer reassures his readers; his attitude is positive toward them. How they have suffered, we do not know. At any rate, the believing community has endured some rather severe persecutions, though none has been killed (compare Heb. 12:4). The writer encourages them toward continued courage or confidence. They have shown boldness before; now they are not to throw it away. This is the point of verse 35.

Verse 36 is the logical conclusion from verse 35: past confidence should continue with endurance. Endurance, continuing firm in all circumstances, will be a key to chapters 11 and 12. According to verse 36 endurance leads to receiving “the promise” (KJV and literal Greek), meaning the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises when Messiah will reign on planet earth.

Verses 37-38 quote Habakkuk 2:3-4 in order to restate both the warning and encouragement. God’s words to Habakkuk suggest three points: (1) Messiah will come a second time in God’s appointed season;

(2) in the meantime God’s people are to continue in faith in spite of difficulties; (3) they are not to shrink back (“draw back,” KJV).

This quotation is applied directly to the readers in verse 39: They will not join “those who shrink back to destruction” but will show the same faith Habakkuk showed. The serious nature of shrinking back is seen in its result, “destruction.” This latter word, used only here in Hebrews, regularly means the opposite of eternal life (as in Matt. 7:13; John 17:12; Phil. 1:28; 3:19; 1 Thess. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:3; 3:7; Rev. 17:8,11). Therefore, shrinking back is not a minor sin; it is yet another description of leaving Christianity and going back to a Judaism apart from Messiah.

Notice that this warning section in its last verses (vv. 37-39) has returned to the main thoughts of the previous section. The previous section (vv. 19-25) had begun the exhortation to respond to God’s grace by persevering faith and had ended by speaking about the Lord’s coming, “the day approaching” (v. 25). The warning section ends with the same two thoughts: the Lord’s coming and our living by faith. The Lord’s coming: “Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (v. 37). Living by faith: “We are...of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul” (v. 39, NASB).

In other words, the warning in chapter 10 follows the same pattern as the warning in 5:11 to 6:20. It interrupts the argument of the book but returns to the main theme in order to resume that argument in chapter 11. There is a diagram about the warning near the end of this lesson. Study it.

Relation of Warning in Hebrews 10:26-39 to the Argument

10:19-25
Begins exhortation
to live by faith

(Section ends with:
until the Lord comes,
v. 25)

10:26-39
WARNING
DANGER OF DESPISING

(Section ends with:
Live by faith
until the Lord comes, vv. 37-39)

11:1-40
Resumes exhortation
to live by faith

Gives examples of
living by faith

MORE QUESTIONS

4. Do you have direct access to God? If so, on what basis?
5. (your own conclusions) Write down practical ways in which you can obey the three parts of the exhortation beginning at 10:19. Be definite.
- 6.√ Summarize each of the seven arguments that Hebrews 10:26-31 describes a sin committed by a lost person. Memorize the five that are indicated in Answers.

Prepare for unit 3 examination in the usual way (see the end of lesson 3). Then take it.

Unit Four

Lesson 11

Hebrews 11

Can you quote from memory three verses from Hebrews 11-13? From Hebrews 11 can you match ten specific people with the things they did by faith? How does Hebrews 11:1 describe faith? What were Abraham and his descendants looking for?

In this unit you will study Hebrews 11-13, then look once more at the book as a whole. The last three chapters of Hebrews continue to encourage us to respond to God's grace with persevering faith.

- 1.√ Read Hebrews 11-13, choosing at least three verses to memorize during this last unit. Each verse must have twelve or more words. Write out the verses to carry around with you, and read them repeatedly. If you want, you may learn them from a version different from the King James Version. If you do, write out a copy for your WW LIT principal to use to check you in the examination. Here are some suggestions of verses you may want to choose from: 11:1, 6; 12:1, 2, 14, 28; 13:5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 20-21.
- 2.√ Hebrews 11 is the great "Faith Chapter" of the Bible. By showing how faith has been demonstrated in sacred history, it encourages us to continue living by faith. Reread Hebrews 11:1-2, which shows that faith gives strength because it lays hold of God and His promise. How does verse 1 describe faith in terms of two things it produces in us? NOTE: In KJV "substance" (v. 1) probably means "assurance." "Obtained a good report" (v. 2) means "gained approval."
- 3.√ Read Hebrews 11:3-38, which lists some of faith's victories. Notice how it brings understanding (v. 3), righteousness (vv. 4-7), promises (vv. 8-22), and mighty deeds (vv. 23-38). As you read, list at least fifteen things that people mentioned by name did or experienced by faith. For example, ABEL OFFERED a better sacrifice and STILL SPEAKS, v. 4; and MOSES REFUSED to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Learn the ones listed in Answers.
NOTE: In KJV "translated" (v. 5) means "taken up to heaven (without dying)."
"Sojourned" (v. 9) means "lived as an alien." In the same verse "tabernacles" are tents.
"Departing" (v. 22) refers to the Exodus from Egypt. "Proper" (v. 23) means "beautiful."
"Assaying" (v. 29) means "attempting." "Compassed about" (v. 30) means "encircled."
"Waxed valiant" (v. 34) means "became brave."
4. In regard to the hope of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:
 - a. What they hoped for is indicated in verses 8-9 and again in verses 10 and 14-16. How do these verses seem to express different hopes?
 - b.√ What city were they and their descendants looking for?

5. Read Hebrews 11:39-40, which points to faith's culmination (that is, its high point and goal). "Obtained a good report" (v. 39) means "gained approval."
- What idea (key to this chapter) does verse 39 repeat from verse 2?
 - Why did all these people not receive what God promised them?

- 6.√ Now practice your memory of what specific people did by faith. For each name in the first column choose a deed from the second column.

PEOPLE	DEEDS
a. Abel	1) lived as an alien
b. Enoch	2) received strength to have a son
c. Noah	3) offered a better sacrifice
d. Abraham	4) prepared (built)
e. Sarah	5) forsook Egypt
	6) was taken alive to heaven

- 7.√ More of the same practice.

PEOPLE	DEEDS
a. Abraham	1) blessed Jacob and Esau
b. Isaac	2) prepared (built)
c. Jacob	3) gave commandment concerning bones
d. Joseph	4) blessed Joseph's sons
e. Moses	5) forsook Egypt
	6) offered his son

- 8.√ Still more of the same practice.

PEOPLE	DEEDS
a. Rahab	1) perished not
b. Abel	2) refused to be called
c. Abraham	3) went out (from his homeland)
d. Joseph	4) made mention of departure
e. Moses	5) blessed Jacob and Esau
	6) still speaks

As you read the commentary that follows, consider whether your own life shows that you have faith.

Faith Demonstrated in Sacred History,
11:1-40

Hebrews 11-13 give in more detail the exhortations given briefly in 10:19-25. But although the emphasis is on practical exhortations, doctrine is either taught or assumed here as well.

In a sense chapter 11 continues the encouragement just given in 10:32-39. This famed "Faith Chapter" of the Bible describes old covenant saints who endured in faith; they did not draw back to destruction.

An Explanation of Faith, 11:1-3

Hebrews 11:1 does not really define faith; rather, it describes it. First, faith always involves the unseen (vv. 1,3,7,10; 2 Cor. 5:7). Second, faith always includes conviction (being sure of something). This does not mean that there is much evidence to convince us; there may be very little (compare Luke 16:31).

Verse 2 indicates one of the things that we cannot see but are sure of: namely, approval from God. This concept of approval ties the chapter together; it is found in verse 2 and verse 39. The theme then of Hebrews 11 is how these people by faith gained approval from God. In fact, we could state the idea of the chapter like this: the only assured result of faith is approval from God. The world demands more of life than God's approval. But what more would God's child want?

Examples of Faith, 11:4-38

The first three examples (vv. 4-7) lived before the flood: Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Notice that each case is very different. Though righteous before God, Abel was murdered and still calls for vengeance. Enoch did not die at all; God took him. Noah condemned the world, which all perished, but saved his own family.

The next two examples (vv. 8-12) are Abraham and Sarah. There can be no doubt that to Abraham and his descendants God promised the land of Canaan. Some interpret this spiritually, making the land mean something different. But this chapter gives evidence that God meant it literally. (1) Verses 8-10 say that Abraham left Ur to go to Canaan. If the promises to him were only spiritual, why was it necessary for him to move? (2) The land of Canaan is described as "the land of promise" (v. 9). (3) Verses

15-16 show that the heavenly city is related to the land of promise. (4) Joseph wanted his bones transported to Canaan (v. 22) because he shared in the hope of a literal fulfillment of the land promises.

Verses 13-16 demonstrate the anticipation of faith. They state that "all these," that is, Abraham's great number of descendants just mentioned in verse 12, died in faith. By faith they saw the promises—that is, the future fulfillment of the promises—but did not receive them. They were willing to die without a country of their own. Even the Promised Land was not theirs yet, until the coming of the city God has prepared. That day is still future.

Verses 17-22 look at the ancestors of Israel. Abraham gives a majestic demonstration of faith in verses 17-19. In obedience to God's command he "offered up Isaac," the promised son who was to carry on his name and covenant. He expected God to do something never seen before—raise Isaac from the dead! This he expected by faith, with no evidence except God's Word.

Verses 23-28 tell about Moses, the law-giver, who walked by faith. Notice that the acts of faith listed in connection with Moses all precede the giving of the law. No examples of his faith are given from the time spent at Mount Sinai or after that. The implication is clear: faith came before the law, and it was faith that made Moses great in God's eyes.

Verses 29-31 tell about ancient Israel at the beginning of the Exodus and at the end of the years of wandering in the desert. Verses 32-38 give a sample of the many other heroes of faith and their deeds. In this paragraph verses 35-37 completely refute so-called "prosperity theology," which

teaches that faith guarantees prosperity. It was faith that enabled some to endure torture and death, just as it enabled others to win great battles (v. 34).

The Extension of Faith, 11:39-40

In verse 39 the theme of the chapter is once again stated: faith brings God's approval. The original readers of Hebrews needed to be reminded of this—and so do we.

Verse 39 also stresses the need for endurance. All the people referred to in chapter 11 are still awaiting the fulfillment of the promises first given to Abraham. In fact, the next verse (v. 40) indicates that those promises will not be fulfilled until the full number of the elect has been attained. Until then even we who have begun to enjoy His new covenant must still live by faith. But the day will come when we will all be blessed together.

MORE QUESTIONS

9. According to the description of faith in 11:1, what are two things always true about faith?
10. What is the theme of Hebrews 11?
11. Restate the evidence that God intends to give the Promised Land to Abraham and his descendants.
12. Do you live by faith? How do you know?

Lesson 12

Hebrews 12

In running our race of faith, what should we lay aside and what should we look at? What is the main value of God's discipline? the fifth warning? What two scenes are contrasted in the fifth warning?

Hebrews 12 shows how faith—in its aspect of hope—is recommended for us. It also has the last major warning of the book, based on a dramatic description.

- 1.√ Before you begin chapter 12, practice writing from memory the three verses you chose in lesson 11. You should be able to write them perfectly, with their references, for the unit examination.
2. Read Hebrews 12:1-3, which encourages us to run our race of faith with patience. It reminds us of those who have given witness in the past and points us to our Great Leader. “Despising the shame” of the cross (v. 2) means that He considered unimportant the humiliation He had to suffer. “Contradiction” (v. 3) means “opposition.”

- a. In our race of faith, we usually know what our sins are. But how can we recognize a “weight” (v. 1)?
 - b. This race seems long. But we can see at the goal the Author and Finisher of our faith—who showed us how to run and reached the prize. What kept Him going? (v. 2)
 - c.√ Summarize what we should lay aside and what we should look at, as we run our race of faith.
3. Read Hebrews 12:4-17, which explains the good effects of God’s discipline. The word “discipline” is found—in different forms—in each verse 5-11 (NASB, NIV). In the same places “chasten,” “chastening,” and “chastisement” are used in the King James Version. “Discipline” is more accurate; though it includes punishment, it refers to all aspects of upbringing and training. “Exercised” (v. 11) means “trained.” “Fornicator, or profane person” (v. 16) means “sexually immoral or godless.”
 - a. What attitude does God have toward those He disciplines?
 - b.√ What does He accomplish by this discipline?
 - c. We are warned not to let anybody poison the rest of us (v. 15) and that no one be like Esau (v. 16). What was he like?
 - d. How should you respond when God disciplines you?
 4. Read the fifth and last major warning, Hebrews 12:18-29. These verses contrast the scenes at two mountains where God has spoken: (a) Mount Sinai, where He gave the first covenant, and (b) the heavenly Mount Zion, where He has given the new covenant. At the latter He has spoken His final word before He judges. “Entreated” (v. 19) means “begged.” “Dart” (v. 20) means “spear.” “Have grace” (v. 28) means “be thankful.”
 - a.√ Can you give a title to this warning? Learn the one in Answers.
 - b. List the eight things and persons we have come to. (The first four words of v. 23 may go with the end of v. 22: “angels in joyful assembly.”)
 - c. “The blood of sprinkling” is Messiah’s blood, which has inaugurated the new covenant (as we saw in 9:15-24). How do you suppose it “speaks better things” than Abel’s blood? (Compare Gen. 4:10; Heb. 11:4.)
 - d. Those that defy God will lose everything; those that listen will gain everything. What will God do in judgment, according to verses 26-27?
 - e. What will remain as our inheritance?
 - f.√ Check your memory. What two scenes are contrasted in this warning?

Hope means either (1) our firm expectation of what God is going to do or (2) the future thing we so expect. As you read the commentary that follows, consider what is the Christian hope in the second sense.

Faith Recommended for Us, 12:1-29

Hebrews 12 reminds us of powerful reasons why our faith must persevere in hope (looking to the future). This chapter could be titled “The Patience of Hope.”

The Examples of Patient Endurance, 12:1-3

Our first examples are the “cloud of witnesses” (12:1), the heroes of faith described in chapter 11. How are they “witnesses”? Not as spectators watching us perform but as those who give testimony to what they have seen or known. The Greek word for “witness” always refers to one who gives testimony of his own experience; he is not just a passive observer. These heroes of Hebrews 11 “surround” us—not physically nor personally but by means of the record God gives us in Scripture—and they testify to the fact that faith brings God’s approval. This encourages us to run our race with endurance.

Another great example is referred to in verses 2-3: that of Jesus. It is clear that He did not throw His life away. He was willing to endure the shame of the cross because His eyes were set on the joy that lay beyond it. “Despising the shame” means that He counted the shame as unimportant in comparison with the future glory. Christians should feel the same.

The Endurance of Discipline, 12:4-13

This paragraph considers the difficulties that have befallen the readers of Hebrews. These difficulties do not indicate God’s displeasure but His love. He is not punishing but doing something quite different; He is disciplining in order to produce righteousness. Discipline is a tool in His hand to correct them and instruct them.

Verse 4 says that the readers have not suffered severely yet (as many of the saints

in chapter 11 did). This implies that they are not in Jerusalem, because Stephen and James have already been martyred there.

The quotation of Proverbs 3:11-12 in verses 5 and 6 supports the idea that discipline is a sign of God’s love and is for the Christian’s good.

Verse 12 begins telling believers how to apply the truth about discipline. It quotes from Isaiah 35:3, a word of encouragement to Israel in view of God’s promises of a future kingdom. So also the readers of Hebrews should be lifted up by the same promises.

Proverbs 4:16 (Septuagint) gives the thought behind verse 13: do not make others stumble. In every way possible the believing community should encourage each one not to falter in his confession of Messiah.

The Ethics of Those Who Endure, 12:14-17

Those who endure will pursue after peace (v. 14a) and sanctification (vv. 14b-17). “Sanctification” (literally, setting apart) has several meanings. In this verse the Greek has an article, “pursue the sanctification,” which probably means that it refers to a “setting apart” already mentioned. Consider the two following uses of the term. (1) Hebrews 10:10, 14 refer to a positional sanctification already assumed to have taken place. In our position we have been set apart from the world, as those destined to partake with Christ in His glory. But we cannot pursue that sanctification; it is already a fact. (2) There is also a practical sanctification, the necessary result of positional sanctification. Using the same Greek stem, 12:10 refers to this as “holiness,” the goal of discipline. This we can pursue (see

also John 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 5:8).

Verse 15 is closely tied to verse 14. As the readers are pursuing peace and sanctification they are to be watching out for the spiritual welfare of others. Verses 15-17 prepare the reader for the warning section at the end of this chapter.

A person who “comes short [fail, KJV] of the grace of God” is one who leaves his profession of Messiah to go back to Judaism.

Notice the following in verses 15-17.

(1) The congregation is to watch out for individuals in the group (“that no one,” NASB; “lest any man,” KJV) who might begin to fall away. (2) The expression “root of bitterness” looks back to Deuteronomy 29:18 and apostasy such as described there. (3) The sin involves someone like Esau, who was profane (godless) and without spiritual insight or interest. He was only concerned with satisfying his flesh (see Gen. 25:27-34; 27:1-40).

In verse 17 the author says that Esau’s decision could not be reversed; neither can the choice of one who finally rejects Christ. What Esau sought for with tears was not a place for repentance but the blessing, as seen by this punctuation and emphasis: “When he desired to inherit THE BLESSING, he was rejected (for he found no place for repentance), though he sought for IT with tears.” It was too late to secure the blessing, for he had despised it earlier. (Some teach that he sought for “repentance,” meaning a “change of mind” in his father. The result is the same.)

An Explanation for the Ethics, 12:18-24

The contrast here is between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. Mount Sinai was the place where God spoke the words of the first

covenant. This Mount Zion is now in heaven but will be moved to earth as the center of the coming kingdom (see Ps. 2:6; 48:1-2,8; 102:12-22; 132:11-18; 146:10; Isa. 2:1-5).

The heavenly Jerusalem is also in existence now and will be on earth during that eternal kingdom, as its capital (Gal. 4:24-31; Heb. 11:10,16).

After referring to the heavenly Jerusalem in verse 22, the author describes its inhabitants in verses 22b to 23. Five categories are given (using NASB):

1. Myriads (meaning many thousands) of angels in festal (joyful) assembly
2. the church of the firstborn (that is, those who already belong to the church in the new covenant age)
3. God
4. the spirits of righteous men made perfect (that is, old covenant saints)
5. Jesus

“The blood of sprinkling” is Jesus’ blood, which He shed as His priestly sacrifice (9:12-14). By sprinkling it to cleanse heavenly things, He inaugurated the new covenant (9:16-23).

The Danger of Denying, 12:25-29

Here is the fifth and last warning passage in Hebrews.

We should not “refuse him who is speaking from heaven” (v. 25). The word here translated “refuse” also means: decline, avoid, deprecate (feel and express disapproval), or reject. We should not do this to God. On earth—at Mount Sinai—God spoke giving the old covenant; from heaven—on Mount Zion—He offers the new covenant (v. 24). He speaks through Christ’s blood of the new covenant, which “speaks better than the blood of Abel.” Abel’s blood cries for vengeance (11:4;

Gen. 4:10); Jesus' blood offers forgiveness. This is God's last word.

Once again the author uses a "much-more" type of argument. We know that disobedience to the old covenant law brought judgment, as seen in the wilderness wanderings. How much more, then, will judgment come to those who turn away from God's voice through the Son!

Verse 26 quotes from Haggai 2:6, which looks forward to the coming of Messiah's kingdom to the earth. Just as there was a

shaking of the earth at Sinai (see Exod. 19:18; Ps. 68:7-8), so will there be a far greater shaking in the tribulation (see Rev. 6:12; 11:13; 16:18; Hag. 2:6; Zech. 14:4; Matt. 24:7; Isa. 2:19-21). Temporary things must be shaken and removed so that the unshakable kingdom can be established (v. 27; see Isa. 13:13; Ezek. 38:19).

Because believers have part in that unshakable kingdom, our response should be both gratitude and awe (v. 28).

MORE QUESTIONS

5. What is the "sanctification" we should pursue?
6. What do the heavenly Mount Zion and Jerusalem have to do with the coming kingdom?
7. What does Hebrews 12 prove from Haggai 2:6?
8. To conclude, what do you think Hebrews 12 presents as the Christian hope?

Lesson 13 Hebrews 13

From Hebrews 13 can you list five exhortations meaningful to you? Can you give a general outline for Hebrews? the five major warnings? the number of the "Faith Chapter"?

Hebrews has been exhorting us to respond to Christ with persevering faith. Chapter 13 concludes that exhortation, showing that such faith is manifested by love, purity, and fidelity. It ends with an epilogue. After studying Hebrews 13 you will reread the entire book.

1. Read Hebrews 13:1-17, listing at least ten exhortations. If possible, it would be helpful for you to say these in your own words. For example, instead of "Let brotherly love continue" (v. 1), you might say, "Keep on loving one another as brothers." When you finish, see Answers.

NOTE: In KJV "marriage is honorable" (v. 4) probably means "marriage should be honored." "Whoremongers" (v. 4) are sexually immoral. Verse 7 is clearer in the New American Standard Bible: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God

to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith.” “Conversation” (vv. 5,7) means “way of life.” “Meats” (v. 9) refers to “ceremonial foods.” “To communicate” (v. 16) means “to share possessions with others.”

2. Here are more questions relating to the same verses.
 - a. Verses 7 and 8 refer to former pastors of the Hebrews. What do you think the relation might be between the two verses?
 - b. (You may find this difficult, but try making an interpretation.) Verses 10-13 show that we have a privilege denied to the priests of the old covenant. What and where is the altar from which we eat?
 - c. We also have priestly sacrifices to make. What are three of them as mentioned in verses 15-16?
 - d. What is the main responsibility of those who “have the rule” over us?
 - e.√ Now, from Hebrews 13:1-17 choose five of the exhortations that are meaningful to you, and memorize them.
3. Read Hebrews 13:18-25. This is the epilogue, which (a) requests and offers prayer and (b) shares personal information about the writer.
 - a. List from these verses at least three facts about the writer and Timothy.
 - b. The prayer in verses 20-21 is a marvelous doxology. What does it call our Lord Jesus?
 - c. What is the “everlasting covenant” in the prayer?

As you read the commentary that follows, think of practical ways you can do the things commanded in Hebrews 13.

Hebrews 1:1 to 10:18 looked at the doctrine of the Son’s superiority. Hebrews 10:19-25 briefly stated the exhortation based on that doctrine: our response should be persevering faith. Hebrews 11-13 enlarges on the practical meaning of that faith from three viewpoints: (a) how faith is demonstrated in sacred history (ch. 11), (b) how faith is recommended for us (ch. 12), and (c) how faith is manifested (ch. 13). These chapters seem to emphasize the work of faith (ch. 11), the patience of hope (ch. 12), and the labor of love (13:1-17).

Faith Manifested by Love and Fidelity,
13:1-17

Chapter 13 emphasizes love toward Messiah and others. The first four verses show that love serves others: brethren in general, strangers, prisoners, and partners in marriage. Why was it necessary to command that “marriage be held in honor” and “the marriage bed be undefiled” (v. 4, NASB)? Probably for one or both of the following reasons. Much sexual immorality in the culture may have brought about (1) immorality in the church or (2) asceticism (that is, saying no to normal bodily desires) as an attempt to prevent such sin in the church.

Verses 5-6 emphasize the sufficiency of God. Covetousness (NASB has “the love of money”) seeks possessions that God knows could hurt us. We must learn to be content, trusting His presence and goodness.

Verses 7-9 emphasize the stability provided by Messiah. He was the solid basis for the life and ministry of the Hebrews’ former leaders (“those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you,” NASB). This basis does not change and cannot be improved.

Verses 10-14 emphasize the separation of Hebrew believers from Judaism. The sacrifice referred to in verse 11 is the sin offering for the high priest or the whole community (see Lev. 4:1-21; 16:27-28). Verse 13 may also refer to the red heifer sacrifice explained in Numbers 19. Those who went outside the camp in connection with those sacrifices were considered unclean and worthy of reproach (that is, disgraceful). After burning the sacrifice, they were required to take a bath before coming back into the camp. Similarly, Jesus suffered for the Hebrew believers (and for us) outside the camp of Judaism. The altar from which they can eat is not in the temple (where the priests eat). Therefore, they must leave Judaism and suffer reproach with Messiah.

Verses 15-16 emphasize the sacrifice of worship. All believers can offer such sacri-

fice; we are all priests and have one High Priest. The sacrifices that please God are not the earthly sacrifices on an earthly altar but the spiritual sacrifices that come from a pure heart. These include praising God and sharing with others.

Verse 17 emphasizes submission to leaders. These are probably the elders in each church. Their responsibility, “keep watch over your souls,” is stated similarly in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2. Other believers are to obey them and submit to them for their own good.

The Conclusion, 13:18-25

Hebrews began with a prologue and ends with an epilogue. These last verses give information about the writer, request prayer, and offer prayer in a beautiful doxology.

The writer wants to see the Hebrews and will come if Timothy does, who is now out of prison. His prayer is that the God of peace “equip you” (KJV has “make you perfect”) to do His will—and that He be glorified. This God is the one who raised from the dead the Lord Jesus, “the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant.” Thus, the conclusion restates the main theme of this epistle: God in Messiah has provided a new and eternal covenant, which will meet all the needs of those who believe.

REVIEW

- 4.√ Here is a simplified outline of the book, which you should learn by memory, including the chapter references. Practice writing it.
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| I. The Son is better | II. We should live |
| A. than angels, chs. 1-2 | A. by faith, ch. 11 |
| B. than Moses, chs. 3-4 | B. in hope, ch. 12 |
| C. than Aaron, chs. 5-10 | C. with love, ch. 13 |

5. Read the entire book of Hebrews rapidly, using as guide the outline you have just learned. As you read, list verses you want to study further. To send in, make a copy of these verses titled "Reading Report 3: Verses to Study." Put your name on this report.

- 6.√ Test your memory.
 - a. What is the "Faith Chapter"?
 - b. What are the five major warnings in this book?
 - c. Which chapters compare Jesus to Moses? to Aaron?
 - d. Which chapters emphasize living
 1. with love? 2. by faith? 3. in hope?

Prepare for unit 4 examination in the usual way. Then take it. Do not forget to turn in reading report 3.

ANSWERS

Unit 1

Lesson 1

2. We know that it was not Paul but are not sure who it was.
3. (a) For Timothy's name, Hebrews puts the description before the name.
(b) Hebrews emphasizes Israel's unbelief rather than idolatry and sin.
(c) Hebrews does not give the author's name.
(d) The Hebrews author puts himself outside the apostolic band.
(e) Hebrews always quotes from the Septuagint.
4. Italy
5. They are essential to the argument, part of it.
6. (a) to encourage the believers to mature
(b) to warn the readers against disowning Christ and going back to Judaism
7. a. four (1:1-4) b. God hath spoken (1:1-2).
c. because it is by His Son (1:2). This is the rest of the theme.
8. Your answer may have been this brief: The Son is (a) Heir, (b) Creator, (c) brightness of God's glory, (d) Image of God, (e) Upholder of all things, (f) sacrifice for sins, (g) seated beside God.
9. a. Did you notice that His being God's Image means that when we see Him we see just what the Father is like? And that as Upholder He actually determines what happens in history?
b. Perhaps (to give some examples) you said that (1) as Heir everything belongs to Him; (2) He made time and whatever exists in time; (3) He shows the Father's glory as sunlight shows the sun's glory; (4) He shows the Father's character in detail.
c. You should realize at least that your eternal welfare depends on your being rightly related to the Son.
10. He finished that work, and God accepted what He did.

Lesson 2

1. a. the Son and the angels b. Son
2. "To which of the angels said He at any time?" (1:5,13)
3. (You will look at these one by one in the following questions.)
4. a. Anointed (v. 2), King (v. 6), Son (vv. 7,12)
b. the heathen (that is, the nations) and the whole earth (v. 8)
He is to ask for it. (v. 8)
c. My beloved Son (in whom I am well pleased)
5. a. as king over Israel b. Solomon
c. that He is the King (Heir to the kingdom)
NOTE: This meaning of *Son* does not deny Jesus' deity. Hebrews 1:2 has already said that He is the Creator of all things.
6. a. David (v. 20) b. They will worship the Son.
7. that they are under the orders of someone else and have changeable activities
8. a. God (1:8) b. for ever and ever (1:8)

ANSWERS

- c. because He loves righteousness and hates iniquity
- 9. a. change it (1:12) b. He will never change. (1:12)
- 10. a. His Father's throne (Revelation 3:21 clearly distinguishes between the Father's throne and the Son's future throne.)
b. the throne of David c. until the Father makes His enemies His footstool
- 11. a. ministering spirits b. minister to those who shall inherit salvation
- 12. a. future ("shall be heirs")
b. All of them speak of salvation as future.
NOTE: In the first three Gospels, salvation is often spoken of as entering or inheriting the kingdom, which will take place in the future. There is also a present aspect of salvation, emphasized in passages such as Ephesians 2:5, 8.
- 13. because it is a synonym for Christ but retains its royal meaning (that is, seeing Him as King)
- 14. Some of the evidences are these:
(a) His better name, "Son"
(b) the command to the angels to worship Him when He comes to rule
(c) His rule as God compared to their temporary nature and ministry
(d) His unchangeable character in contrast to His changeable creation
(e) His present position, seated and waiting at God's right hand
- 15. a. to show that the Son is greater than the angels in His person
b. Christ's future reign on earth (the kingdom)

Lesson 3

- 1. a. Perhaps you called it "the danger of drifting." Learn this title.
b. that the Son is greater than the angels
c. that of the angels (2:2; that is, the law) and that of the Son (the Lord, 2:3)
- 2. It was future in 1:14.
- 3. He includes himself among those who heard the eyewitnesses—that is, heard the apostles—and saw God's confirmation of their testimony ("confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness," 2:3-4). In other words, (a) he was not one of the apostles, and (b) apparently the miracles were now past.
- 4. Learn these four: We know that "salvation" in Hebrews 2:3 is still future for the following reasons:
(a) The same word "salvation" in 1:14 was definitely future.
(b) "Salvation" is future elsewhere in Hebrews.
(c) The miracles associated with the announcement of this salvation were miracles of the world to come (2:5; 6:5).
(d) Hebrews 2:5 identifies the subject being discussed as "the world to come."
- 5. a. It says, "the world to come, that we are talking about" (2:5).
b. It (1) quotes Psalm 8 to show that God has put all things in subjection under man's feet (2:6-8a) but (2) states that this is not yet true (2:8b). (Therefore, it must take place in the world to come.)

ANSWERS

6. a. suffer (2:10)
b. It perfected Him. For them it “destroyed” the devil and delivered them from bondage.
7. a. be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation and help those who are tempted
b. You probably noticed that He “suffered” when tempted, which means it was real and difficult. He could be tempted because He had the limitations and weaknesses—though not the sins—of a man.
8. a. (1) to be perfected through sufferings
(2) to make Satan’s power without effect
(3) to become a merciful and faithful High Priest
b. to lead many sons to the glory of the world to come

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. a 2. d 3. d 4. b 5. d 6. a 7. d 8. c
- 9-10. (in either order)
 9. to encourage the believers to mature
 10. to warn the readers against disowning Christ and going back to Judaism
 11. to prove that the Son is greater than the angels (in His person)
 12. the danger of drifting
- 13-16. (in any order) See the answers to question 4, above.
17. to lead many sons to the glory of the world to come

Unit 2

Lesson 4

1. Here are some of the things you may have noticed:
 - (a) It is God’s rest (3:11,18; 4:4-5).
 - (b) God swore that the generation that tempted Him in the wilderness would not enter (3:11; 4:3,5).
 - (c) It is the same as being “partakers of Christ” (3:14).
 - (d) Moses’ generation could not enter because of unbelief (3:19; 4:2,11).
 - (e) There is a promise for us to enter it (4:1,6).
 - (f) We who have believed do enter it (4:3).
 - (g) There are two “days” of invitation: when it was first preached and “Today” (4:6-8; 3:13).
 - (h) Joshua did not give them (that) rest (4:8).
 - (i) It is a rest that “remains” for God’s people (4:9).
 - (j) Entering God’s rest means ceasing from one’s works as God did (4:10).
 - (k) We should work to enter that rest (4:11).
2. a. “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling”
b. Apostle and High Priest
3. a. Moses b. They were both faithful to God.

ANSWERS

B. His Superiority to Moses, 3:1 to 4:13

C. His Superiority to Aaron, 4:14 to 10:18

Lesson 6

1.
 - a. high priest, Jesus, profession
 - b. because He was tempted like us (4:15)
 - c. You probably said that because of Jesus' presence there (and His triumph over death and the devil), we are accepted at that throne and will obtain God's help there rather than condemnation.
 - d. hold fast our confession, come in prayer to the throne of grace
 - e. Jesus with Aaron (the high priest)
2.
 - a. for Him to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin
 - b. (1) He must be a man (in order to sympathize with other men in their weakness).
(2) He must be called of God.
 - c. Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4; notice how Melchizedek is spelled).
 - d. He learned "obedience" (v. 8)—that is, what obedience can cost.
He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him (v. 9).
3. both priest and king
4. He became fully qualified to be High Priest.

Lesson 7

1.
 - a. Perhaps you called it "the danger of deserting the Son" or something similar. Learn this one: "the danger of degeneration" (a general moral breakdown).
 - b. "a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"
2.
 - a. The author finds it difficult to explain his subject, since the Hebrews are sluggish in hearing.
 - b. As unweaned babies they want to continue living on milk rather than solid food.
3.
 - a. repentance, faith, baptisms (that is, washings), laying on of hands, resurrection, judgment
 - b. go on unto perfection
 - c. land that has been carefully worked and watered but will produce nothing but thorns and thistles
 - d. because in their work and the love they have showed to other Christians, they have showed that they are true believers
 - e. faith and patience (6:12)
4.
 - a. by swearing by Himself, to Abraham (6:13,16-17)
 - b. bless and multiply (6:14) c. Jesus (6:20)
5. "Washings" must refer to old covenant teachings; therefore, all do.
6.
 - a. The grammatical form and relationship for this verb are the same as for the other steps.
 - b. to renew them again unto repentance (6:6)

ANSWERS

- c. professing Christians who abandon Christ to return to Judaism
 - d. Judas
7. He swore by Himself to bless and multiply Abraham.

Unit 3

Lesson 8

1. Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine—and blessed him.
Abraham gave Melchizedek tithes from all the goods he had taken from the kings.
2. a. You probably noticed these:
 - He was both king and priest at the same time.
 - He was king of righteousness and king of peace.
 - He was priest without consideration of parents nor succeeded by others.
- b. He received tithes from Abraham and blessed him, thus showing his superiority to Abraham. At that time Levi was in Abraham; therefore, Levi also paid tithes to Melchizedek as superior.
3. a. It has been changed (v. 12) to a law that makes men perfect and permits access to God (vv. 18-19).
- b. He swore on oath when He made Jesus priest.
- c. He can save us to the uttermost (completely) by interceding for us (v. 25).
- d. 3
- e. (You do only if you have the Lord Jesus.)
4. a. on the right hand of God's throne in heaven
- b. to give an example and shadow of heavenly things
- c. mediate a better covenant
- d. God puts His laws into minds and hearts (v. 10), resulting in their being His people and all knowing Him (vv. 10-11), all based on forgiveness of their sins (v. 12).
- e. the place where He ministers (heaven) and the covenant He ministers (the new covenant)
5. because he was of the same priestly order as Jesus
6. a. by showing that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and therefore greater than Levi, forefather of Aaron and all Aaronic priests
- b. It never ends.
7. (a) God puts His laws into men's minds and hearts.
- (b) All know God.
- (c) God remembers men's sins no more.
8. a. (1) It is the covenant the Lord Jesus put into effect with His death.
- (2) It is the covenant the Lord now ministers from heaven.
- (3) It is the covenant that Paul—and all the apostles—served.
- (4) Hebrews 10 shows that the Jeremiah passage is a witness by the Holy Spirit to us.
- b. Is God putting His laws into your mind and heart?

ANSWERS

Lesson 9

1. a. the fact that though the priests could go into the holy place, only the high priest could go into the holiest place, and then only once a year and only with sacrificial blood
b. because they were all “external” (affecting only the body)
2. a. the new covenant b. “blood of the covenant”
3. a. the conscience and heavenly things
NOTE: This means that the new covenant is universal rather than just earthly.
b. the new covenant c. only once
d. save those who look for Him
e. It cleanses the conscience (11-14), dedicates the new covenant (15-24), and never needs repeating (25-28).
4. because they were external and could not purify man’s conscience (9:9)
5. a. in order for them to receive their promised eternal inheritance
b. forgave them for their transgressions under the first covenant
6. The Lord’s Supper celebrates Messiah’s inaugurating the new covenant.
7. You do if you are under the new covenant.

Lesson 10

1. a. be a shadow of good things to come, remind of sins
b. They would have ceased to be offered. (v. 2)
c. that Messiah would not come to continue with the sacrifices prescribed by the law but to accomplish God’s will
d. because with His one offering He has made us perfect (that is, completely acceptable to God)
e. because our sins are forgiven and He remembers them no more
2. a. (1) the new way Jesus has opened—that is, His flesh (body)
(2) our new High Priest (vv. 20-21)
b. (Memorize the words that are capitalized.)
Let us DRAW NEAR WITH a true heart in full assurance of FAITH. (v. 22)
Let us HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF our HOPE. (v. 23)
Let us consider one another to PROVOKE UNTO LOVE and to good works. (v. 24)
3. a. Perhaps you called it the danger of drawing back or despising. Learn this: “the danger of despising.”
b. Here are some of the other similarities you might have seen. Each warning
(1) says that there is no hope for the sinner in view (6:4,6; 10:26-27)
(2) says that the danger demands patience (6:11-12; 10:36)
(3) says that God’s promise sustains us (6:12-21; 10:36)
(4) says that those in danger have known the truth (6:4; 10:26)
(5) says that the punishment is judgment and fire (6:8; 10:27)
(6) reminds the readers of their earlier acts of faith (6:10; 10:32-34)

ANSWERS

4. If you answered yes, your basis should be the same as the one in Hebrews 10. You should have (a) the new and living way through the veil, that is, through the sacrificed body of Jesus, and (b) a great priest, Jesus.
5. Perhaps you indicated definite times in which you will pray and someone you will stimulate to love.
6. Here are possible ways to summarize the arguments. Memorize the five that are written in capital letters.
 - (a) There is NO FORGIVENESS FOR THIS SIN.
 - (b) FIRE IS TO PUNISH THIS SIN.
 - (c) THE BACKGROUND IN DEUTERONOMY IS APOSTASY.
 - (d) THE DESCRIPTIONS IN VERSE 29 FIT THE LOST.
 - (e) The “severer punishment” is worse than death.
 - (f) VERSES 30-31 SHOW GOD’S FINAL JUDGMENT.
 - (g) Chapters 5-10 contrast salvation in Christ to imperfection in the old covenant.

Unit 4

Lesson 11

2. It says that faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.
3. Learn who did or experienced each of the following.
 - Abel offered (a better sacrifice), yet speaks.
 - Enoch was taken alive to heaven.
 - Noah prepared an ark.
 - Abraham went out (from his homeland), lived as an alien, offered (his son).
 - Sarah received strength to have a son.
 - Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.
 - Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons.
 - Joseph made mention of Israel’s departing (the Exodus), gave commandment concerning his bones.
 - Moses was hidden, refused to be called (the son of Pharaoh’s daughter), forsook Egypt, kept the Passover.
 - Rahab perished not.
4.
 - a. In verses 8-9 they were promised the land; in verses 10 and 14-16 they looked for the heavenly city and country. (The land will become the heavenly country when the heavenly city becomes its capital in the future kingdom.)
 - b. the one that has foundations and that God has built and made (v. 10; this is the heavenly Jerusalem of 12:22)
5.
 - a. that these people obtained a good report (from God) through faith
 - b. God has prepared something better for us (to do by faith) before they can be perfected.
6. a. 3 b. 6 c. 4 d. 1 e. 2
7. a. 6 b. 1 c. 4 d. 3 e. 5

ANSWERS

8. a. 1 b. 6 c. 3 d. 4 e. 2
9. It involves the unseen and includes conviction.
10. Faith gains God's approval.
11. (a) Abraham had to leave his country and go to another.
(b) It is called the "land of promise."
(c) The heavenly city is related to that land.
(d) Joseph wanted his bones moved there.

Lesson 12

2. a. Since a weight is heavy, you probably said: A weight is anything that takes a lot of time and effort that could be used in better ways.
b. keeping His eyes on the joy set before Him
c. Lay aside every weight or sin (that holds us back).
Look at Jesus (who has already finished the race).
3. a. love (v. 6) b. He makes us partake of His holiness. (v. 10)
c. sexually immoral and godless d. You should let it train you.
4. a. Perhaps you called this the danger of defying or refusing or deserting. Learn this one: "the danger of denying."
b. Mt. Sion (now spelled Zion), the heavenly Jerusalem, innumerable angels, the church of the firstborn, God the Judge, the spirits of just men made perfect, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, the blood of sprinkling
c. "The blood of sprinkling" offers pardon, whereas Abel's blood cries for vengeance.
d. shake earth and heaven, to remove what is not permanent
e. the kingdom that cannot be shaken
f. Mount Sinai, where He gave the first covenant, and the heavenly Mount Zion, where He has given the new covenant
5. practical sanctification, that is, the holiness that is the result of discipline
6. They will be on earth as the center and capital of that kingdom.
7. that there will be a final shaking to remove all temporary things and leave only the unshakable kingdom
8. You probably said: to inherit the eternal kingdom.

Lesson 13

1. Some of the other exhortations you might have listed are:
Don't forget to show hospitality. (v. 2)
Remember and go to help those who are in prison. (v. 3)
Keep marriage sacred and pure. (v. 4)
Don't always think you need what other people have. (v. 5)
Remember the good example and teachings of your former pastors. (v. 7)
Establish yourself with God's grace, not with legalistic rules. (v. 9)
Be willing to suffer reproach with Jesus. (v. 13)
Offer praise as sacrifice to God. (v. 15)

ANSWERS

Help others as sacrifice to God. (v. 16)

Obey your present pastors. (v. 17)

2.
 - a. Since verse 7 speaks of the message and conduct of the former pastors, verse 8 presents Jesus probably as the theme of that message and the standard for that conduct.
 - b. Probably you decided that our altar is the cross of Messiah outside the system of Judaism. We partake of Him spiritually.
 - c. praising God, doing good, sharing with others
 - d. They watch for our souls (make sure we are all right spiritually).
3.
 - a. Did you notice the following?
He wants to be restored to them (which means he has been with them previously). (v. 19)
“They of Italy” are with him and send greetings. (v. 24)
Timothy has been in prison and is now free. (v. 23)
He hopes Timothy will come soon and the two of them go visit the Hebrews. (v. 23)
 - b. that great shepherd of the sheep c. the new covenant
6.
 - a. Hebrews 11
 - b. the dangers of drifting (ch. 2), disbelief (ch. 3), degeneration (chs. 5-6), despising (ch. 10), and denying (ch. 12)
 - c. 3-4, 5-10
 - d. 1. ch. 13 2. ch. 11 3. ch. 12