

The Letter To The HEBREWS

In former times, God spoke to our ancestors thru the prophets. He did this at various times and in many different ways.

²But in this last period of time, He has spoken to us thru His Son. And it was thru His Son that God created the entire universe.^a He has also decided that His Son will inherit everything.

³The very brilliance of God's glory shines out from the Son, and reveals what God is really like. And it is by the powerful word of command of His Son that God maintains and perpetuates all things in the entire universe. After the Son had provided the means by which we could be cleansed of our sins,^a He sat down in Heaven at the right hand of God, the Supreme Power.^b

God's Son Is Greater than Angels

⁴The Son has become far greater than the angels—as much greater as the name He inherited from the Father is far greater than theirs.

⁵Because to which of the angels did God ever say,

You are My Son; because today I have begotten You and have become Your Father^a?

Nor did God ever say about any angel,

**I will be His Father,
and He will be My Son.^b**

⁶And again, when God brought His first-born Son into the world, He said,

All the angels of God must worship^a Him.

⁷But when speaking about the angels He said,

God makes His angels to resemble the winds, serving Him as swiftly and powerfully as lightning.^a

⁸On the other hand, when speaking about the

Son, He said,

Your Kingdom, O God, will continue on forever and ever! Your Imperial Dominion will be highly esteemed for its justice, honesty, and goodness.

⁹**You have loved what is right and hated what is wrong. For that reason God, yes, even Your God, has flooded Your soul with great joy, far above that experienced by Your companions.^a**

¹⁰God also said,

In the beginning, O Lord, You created the earth. And the galaxies of stars in the heavens are the work of Your hands.

¹¹**They will perish, but You will remain. They will all become worn out with age like a garment.**

¹²**Then You will fold them up like a robe, and they will be changed into something new. But You are and always will be the same, and Your life will never end.^a**

¹³And to which of the angels did God ever say,

Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet^a?

¹⁴He never said that to any of them, because the function of angels is that of ministering spirits. They are constantly being sent out by God to help and serve those who are about to be saved.

Our Salvation is So Great

2 So because of what's been said here, we must be more careful than ever to keep listening and acting on what we've been taught, so that we don't allow ourselves at any time to drift off course from what God has told us.

²Because if God backed up everything He said to us thru angels, and punished us in the way we deserved when we disobeyed the commands He

1:2a John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9c; Colossians 1:15-17.

1:3a ... *by means of His suffering and death on the cross for us* ...

1:3b There is only one Supreme God, (John 17:3), and that's the Father. See also 1 Corinthians 8:6, and the note. Many places in Scripture the Father is called the Most High God. Yes, the Son is also God, but He is God by virtue of the power and glory given Him by the Father. Matthew 28:18; John 14:28; 17:24; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

1:5a But this is what God did say to His Son.

Hebrews 5:5; Psalm 2:7; 89:27.

1:5b 2 Samuel 7:14.

1:6a Imperative mood. God is not begging or suggesting, He is commanding! If angels are under obligation to worship Him, man is most certainly under obligation to do so.

1:7a Psalm 104:4. Or ... serving Him *as flames of fire*.

1:8-9a Psalm 45:6-7.

1:10-12a Psalm 102:25-27.

1:13a But this is what God did say to His Son. Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44.

gave us thru them, how can we escape His judgment if we neglect^a a salvation that is so great?

³It was the Lord Jesus who first told us about it.^a Then it was confirmed and passed on to us by those who had heard Him speak.

⁴Even now God continues to testify^a to the truth of their testimony by signs and wonders, and by different kinds of miracles. He also gives gifts of the Holy Spirit to His people, according to His own will and purpose.

Jesus Became as Human as We Are

⁵And we know that God has not put the angels in charge of the coming new world of which we speak.

⁶But as one writer of Scripture earnestly and most solemnly declared in a certain place,

What is mankind, O God, that You bother Yourself to even think about us? Why are You so concerned about mere man that You continue to care for us?

⁷**You made us a little lower than the angels. Then You crowned us with glory and honor, putting us in charge of the things Your hands had made.**

⁸**You have put us in charge of everything there is!**^a In putting us in charge of everything, God hasn't left anything that is not subject to us. But at the present time we don't yet see ourselves ruling over everything.

⁹But what we do see is Jesus. Thru God's kindness which we don't deserve, Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the purpose of suffering and dying, so that He might endure suffering and death for every one of us. But now we see Him

crowned with great glory and honor!^a

¹⁰All things were created by God for His own reasons and purposes. And in order to make it possible for Him to bring many children to Himself to share His glory,^a He did what His love, justice, and wisdom demanded when He made the Founder of our salvation perfect thru sufferings.

¹¹Because both Jesus, who is making us holy, and those of us who are being made holy by Him, have the same Father. That's why He isn't ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters.

¹²He even said to God,

I will tell My brothers and sisters what You have done. When they meet together I will join them in singing Your praises.^a

¹³He also said,

I will put My trust in God.^a

And also,

Here I am, with the children God has given Me.^b

¹⁴And since the children are made of flesh and blood, He was born as they were, taking on Himself a body of flesh and blood. He took upon Himself our humanity so that He could die, because only by dying^a could He crush the power of the one who had the power of death—that is, the devil.

¹⁵He did it so that He might set free those who were enslaved all their lives by fear of death.

¹⁶Clearly, then, He did not become an angel; He became a man, a descendant of Abraham.

¹⁷So He had to be made like His brothers and sisters in every way, so that He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest in matters relating to God. This was also necessary if He were to be able to

2:2a Just who is the writer addressing here? What does He mean? See Appendix 227, page 489.

2:3a ... and the conditions for receiving it.

2:4a The Greek *sunepimarturoontos* here, is present tense (present continuous action), not past tense as some translate.

2:6-8a Psalm 8:4-6. Oh, the wonder of it all! The main idea in the teaching here is that redeemed people, in their glorified state, as children of God, will rule over all of God's creation. It could be that during the first 1,000 years, while the earth is being subdued, this rule will be confined to the earth. But in reading these verses carefully, one is impressed with the fact that God plans to put *everything* under His children. A summary of *everything* would include the moon, the sun, and all the galaxies of stars. It no doubt will include much more, of which we know nothing at present.

2:9a ... following His death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven.

2:10a 1 Peter 5:1,4,10. This glory is not a place,

but a state of being. It is *we* who will be glorified!

2:12a Psalm 22:22.

2:13a Isaiah 8:17.

2:13b Isaiah 8:18.

2:14a He died so that He could be our substitute, and die in our place. The great purpose for which the Redeemer came was to rescue us from the awful penalty that God has pronounced upon us because of our sin; to restore us to life and hope; to place us in a world where death is unknown.

What undertaking in all the universe has been so grand as this? And Christ has given each and every one of His followers the awesome responsibility of sharing in that great undertaking by telling the Great News to everyone everywhere! Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:9-10.

2:17a ... to make it possible for God to offer us forgiveness.

2:18a It hurts to resist temptation. Whatever the temptation, your lower self cries out to be satisfied. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Christ *was tempted in*

suffer and die in order to make amends for the sins of mankind.^a

¹⁸Because of the fact that He Himself suffered when He was tempted,^a He is able to help us as we are now being tempted.

Jesus is Greater than Moses

3 For that reason, dear brothers and sisters, who are dedicated to God and have accepted His invitation to Heaven, I want you to think very seriously about Christ Jesus^a who is both God's Messenger to us and the High Priest of our faith.

²He was faithful to God who appointed Him as High Priest, in the same way that Moses served faithfully in everything having to do with God's house.^a

³But it certainly is agreed that Christ is worthy of far greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house is worthy of far greater honor than the house.^a

⁴Every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.^a

⁵And Moses was indeed faithful in all of his responsibilities as a servant in God's house, even challenging the people to pay close attention to the message that would later be given them by Christ, the Messiah.^a

⁶But Christ is faithful as the Son in charge of God's house. And we are His house,^a if with unflinching determination, unshaken in courage, we indeed continue until the end of life to joyfully boast to others about who we now are^b and the sure hope^c we have.

every way that we are. But not once did He yield to them and sin. Christ suffered the death of self every time He resisted temptation to sin. So He's been there before us—as a human being.

So call on Him for help when you are tempted, because He knows all about your need, and He has promised to help. See 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philipians 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; James 1:12-15; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 John 1:8-9; Jude 1c, and the notes.

3:1a Every person should stand in profound amazement when he considers who Jesus really is, and all He has done for us, and what the results will be for us thruout eternity. We owe Him endless praise and thanksgiving.

3:2a Numbers 12:7.

3:3a Because Jesus, the Son of God, is even the Builder and Creator of Moses. John 1:3.

3:4a ... *who created all things thru Jesus Christ.* See 1:2; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15-16.

3:5a Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

3:6a ... *in which He lives* ... John 14:23; 1

We Must Continue to Believe and Obey Our Lord God

⁷So as the Holy Spirit warns,

When you realize that your God is speaking to you today,

⁸**don't be stubborn and refuse to obey My commands! That's the way your ancestors acted when they rebelled against Me during the time I was testing them in the wilderness.**

⁹**They, instead, put Me on trial and put My patience to a severe test there,^a even after they had seen all the amazing things I had done for them.^b**

¹⁰**So for 40 years after that I was inflamed with anger against that entire generation. In their hearts they are always going astray, I said. They have no real interest in knowing what I want them to do.**

¹¹**In my anger I solemnly vowed, They will never enter into My rest in the land I promised them!^a**

¹²So take warning, my brothers and sisters, and make sure there isn't a heart of evil desire and doubt in any of you,^a causing you to turn back from obeying what the living God has told you to do and not do.

¹³You must continue to challenge and urgently plead with one another every day while the word today still applies to us, so that not even one of you becomes hardened^a by the treacherous siren calls of sin.

¹⁴Because we can claim we have become partakers of the great inheritance Christ has purchased for us only if we have indeed held on firmly to the original assurance^a we had, until the end of our

Corinthians 3:16.

3:6b 1 John 3:1-2.

3:6c The Greek word here, translated *confidence* in many translations, actually means *outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, outspokenness to the public, courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness*—all toward man; and *joyfulness and confidence* toward God. See Romans 10:9-10 and notes. Notice that this verse and Romans 10:9-10 hold very serious implications regarding our salvation.

3:9a ... *by not believing I was serious or capable when I commanded them to move forward and take the land* ... Numbers 13:1 to 14:23.

3:9b ... *in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the desert.*

3:7-11a Psalm 95:7-11.

3:12a ... *believing you don't need to continue to obey the Lord in order to be saved* ... Romans 2:3-8; 6:16; Hebrews 5:9. This includes the command to speak out for the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans

life here.^b

¹⁵Seriously consider that the Scripture says,
When you realize that God is speaking to you today, you must not harden your hearts as your ancestors did when they rebelled against Me.^a

¹⁶And who were the people who even heard God's voice, and still rebelled? Didn't that include all^a the people who came out of Egypt with Moses?

¹⁷And with whom was God angry for 40 years? Wasn't it with those who sinned, who finally died in the desert?

¹⁸To whom did He solemnly vow that they would not enter His place of rest? Was it not to those who had refused to obey Him?

¹⁹So we see that the reason they couldn't enter was because of their unbelief.^a

4 Although we have God's promise of rest in His Heaven, the thing that happened to those people should cause us to tremble with fear,^a when we realize that any one of you may have come short of what God requires of you to get there.^b

²The Great News about a place of rest has indeed been preached to us, just as it was to them. But the message they heard didn't do them any good, because they didn't believe.^a

³We who have truly believed^a will indeed enter into His rest. But always remember that God said this concerning Israel,

In my anger I solemnly vowed, They will never enter into My rest in the land I promised them!^b

He said this even though He had finished His work of preparing for them ever since the world was created.

⁴Moses reported somewhere about the seventh day in this way,

And God rested on the seventh day after He had

finished all of His work of creation.^a

⁵But as already quoted, God said,
Those people will never enter into My rest in the land I promised them!^a

⁶So the Scriptures plainly speak about a place of rest that is available to some, even though those to whom it was first offered weren't able to enter because of their refusal to obey God.^a

⁷But now God has given us another day when it's possible to gain entrance into His rest. King David wrote about it long after Israel rebelled in the wilderness. That day is called **today**. As already quoted, David wrote,

When you realize that God is speaking to you today, you must not harden your hearts!^a

⁸If Joshua had given the people true rest when he brought them into Israel, God would not have spoken later about another day when we could enter.

⁹So for the people of God there is a wonderful, complete rest, that is still in the future.

¹⁰And anyone who has been welcomed into God's rest in Heaven has rested from his work, just as God did from His.^a

¹¹So let us be diligent in making sure that we enter that rest.^a Let's make sure that none of us miss going there by following the example of those who disobeyed God.^b

¹²Because every word that God speaks is alive and powerful. It's cutting edges are sharper than any two-edged sword. It cuts open and lays bare your very soul and spirit, even piercing into the joints and marrow. As it does so, it reveals and examines the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³There is no created thing in all of creation that is hidden from the eyes of God. Everything lies

10:9-10) as well as obeying His commands to refrain from sin. His commands to act are just as important and binding as His commands to refrain from acting.

3:13a ... hardened to the high standards Christ has given you to live by, and thereby becoming open to the treacherous siren calls of sin.

3:14a We certainly can't have assurance that we belong to Christ if we ignore His teachings and ignore or refuse to obey Him. See 5:9.

3:14b Philippians 3:11-17.

3:15a Psalm 95:7-11.

3:16a All but two (Caleb and Joshua) rebelled. Numbers 13:1 to 14:9.

3:19a But they were believers, weren't they? What was wrong? See Appendix 228, page 490, for the answer.

4:1a Philippians 2:12.

4:1b We must realize that what God requires is genuine faith—faith that comes from the very center of your heart and soul, causing you to not only believe His promises, but also to believe and act in regard to His warnings, and to faithfully follow His instructions about how we are both to live for Him and serve Him until He takes us home. God clearly shows us here that anything less is unbelief.

4:2a ... that God could bring them to the place of rest He had promised. So they became fearful and refused to obey. Numbers 13 and 14. When a person refuses to believe God to the extent of disobeying His instructions, God's promises no longer apply to him.

4:3a Remember, to believe in Christ means to believe and obey His teachings and commands, as

bare and exposed to the eyes of the One to whom we must all give an accounting.^a

Jesus is Our Great High Priest

¹⁴And since we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who has passed thru the skies and beyond, let us take a strong and firm stand^a for what we say we believe.

¹⁵Because we don't have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was tempted in every way that we are. But not once did He yield to those temptations and sin.

¹⁶For that reason we should always come with confidence to the throne of our merciful God. Because there we will find mercy and forgiveness, and we will receive His undeserved kindness and help in our time of need.

5 Now every High Priest of Israel is selected from among men, and is appointed to represent them in their dealings with God. He offers their gifts to God, as well as their sacrifices for their sins.

²Since he himself is weak in many ways, he is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are being seduced and led astray.

³And because of his own weaknesses, he must offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

⁴But no man can take this honorable position for himself. He must be appointed by God, just as Aaron was.^a

⁵Even Christ didn't glorify Himself to the position of High Priest. But the One who appointed Him was the One who had told Him,

You are My Son. Today I have begotten You and have become Your Father.^a

well as to believe His promises.

4:3b Numbers 14:22-23; Psalm 95:11.

4:4a Genesis 2:2.

4:5a Psalm 95:11.

4:6a Some have translated this word *unbelief*, but it's *disobeyed* in the Greek. How can some people dare to take such liberties with the word of God! Even the King James translation is wrong here and in v 11.

4:7a Psalm 95:7-8.

4:10a ... *after He had finished the work of creation.* Genesis 2:1-3.

4:11a 2 Peter 1:10.

4:11b What kind of disobedience brought chaos to those people? And how does their disobedience apply to us? See Appendix 229, page 491.

⁶In another Scripture God says,

You are a Priest forever, in the same distinctive class as Melchizedek.^a

⁷When Jesus was here on earth in human form, He prayed and pleaded with loud, impassioned prayer, with tears, to the One who was able to save Him from death.^a And God granted His request because of His utter devotion to the Father.

⁸Even though He was God's Son, He still learned to be obedient by the things He suffered.

⁹And when that suffering had made Him God's perfect sacrifice, He became the source of salvation and eternal life for those who make it their sincere aim to obey Him in all things at all times.^a

¹⁰Remember that God has declared Him to be High Priest in the same distinctive class as Melchizedek.

Warning Against Falling Away

¹¹There is so much more we could say about this, but you've become sluggish and lazy in your listening, so it's hard to explain it in a way that you can understand.

¹²Because by this time, when you should be teaching others, you still need someone to explain to you all over again the simplest things about what God has said. You're still in constant need of milk instead of solid food!

¹³Anyone who can take in only milk is still a small baby, who knows nothing about the true demands and expectations of God for us.

¹⁴But solid spiritual food is for those who are spiritually mature, who have come to the place where they more fully understand the teachings of Christianity, and can accept what is true and reject what is false.

4:13a Proverbs 5:21; 15:3.

4:14a ... *by both word and action* ...

5:4a Aaron was the first High Priest of Israel.

5:5a Psalm 2:7.

5:6a Psalm 110:4.

5:7a Some believe Christ was near death in Gethsemane when He endured such intense sorrow, and that God restored Him so He would be able to complete the work of redemption on Calvary's cross.

5:9a *Obey*, present participle. In the Greek this verb now becomes an adjective, describing those who will be saved. Present tense, present continuous action. Only those who *make it their sincere aim to always obey Him* can have any assurance that they will be saved. Only obedient faith is saving faith. Selective obedience is rebellion!

6 So let's be done with constantly going over and over again the first lessons we learned about the Christian faith. Let's move on to maturity, not continually laying the foundation, only talking about the necessity of turning away from acts that lead to death, and the need for genuine faith toward God.

²And you don't need continual instructions about the various ceremonial washings practiced by the Jews,^a the laying on of hands to bless and heal, the resurrection of the dead, and judgments that are eternal.

³With God's permission, we will now move on to other things.

⁴In regard to those who once clearly understood the Great News, who accepted the heavenly gift of life and were partakers of the Holy Spirit,

⁵who have experienced comfort and peace from the word of God, and have even experienced the great powers of the age to come,

⁶and then have fallen away,^a it is impossible to bring them again to the place where they will repent. They are themselves now crucifying the Son of God all over again, and shaming Him publicly!

⁷Soil that drinks in the rain that falls on it often, and continues to produce good crops for those who have cultivated it, is blessed by God.

⁸But land that continues to produce only thorns and thistles is in danger of being rejected and cursed. It will end up being burned.

⁹But even though we are compelled to keep warning^a you in this way, we are confident that we can expect better things from you,^b dear friends—yes, things that prove you are fixed in your direction, with firm and unwavering resolve in your dedication to God.

¹⁰God isn't unfair. He won't forget how you have faithfully worked and labored for Him because of your love for Him. He knows how you have helped others who are dedicated to Him, and how you continue to do so.

¹¹But we continue to earnestly desire that every one of you continue in your diligence in living for

the Lord, so that to the very end of your life here on earth you will have every reason to be firmly persuaded that the hope you have will be fulfilled.

¹²You must not be lazy and sluggish;^a but you must follow the example of those who are indeed in the process of inheriting the promises of God thru both faith and long-suffering endurance.

The Certainty of God's Promise

¹³When God made His promise to Abraham, He made a vow to do what He had promised. And because there was no one greater to call on as a witness, He made a vow in His own name.^a

¹⁴You can be absolutely sure, He told Abraham, that in the way I am continually blessing you now, I will also bless you in the future. When I promise that you will be multiplied, you will indeed be multiplied, with great numbers of descendants.^a

¹⁵And that happened. After Abraham had patiently endured all kinds of disappointments, he finally obtained what God had promised.

¹⁶When a person makes a solemn vow, he uses the name of someone greater than himself to guarantee his promise. And the vow settles the matter.

¹⁷So when God wanted to give absolute proof to those to whom He had given the promise, that He would surely do what He had said, He solemnly vowed to keep His promise.

¹⁸So now, those of us who have run to God for safety to take hold of the hope of eternal life which He has promised us, can continue to be greatly encouraged by the fact that both God's promise and His vow are two things that cannot change, because God cannot lie.

¹⁹This sure hope we have of being saved and being with God is like an anchor for the soul. It has fastened itself both firmly and securely right into the very heart of God in Heaven.

²⁰And Jesus has gone there ahead of us^a as our High Priest forever, just like Melchizedek.

Melchizedek, a Picture of Christ

7 This Melchizedek, you see, was both king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. As

6:2a Hebrews 9:10.

6:6a Translations which include an "if" in this phrase are incorrect. There is no conditional participle in the Greek text. Sadly, this refers to persons who have actually fallen away.

6:9a The word of warning pointing to safety and completeness must be spoken in time. *A friend who wounds you because of his love for you, is a faith-*

ful friend indeed. Proverbs 27:6. Even as a doctor or dentist must at times wound you and cause much pain in order to bring healing, a true friend must at times point out error in belief or action in order to bring you healing and forgiveness from God for the sake of your eternal soul.

6:9b The writer is *confident of better things from you*, but not from *them*.

Abraham was returning from the battle in which he had defeated many kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him.

²Abraham then gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had taken in battle. First of all, Melchizedek means **king of righteousness**. He is also called **king of peace**, which is the meaning of **king of Salem**, the city of which he was king.

³There is no record of his father or mother, nor of any other ancestor. Nor is there a record of his birth or death. But just like the Son of God, he has been appointed to be a priest forever.^a

⁴Just think how great this man is, when even Abraham, our great ancestor, gave him one tenth of everything he'd taken in battle.^a

⁵Now the Law of Moses requires that the descendants of Levi, who became the priests, are to be given a tenth of all that the rest of the people earn. They are to receive this from their brothers, even though they have all descended from Abraham.

⁶But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, still received a tenth from Abraham and then blessed Abraham, who had received such amazing promises directly from God.

⁷And it's always true that the more important person blesses the one who is less important.

⁸In the one case, the tenth is given to men who die, but in regard to Melchizedek we are told that he continues to live.

⁹In a sense, even the Jewish priests who collect the tenth today, paid the tenth thru Abraham,

¹⁰because even though they weren't yet born, they were in the genes of Abraham when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹So if we could have been made perfect by means of the Jewish priesthood, under which the people received the benefits of the Law, what further need would there have been for another priest to come in the same distinctive class as Melchizedek, instead of thru Aaron?^a

¹²Also, if the priesthood has been changed, that means we must now be under a different law.

¹³Because our Lord, of whom these things are spoken, belongs to another tribe. And no one has ever officiated at the altar from that tribe.

¹⁴It's clear that our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses said nothing about men from that tribe serving as priests.

¹⁵And even greater proof that we're now under a new system is the fact that a different Person is now serving as High Priest, One who resembles Melchizedek.

¹⁶The power of His authority did not come to Him by being born into the family of a priest, as required by the Law, but because His life can never be brought to an end.

¹⁷Because thru David God declares,

You are a Priest forever, in the same distinctive class as Melchizedek.^a

¹⁸So the former arrangement given by God to Moses has now been cancelled, because it was weak, and actually useless.^a

¹⁹In fact, the Law of Moses never made anyone right with God. But now it has been replaced by a much better plan, a plan which gives us a deep assurance of an absolute and confident hope, by which we are able to come joyfully and humbly into the very presence of God.

²⁰And just think how meaningful it is that God made a vow when He declared that Jesus would be His High Priest.

²¹He never made a vow concerning any other priest. But He did make a vow when He said to His Son,

I, the Lord, have vowed, and I will not change My mind, You are a Priest forever in the same distinctive class as Melchizedek.^a

²²Because of this vow, Jesus has become the guarantee of a far better covenant agreement.

²³Under the old agreement, there were many High Priests, because death stopped them from continuing to serve.

²⁴But Jesus lives on forever, so He will never surrender His priesthood to someone else.

²⁵So for all time to come, He is able to continue saving those who are coming to God thru Him, because He will always be alive to plead for them before God.

²⁶And that's the kind of High Priest we need—One who is holy, without the slightest taint of guilt,

6:12a ... *in your desire to make real progress in your living to please the Lord and in effectively serving Him.* And this you will do if you *always keep the end results in view.*

6:13a Genesis 22:16-17.

6:14a Genesis 22:17.

6:20a ... *and is pleading our case before God* ...

7:3a Melchizedek is really a mystery. He is con-

sidered a type of Christ, and some believe He actually was the preincarnate Christ.

7:4a Genesis 14:1-20.

7:11a Aaron (of the tribe of Levi) was chosen by God to be the first High Priest of Israel.

7:18a See 10:1-4, 11.

7:17, 21a Psalm 110:4.

7:26a ... *at the very throne of God.*

unstained by sin, never joining sinners in their selfish plans, goals, or forbidden or questionable pleasures, and One who is exalted higher than the highest heavens.^a

²⁷Unlike other High Priests, He doesn't need to offer up sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people. When He offered up Himself on the cross, He offered up a sacrifice to God just once, which is of sufficient excellence and worth to rid the human race of all guilt for all time to come.

²⁸On the other hand, the Law appoints men as High Priests who are weak and sinful. But God's vow, which was made after the Law was given, appoints the Son, which gives us a perfect arrangement with a perfect High Priest forever.

Jesus Our High Priest

8 The key point of what we are saying is this: We do indeed have the High Priest about whom I've been speaking, and right now He is seated in Heaven, in the place of highest honor, at the right hand of the throne of God, the Supreme Power.

²He is serving as High Priest in the Most Holy Place in the true tabernacle in Heaven, which was erected by the Lord, not by man.

³Every High Priest is given the assignment of offering both gifts and sacrifices. So it was necessary that this One should also have something to offer.

⁴If He were on earth, there would be no way that He could be a priest, since certain men have already been appointed to offer gifts required by the Jewish Law.

⁵But they serve in a Temple that's only a model or shadow of the real Temple in Heaven. That's why Moses was given strict orders by God when he was about to build the tabernacle. God told him,

Be sure you make everything exactly like the pattern you were shown on the mountain.^a

⁶But the priestly work that Jesus has now been given to do is far superior to the work given the other priests. The covenant agreement of which He is the Mediator is also far greater than the old one, because it's based on far better promises.

⁷Now if there had been nothing wrong with the first agreement with God, there would have been

no need for a second one.

⁸But God Himself found fault with the old one, and thru Jeremiah He said,

Listen to Me, the Lord says, because the time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

⁹**It will not be like the agreement I made with their ancestors, when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. They didn't keep their part of My agreement, so I stopped taking care of them.**

¹⁰**But this is the kind of agreement I will make with the people of Israel in time to come: I will put My laws into their minds and write them upon their hearts. Then I will indeed be their God, and they will be My people.**

¹¹**None of them will then need to teach his neighbor or his brother or sister, saying, Let me tell you about the Lord, because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.**

¹²**Because I will be merciful to them in spite of all the wrong they have done, and I will no longer remember their sins nor their lawless deeds.^a**

¹³By calling this a new agreement, God made the first one obsolete. And whatever is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear.

The Old Agreement

9 Now even the first agreement had regulations as to how to worship, and an earthly building for worship.

²Because an elaborate tent^a was constructed, with two rooms. In the first room were the lampstand and a table with loaves of bread on it that were dedicated to God. This room was called the Holy Place.

³Behind a large, heavy curtain was a second room, called the Most Holy Place.

⁴In this room were the golden altar on which incense was burned, and the ark^a of the agreement, which was a wooden chest totally covered^b with gold. Inside the ark were the gold jar containing manna, Aaron's rod that had sprouted leaves,^c and the two tablets of stone on which God had written His Ten Commandments.

⁵Above the ark were the two cherubim^a facing each other, (representing the glory of God's presence there), with their wings meeting and over-

8:5a Exodus 25:40.

8:12a Jeremiah 31:31-34. If God will forgive Israel, won't He likewise forgive your sins if you call upon Him and surrender your will to Him so you might be born again? John 3:1-21.

9:2a Or *tabernacle*.

9:4a Exodus 25:10-22.

9:4b ... *both inside and out* ...

9:4c Numbers 16 and 17.

9:5a Figures of two angels made out of hammered gold. Exodus 25:18-20; 37:7-9.

9:8a ... *into God's presence* ...

shadowing the place of mercy. But this is not the time to go into detail about these matters.

⁶When all of these things had been arranged in this way, the priests then entered the first room every day, to minister there.

⁷But only the High Priest entered the second room. And he went there only once a year, but never without blood, which he offered to God for himself and for the people for sins they had committed in ignorance.

⁸By this arrangement, the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy Place^a had not yet been opened to the people as long as the original tent^b was God's arrangement for man to reach out to Him.

⁹But this symbolic arrangement was only for that time, because neither the gifts nor the sacrifices, which were offered repeatedly, could ever clear the conscience of the one who offered them.

¹⁰Other provisions of the agreement dealt mainly with what was lawful to eat and drink, and with various purification ceremonies. There were also regulations concerning the body, all of which were imposed on them until the time when God would open up the new way into His presence.^a

The New Agreement

¹¹But when Christ came on the scene as High Priest of the excellent plan we now have,^a He entered into a far greater and more perfect Temple^b which is not man-made—and which is not even a part of God's creation that we can presently see.

¹²And He did not bring in with Him the blood of goats and calves.^a He entered the Most Holy Place of All with His own blood. And He did this only once, which is enough for all time to come. By doing this He ransomed us, obtaining an eternal pardon from God for us.^b

¹³Under the Jewish Law, people who become unclean for various reasons are not fit to worship God. But they will be considered clean, if they are sprinkled with the blood of sacrificed bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer.^a

¹⁴But think of how much more is accomplished

by the blood that Christ shed for you! Thru the eternal Spirit He offered Himself to God as a blameless sacrifice without blemish. So now He is able to thoroughly cleanse your conscience from the things you have done that lead to death, so that you may now serve the everliving God!

¹⁵That's why He is the One who is now able to successfully plead for us before God under the new agreement. It's also by means of His death that those who accepted God's invitation to life under the first agreement are now ransomed from the penalty of their sins, and obtain the fulfillment of the promise of an eternal inheritance with God.^a

¹⁶In fact, when God made this agreement it was like making a will. And when someone writes a will, the one who makes it must die before it goes into effect.

¹⁷It becomes effective only after it can be proved that the one who made it has died. What it promises can never be claimed while the one who made it is still alive.

¹⁸That's why even the first agreement was put into effect with blood, *indicating that there had been a death.*^a

¹⁹First, Moses read out loud every commandment of the Law to all the people. Then he took the blood of bulls and goats, mixed with water, and using a sprig of hyssop plant and some bright red wool, he sprinkled it on both the book from which he had read, and on all the people.

²⁰Then he said,

This is the blood which seals the agreement that God has commanded you to obey.^a

²¹He also sprinkled blood on the tent and on everything there that was used in the worship ceremonies.

²²According to the Law, almost everything must be purified by blood. In fact, there is no forgiveness of sins unless blood has been shed.

Our Sins Can Now Be Purged by the Shed Blood of Christ's Suffering and Death For Us

²³It was necessary then that even the models of the heavenly originals should be purified by such sacrifices. But the heavenly things themselves

9:8b ... and later the Temple ...

9:10a ... by means of Jesus Christ.

9:11a Or of the good things to come. Both are true.

9:11b ... in Heaven ...

9:12a ... as a sacrifice, and to sprinkle on the mercy seat.

9:12b Psalm 103:10-12; Micah 7:18-19.

9:13a ... that's been sacrificed as a burnt offer-

ing.

9:15a So even those who believed God and sacrificed animals to Him under the old agreement are saved now by the shed blood of Jesus. These people believed and obeyed God, and God has honored their faith.

9:18a Implied.

9:20a Exodus 24:8.

must be purified by much better sacrifices than these.

²⁴That's why Christ did not go into a holy place made by human hands, one that was a mere model of the true one, but into the Most Holy Place of All, in Heaven itself. And He's there now, appearing in the very presence of God on our behalf.

²⁵That doesn't mean that Christ must offer Himself as a sacrifice over and over again, like the High Priest, who enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of an animal.

²⁶If that were the case, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But instead, He has clearly revealed Himself to us only once, in the final age of the ages, to make it possible for God to forgive us our sins^a by sacrificing Himself.

²⁷And God has determined that we mortals are to die just once. After that we must all stand before Him for judgment.^a

²⁸In the same way, God offered Christ as a sacrifice only once, to suffer and die for the sins of many. When He comes again, He will not come to deal with sin, but to finalize the salvation of all who are eagerly and patiently waiting for Him.^a

10 Actually, the Jewish Law is only a sketchy outline of the good things that were to come to us later thru Christ—not the very things themselves. Because the sacrifices under the Law, which they offer again and again, year after year, can never make those people perfect who draw near to worship God.

²If those sacrifices were effective, wouldn't they have stopped offering them? Because the wor-

shippers, having once been purified, would have felt no further guilt for their sins.

³But year after year, those sacrifices are an annual reminder to the people of their sins,

⁴because it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to remove the guilt of sins.

⁵For that reason, when Christ was about to come into the world, He said to God,

It was not Your plan or intention to be satisfied with animal sacrifices and other offerings. But You have prepared a body for Me to offer to You in sacrifice.

⁶Even whole animals burned on the altar, and other offerings offered as sacrifices for sins, gave You no satisfaction.

⁷Then I said, Look! I have come to do exactly what You want Me to do, O God, just as it is written about Me in Your Holy Book.^a

⁸Notice that He first said, "Animal sacrifices and other offerings, and even entire animals offered as burnt offerings, and other sacrifices for sin, gave You no satisfaction." (He said this even though the Law required that these sacrifices be made repeatedly.)

⁹Then He said, "Look! I have come to do exactly what You want Me to do, O God." By Christ doing what He did, God did away with the first agreement in order to firmly set up in its place the second one.

¹⁰So by God's will, we are freed from the guilt of our sins by the once-for-all-time sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

¹¹Under the old agreement, every priest stands day after day performing his religious duties and offering the same sacrifices time after time— sac-

9:26a By His sacrifice, He made it possible for God to offer us mercy. It is now both legal and right for God to forgive us, because our Creator has become one of us, and has suffered and died as a sacrifice to God because of our sins. He suffered and died in our place.

9:27a This Scripture definitely refutes the teaching of reincarnation. It very definitely states that we mortals *die just once*, and next comes *the judgment*. It's just as plain as that.

9:28a Who will be included among the saved when Christ returns? The key words here are *all who are eagerly and patiently waiting for Him*. This is another instance where the Bible teaches that the faith of one who would gain Heaven must be a faith that is vibrantly alive and active. No other faith will do.

10:7a Psalm 40:6-8. (Septuagint translation).

10:15a Jeremiah 31:31-34, just quoted in 8:8-12.

10:16a Jeremiah 31:33.

10:17a Jeremiah 31:34.

10:19a ... *and fellowship with God in praise, meditation, and petition.*

10:20a This refers to the heavy curtain hung in the Temple, separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place where God resides.

10:21a Each true follower of the Lord is a house of God, where God lives. See 3:6; John 14:21-23; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Revelation 3:20. But in this case it seems that Paul is speaking of the followers of Christ in their corporate identity as a household and family of God. See also Ephesians 2:19-22.

10:22a This refers to baptism, and what it means. See Romans 6:1-8.

10:24-25a As Christians we are to be *truly concerned about one another*. It is taken for granted that if a person is a Christian he is trusting in the Lord for the forgiveness of his sins. Our main

rifices which can never free the people from the guilt of their sins.

¹² Jesus, however, offered one sacrifice for sins, an offering that is effective forever! Then He sat down at the right hand of God.

¹³ Ever since then, He continues to wait until God will put His enemies under His power, even as a footstool under His feet.

¹⁴ By that one sacrifice, then, He has made perfect forever those who are being purified from sin.

¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also says this in the Scripture we just quoted,^a when He said,

¹⁶ **This is the kind of agreement I will make with My people in the future, the Lord says. I will put My laws upon their hearts, and I will write them upon their minds.**^a

¹⁷ Then He added,

I will no longer remember their sins nor their lawless deeds.^a

¹⁸ The point is, because ample provision has now been made for the forgiveness of sins, there is no longer any need for more sacrifices.

A Most Serious Call to Persevere

¹⁹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, with utmost confidence we are each of us now able to personally enter the Most Holy Place of All, in Heaven, because of the blood that Jesus shed for us.^a

²⁰ He dedicated a new and living way thru the curtain,^a giving His own torn body as our means of entry into the very presence of God.

²¹ We have such a great High Priest ruling over the house of God!^a

²² So let us continually draw near to God with a sincere heart, and with faith that is full of assur-

ance that our hearts have indeed been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, to cleanse us from all the evil of which our conscience convicted us, and that our bodies have been washed with pure water.^a

²³ Let us, then, without ever wavering, keep holding firmly to the hope we have, because God can be fully trusted to keep His promise.

²⁴ And we should continue to be truly concerned about one another, to help stimulate each other to show love, and to be active in doing good deeds.

²⁵ Also, don't give up meeting together with other followers of the Lord, as some are in the habit of doing. But let's continue to meet and encourage one another, and even to increase doing so as we see the awesome Day approaching.^a

²⁶ Because if we willfully make a practice of ignoring God and living in sin after taking hold of the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins!

²⁷ All that one can then look forward to is an inescapable, fearful judgment, which will be a terrifying judgment of raging fire that will continually feed upon^a the enemies of God.

²⁸ On the evidence given by two or three witnesses, anyone who refuses to obey the Law of Moses is to be put to death without mercy.^a

²⁹ What, then, about the person who has trampled under foot the Son of God, who now considers the blood of the new agreement by which he had been cleansed and purified as being worthless, thereby insulting the mercy shown him by the Holy Spirit? How much greater and more severe punishment do you suppose such a person will deserve?

³⁰ Because we know who it was who said,

It is My responsibility to inflict punishment. I will

precede our Lord's coming to reign on the earth. Certainly the signs today are many in this regard.

* * *

emphasis among fellow Christians must be to encourage each other to continue in *love* and *to be active in doing good deeds*. This is the emphasis that is needed.

We need to encourage each other to truly love our God, by emphasizing the need to spend time with Him in prayer and in reading His word. Only in this way can a follower of the Lord receive the necessary spiritual strength and challenge. Then, and only then, can any of us be effective in telling others about Him. Our *doing good deeds* should include all of our service to God and man, both in the area of the material as well as the spiritual.

But it is impossible to encourage one another in these matters unless we *get together*. Paul stresses the need for *getting together*, especially *as you see the awesome Day approaching*. He is speaking here of the Day of the Lord, the time when the earth will be judged by the Lord, which will immediately

precede our Lord's coming to reign on the earth. Certainly the signs today are many in this regard.

No doubt the day is soon coming when true Christians will not be allowed to meet together in churches. This is already true in some countries. The church began in the homes of the believers. It will no doubt return to the homes. But these home meetings can be just as precious and alive as any large church service has ever been. Maybe more so.

The Christian who stays away from the worship services of his church obviously has little interest in the Kingdom of Christ, and feels no need for spiritual encouragement. He is in the process of surrendering *the good fight that needs to be fought in living the Christian faith*. Final surrender occurs without his realizing it. The person still imagines himself to be a Christian; but he only fools himself—a subtle danger which the Bible warns

indeed repay those who are guilty.^a

And again,

The Lord will judge even His own people.^b

³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the everliving God!^a

³² But continue to remember how it was when you were first illuminated by the Great News. You stood your ground, and endured fierce opposition and suffering.

³³ There were times when you were made a public spectacle, being ridiculed and scornfully attacked with verbal abuse. You were also beaten, and persecuted in other ways. At other times you experienced further ill-treatment when you defended others who were being treated this way.

³⁴ You even stood up for me and helped me when I was in jail.^a And when your possessions were plundered and taken from you, you joyfully allowed that to happen,^b because you know that God has promised you far superior possessions in Heaven that no one can ever take from you.

³⁵ So don't ever cast aside this boldness and confidence you have in the Lord and in all that lies ahead for you. Such great rewards await you!

³⁶ But it's just as important, and in fact, it's absolutely necessary that you patiently persevere,^a so that after you have done all that God wants you to do, you may receive what He has promised.

³⁷ Because as the Scripture says,

In just a little while, the One who is coming will indeed come. He won't waste any time when it's time for Him to come.^a

³⁸ **Now the one who gains right standing with God will be made alive spiritually by the fact that he believes both what God has promised and commanded.^a But if he shrinks back, he will no longer continue in God's favor.^b**

against frequently and urgently.

Millions of "Christians", satisfied with their "Christian experience" (all in the past) and lazy and indifferent toward Christ and His Church, are in desperate need of examining themselves to see whether or not they really are in the faith. 2 Corinthians 13:5. Love for the world is the path of compromise, and it ends in disaster!

10:27a Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10b.

10:28a Deuteronomy 17:1-7.

10:30a Deuteronomy 32:35.

10:30b Deuteronomy 32:36. The mere fact that they *are* His people will not save them from punishment if they deserve it. See Ezekiel 20:37-38.

10:31a ... *to be judged by Him.*

10:34a ... *because of my witness for Christ.*

10:34b Matthew 5:11-12; Luke 6:23-24; Acts 5:41.

³⁹ But we're not among those who turn back and are destroyed,^a but of those who steadfastly believe^b and are saved.

The Honor Roll of the Faithful

11 True faith is having complete confidence in the fact that what you are hoping for will positively happen. It's being absolutely certain about things you haven't yet seen.

² That's the kind of faith by which our ancestors were able to please God.

³ It's by faith that we accept the fact that God spoke the universe into existence. So God did not make the things we now see from things that can be seen by the human eye.

⁴ With confident faith, Abel offered a sacrifice that was more pleasing to God than the sacrifice offered by Cain. By doing so, he obtained assurance that He was right with God, because God gave him proof of that by accepting his sacrifice. And what Abel did by faith continues to speak volumes, even though he's been dead now for a long time.^a

⁵ Because of the kind of faith Enoch had, God took him to Heaven without dying. The record states that he couldn't be found anywhere, because God had taken him.^a Before God took him, it was common knowledge that here was a man whose main goal in life was to please God in everything.

⁶ In fact, it's impossible to please God at all without faith.^a Anyone who comes to God must believe with absolute certainty that there is such a Being as God, and that those He rewards are those who sincerely and most diligently seek Him.^b

⁷ Noah was warned by God about things that had never happened before.^a And by faith, in deep respect for what God had told him, he built a large ship in order to save his family.^b The demonstrat-

10:36a It is certainly implied here that God's promises to the believer will not be fulfilled unless we are patient in continuing to do what God's will is for us, and unless we are patient in enduring the trials and tribulations that will come to everyone who takes a firm stand for Christ. Surely, the prospect of such great rewards should encourage each of us to steadfast endurance.

Remember the warning of our Lord when He said, *Not everyone who repeatedly calls me 'Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who practice obedience to my Father in Heaven will.* Matthew 7:21. See Colossians 1:23, and note.

10:37a Even though Christ's coming may seem long delayed, it is only a little while when compared with an endless eternity. He will soon be here. So let us hourly keep the goal in mind. We are to use

ed faith that Noah lived and preached^c served as a condemnation to the rest of the world. And by means of that obedient faith, he gained right standing with God.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed God when God told him to go out to the place which He would later on give Abraham as his own. He obeyed God and went, even though he didn't know where he was going.

⁹By faith he lived as a foreigner in the Promised Land, living in tents, as Isaac and Jacob did also, who were heirs with him. Later on, they too, received the same promise from God.

¹⁰Abraham was satisfied to live humbly in this way because he was looking forward to the great and beautiful city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.^a

¹¹It was also by faith that Sarah received strength to become pregnant and give birth to a child, even when she was far too old to have children, because she believed that God could and would do what He had promised.^a

¹²So from one man—a man who was dead as far as his being able to father children was concerned—have come as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people were still believing God's promises when they died. They hadn't yet received the fulfillment of them, but by faith they could see them happening far off in the future. They were absolutely sure of them and clung to them, and told everyone that they were foreigners and only temporary residents on planet earth.

¹⁴Now those who say such things make it very plain that they are continually seeking, by careful endeavor, to reach their real home in Heaven.^a

¹⁵It is certainly true that if they had been longing for the country they came out of, they no doubt could have found a way to get back there.

¹⁶But that wasn't what they wanted. They were longing for a much better country—one that's in the heavens. That's why God isn't ashamed to be called their God. So He has prepared a great and beautiful city for them.^a

¹⁷And when God tested Abraham, by faith he obeyed and offered up Isaac. Even after he had finally received the special son that God had promised him, he willingly began to offer him as a sacrifice^a

¹⁸—the very one of whom God had said,

It is thru Isaac that you will have the descendants I promised.^a

¹⁹He believed that God was able to raise Isaac up again even after he was dead, and in a sense, that's what happened.

²⁰By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau about their future.

²¹By faith Jacob blessed each of Joseph's two sons when he was about to die, as he leaned upon the top of his staff and worshiped God.

²²When Joseph was about to die, by faith he spoke about the time when the people of Israel would leave Egypt, and he gave instructions about what was to be done with his body at that time.

²³When Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months when they saw what an extremely beautiful child he was. They had faith in God, and weren't afraid to disobey the king's order.

²⁴When Moses had grown up, because of his faith in God's promises, he refused to be called the son of the king's daughter.^a

²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the very temporary

the brief years of our lives here for His glory, for our own preparation to meet Him, and for the task of preparing others to meet Him. *From that moment on we will be with the Lord forever!* 1 Thessalonians 4:17. But until that glorious Day, there is work to be done and a life to be lived for Christ.

10:38a See Galatians 3:11 note.

10:38b Habakkuk 2:3-4.

10:39a Revelation 14:11; 20:10,14-15.

10:39b John 8:31; Acts 14:22; Colossians 1:23.

11:4a Abel could have this kind of faith because He was evidently sacrificing what God told him to. We must likewise obey God and give Him what He requires of us.

11:5a Genesis 5:24.

11:6a ... faith in His trustworthiness, His truth, His wisdom, and His promises.

11:6b ... and let Him know in no uncertain terms how truly in earnest you really are. God is not moved by mildly interested people. Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8; James 5:16b.

11:7a And there was absolutely no evidence that they ever would happen.

11:7b Genesis 6:1 to 8:22.

11:7c 2 Peter 2:5.

11:10a Revelation 21:9 to 22:5.

11:11a Genesis 18:1-14; 21:1-2.

11:14a 2 Peter 1:10-11.

11:16a Revelation 21:2-22:5.

11:17a ... when God stopped him. Genesis 22:1-19. The word *offer* here is in the imperfect tense, which shows action in process, but not completed.

11:18a Genesis 21:12.

11:24a This happened when he was 40 years of

pleasures of sin.

²⁶Because of his staunch belief in the promised Messiah, he looked upon being publicly cursed and criticized as being of far greater value than all the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking forward to the indescribable rewards.^a God has promised those who are faithful to Him.

²⁷When Moses finally led the people of God out of Egypt, he did so by faith. He had no fear of what the angry king could do to him.^a By faith he conquered every obstacle, because he knew that the God he could not see was right there with him.

²⁸By faith he followed God's instructions about the Passover and the sprinkling of blood on the doorframes, so that the angel who was to destroy the firstborn children of Egypt would not destroy the firstborn children in the families of Israel.^a

²⁹By faith the people of Israel trusted God and walked thru the Red Sea as easily as if they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried it, they were all drowned.

³⁰Because of their faith in what God would do, the walls of Jericho came down after the people had marched around them for seven days.

³¹By faith the harlot Rahab didn't die with those in her city who refused to obey God, because she welcomed and helped the Israeli spies.^a

³²What more needs to be said! I don't have time to write about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.

³³Thru faith they conquered kingdoms. By doing what was right and pleasing to God, they reached out and gained possession of what God had promised them.

³⁴They shut the mouths of hungry lions,^a quenched the power of raging flames,^b and escaped being killed by the swords of their enemies. Although they were weak, God enabled them to perform exploits that called for power way beyond their own strength. They became brave and powerful in battle, turning the foreign invad-

ing armies to flight.

³⁵Thru the faith of their prophets, women received their dead loved ones raised back to life.

Other men of God were severely tortured, choosing to suffer and die rather than disobey God in order to be free. They believed that by remaining faithful to God, they would be raised to a much better life later on.

³⁶Some were scornfully treated with contempt and severely whipped. Others were chained in jail.

³⁷Still others were killed by a barrage of stones being hurled at them. Others were sawed in two, and some were tempted by their captors to renounce their faith, and when they refused, they were put to death by the sword. Some went about their ministry in skins of sheep and goats, being destitute, persecuted, and mistreated.

³⁸The world wasn't worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and sought shelter in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹But even though all of these gained God's approval because of their genuine faith, they did not in their lifetime receive what God had promised.

⁴⁰Because God was looking ahead and seeing something far better happening for all of us. For that reason, those people of faith couldn't be made perfect before the event which also now makes us perfect.^a

Follow Jesus' Example

12 So because we are surrounded by such a great cloud of faithful witnesses,^a let us also throw aside all the dead weight that keeps holding us back. We must especially do so with whatever sin it is that would so easily get us all entangled and trip us up. Let us give our full and undivided attention to the race marked out for us, running hard, with strong determination and unyielding endurance, until we finally reach the finish line.

age.

11:26a Psalm 16:11.

11:27a He did fear the anger of the king the first time he left Egypt. Exodus 2:11-15.

11:28a Exodus 12:1-32.

11:31a The others in Jericho knew as much about the great deliverance of Israel from Egypt as Rahab did, but they loved their sin and didn't want to acknowledge or obey God. Rahab believed and *obeyed* by helping the two spies. Joshua 2:1-24; 6:22-23.

11:34a Daniel 6:1-28.

11:34b Daniel 3:1-30.

11:40a We can all now be brought into perfect relationship with God, because of the suffering and death that Jesus the Son of God endured for us.

12:1a ... *those mentioned above, and multitudes of others who are watching us from Heaven,*...

12:2a Primary meaning of the word is *leader, ruler, prince*. Secondary meaning, *one who begins something*, as first in a series, and thus supplies the power. Third meaning is *originator, founder*. So the evident meaning here is, Jesus is the *first* and the *last* as an example of faith, or of One who had total confidence in God.

²And we must constantly keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, because He's our Leader,^a and the Perfecter of our faith—the Supreme Example of a Man of faith, who finished His race in a blaze of glory! As He looked ahead and saw the joy that was waiting for Him at the end of His race, He willingly endured being nailed to a cross, and utterly despised all the shame connected with it. Now He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God!

³You also need to constantly remember how He put up with so much hatred from sinners, so that you won't get discouraged and give up.

⁴None of you have yet struggled in your fight against sin to the extent of being killed!

⁵Or have you forgotten the encouraging words that God speaks to you as His children?

My child, don't think of the punishments that come from the Lord as being of little value. And don't get discouraged when He scolds you.

⁶Because the Lord corrects those He loves. He severely whips^a everyone He receives as His child.^b

⁷You are to patiently endure hardship as being good discipline. God is dealing with you as any father should deal with his own child. Because what child is there who isn't disciplined and corrected by a loving father?

⁸In fact, if you are not punished when you do wrong (because God does discipline all His children when they disobey Him), then you are illegitimate, and not a child of God at all.^a

⁹Then too, we respected our human fathers when they corrected us. Should we not then in a much greater way be in submission to the One who in the full and supreme sense is our Father, and as a result live eternally?

¹⁰Our human fathers punished us in the way they thought best for us, for our good in this brief life. But God punishes us for our eternal good, so that we may finally become just like Him in nature and character.

¹¹No punishment is a pleasant experience while it's taking place. On the contrary, it's a miserable experience. But afterwards, the one who has been trained by it reaps the profitable reward of knowing how to live in a way that is both right and pleasing to God.

Get Going for God!

¹²So lift up those hands that have been hanging down, unused, and stretch those feeble, shaking knees!

¹³Clear all that rubbish out of the pathway on which you're walking, so you won't stumble and also cause those who are weak to stumble because of you! Then they may experience healing instead.

¹⁴Be diligent in trying to live at peace with everyone. But especially continue to work at living a holy life, because unless you are sincerely aiming to please God in all things, you will not be with Him in Heaven.^a

¹⁵Always be continually diligent as guardians of each other, so that none of you fall short of receiving God's wonderful, undeserved mercy. And be most careful to make sure that no one be allowed to bring in poisonous teachings that would allow one to lead an unholy life. This could cause the corruption and downfall of many.^a

¹⁶Watch out that no one becomes involved in sexual sin^a or becomes a sensuous person like Esau, who sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son for a single meal.

¹⁷Afterwards, as you know, when he wanted to receive his father's blessing, he was rejected. He couldn't get his father to change his mind even though he tried desperately to do so, with tears.

¹⁸But you don't have to approach God as the Israelites did, coming to the mountain that could be seen and touched, a mountain of blazing fire, darkness, gloom, and storm.

¹⁹All of this, together with the loud, and ever louder sound of the trumpet and the voice of com-

He occupied in this, as in all other things, the pre-eminence, and He is the most complete model that can be placed before us. The apostle had not counted Him among those who had been distinguished for their faith (ch 11), but he now refers to Him as above them all—as a case that deserved to stand by itself.—From *Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich*; and *Barnes Notes*.

Christ has not *given us our faith*, as some translations imply here. All thru the Gospels Christ teaches that we are the ones who must exercise faith and believe. See Ephesians 2:8 note.

12:6a ... *for the purpose of correction* ...

12:6b Proverbs 3:11-12.

12:8a See Colossians 3:6 and note.

12:14a This verse likewise has to do with prophecy because it deals with a very necessary essential for one who wants to receive eternal life and be with God. You will have no part in all the wonderful future that God has planned for His own *unless you are living a holy life*. Here again we have those who claim that we can have no holiness apart from Christ. They say that all the holiness we have is the holiness of Christ. So they claim it is all of faith—all of grace. But in this regard we would encourage you to read the notes on Philipians 3:9.

mand, caused those who heard it to beg Moses to ask God not to speak to them again.

²⁰They were completely intimidated by God's command that,

If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned or killed with an arrow.^a

²¹The sight was so terrifying that even Moses said,

I was extremely afraid, and trembling.^a

²²Instead, you have now come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where myriads of angels are joyfully gathered.

²³You've come to the joyful general assembly of all who have a very special place in God's heart,^a whose names are written in Heaven. You've come to God, the Judge of all people, and to the dwelling place of the spirits of good people who have now been made perfect.

²⁴You've come to Jesus, the One who is able to negotiate a renewed friendship between us and God by means of the brand new agreement, whose sprinkled blood has a better message than the blood of Abel.^a

²⁵So make sure that you don't refuse to listen to the One^a who is now speaking to you. Because if those who ignored the words of Moses, God's representative on earth, didn't escape judgment, how much greater is the certainty that we will not escape if we turn away from the One^a who came from Heaven to speak to us.

²⁶God's voice shook the earth when He spoke at Mount Sinai, but now He has promised,

One more time I will shake the earth in a most

powerful way, and not only the earth but the heavens too.^a

²⁷Now the words **one more time** refer to the time when the things that can be shaken apart—things created—will be done away with, so that only the things that cannot be shaken apart will remain.

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us show our gratitude by diligently serving God in a way that's altogether pleasing to Him. And let us do so with fearful reverence.^a

²⁹Because^a our God is indeed an all consuming fire!^b

13 Keep loving one another as brothers and sisters.

²And don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers. Some thru their hospitality have welcomed angels without even knowing it.

³Remember those in jail as if you were confined in jail with them. And remember those being mistreated as if you were suffering with them.

⁴Marriage is to be highly regarded in every respect, and husbands and wives must remain loyally faithful to each other. God will definitely judge adulterers and those who are in any way sexually immoral.^a

⁵Don't allow the love of money to get a grip on you. Be content with what you have. Always remember that God has promised,

There is no possibility whatever that I will ever leave you, nor that I will ever abandon you.^a

⁶So with courage and confidence we are always

In regard to *justification*, we are justified (considered without fault by God) when we turn from our sinning and accept His forgiveness for our sins because of the sin-offering He made for us, when Christ, His incomparable Son, died on the cross to atone for our sins.

Two kinds of holiness are needed to gain eternal life—credited, or imputed holiness, thru the death of Jesus on the cross (enabling God to forgive the sins of all who come to Him in faith and true repentance), and personal holiness. See Philippians 2:12 and 13, and the notes.

* * *

"*Everyone* will see God in the day of Judgment (Revelation 1:7.), but to 'see' one is often used in the sense of being with one, living with one, enjoying one. The principle stated here is one which is never departed from in Scripture. Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8,27.

"No one has ever been admitted to Heaven in his sins, nor is it desirable that anyone ever should be.

Just as you exclude certain undesirable people from your home, and as your city and state confine thieves, murderers, etc. in prison, God will exclude from Heaven all who have refused to obey His laws and live a righteous life.

"How deeply concerned we should then be to have this holiness which is indispensable to salvation! Let's not fool ourselves. We may have many things—which are in themselves desirable—but without this *one* thing we shall never see the Lord in peace."—*Barnes' Notes*. See also Acts 20:20-21 note, and Revelation 20:6.

12:15a The writer here refers to Deuteronomy 29:18-29. He who accepts false teaching without vigorously protesting is really cooperating in the preaching and teaching of it!

12:16a See Ephesians 5:3 note.

12:20a Exodus 19:10-25.

12:21a Deuteronomy 9:19.

12:23a Literally *the assembly of God's firstborn*—those who will share His glory.

able to say,

The Lord is my helper!

So why should I be afraid of what mere mortals can do to me?^a

⁷Keep thinking about those who lead you and have faithfully taught you the word of God. Carefully consider what the end result will be for those who live the way they live. Imitate their kind of faith.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same today as He was in ages past, and He will forever be the same.

⁹Don't be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings, because it's a beautiful and morally excellent truth that your heart receives forgiveness and strength by trusting in God's undeserved mercy, not by avoiding certain foods. Obeying such rules never gave anyone power over sin.

¹⁰We too have an altar,^a but those who still rely on the sacrifices of the Jewish Law cannot be partakers of its benefits.

¹¹The Jewish High Priest carries the blood of the sacrificed animals into the Most Holy Place to offer it as a sacrifice for sins. But the bodies of the animals are burned outside the camp.

¹²For this reason, Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to purify the people with His own blood.

¹³So let us always be out there with Him, outside the camp, sharing the abuse and shame He suffered!

¹⁴Because we don't have any city here that will last very long, but we earnestly and continually

pursue a home in the one that's coming.^a

¹⁵So for that reason, let us continually offer up to God, thru Jesus, a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of our lips being a thank offering to the name of our God.

¹⁶But on the other hand, don't forget to do good to others, and share what you have with those in need. God is truly pleased with such sacrifices.

¹⁷Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they ask you to do,^a because they are always watching out for your souls, as those who must give an accounting before God.^b Make it possible for them to talk to God about you with joy, not with sadness. A negative report from them would certainly not do you any good!

¹⁸Keep on praying for us. We are sure that our conscience is clear, because we try to do what's right at all times.

¹⁹I ask that you pray especially that I may be restored to you sooner than I would be under normal circumstances.

²⁰Now may God, the source of all peace, equip you with every good thing you need in order to do His will.

²¹It is He who brought our Lord Jesus back from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, who by His blood established the everlasting agreement. May He continue to accomplish in and thru you, thru the power of Jesus Christ, all that is pleasing to Him—to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen!

²²My brothers and sisters, I trust you will consid-

12:24a The blood of Jesus offers forgiveness, while the blood of Abel (Genesis 4:10) cried out for revenge.

12:25a God is now speaking to us thru His Son, Jesus. Those who turn away from Him, or lightly regard what He says, or obey only what they wish to obey, will have to deal with an angry God at the judgment. There will be no escape, no changing of God's mind then. *Be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing!* 2 Peter 1:10.

12:26a Isaiah 13:13-14; Haggai 2:6; Matthew 24:7-8,29; Revelation 6:12-17; 11:13; 16:18.

12:28a ... *with deep concern as to what God's judgment will be as He considers how we have served Him.*

12:29a ... *besides being a God of mercy and grace ...*

12:29b The last warning here indicates that God will judge and *consume* everything and everyone who offends. If we know the truth, and only half-heartedly obey God's commands for this day, how

can we expect to escape? So we repeat the warning and challenge of v 28, that you give serious attention *to serve God in a way that's pleasing to Him*, and that you *do so with fearful reverence*.

13:4a If you are unfaithful in your marriage, you can be sure that God will judge you, even if no one else does. You will pay a terrible price for unfaithfulness. Galatians 6:7.

13:5a Deuteronomy 31:6,8; Joshua 1:5; Psalm 118:6; Matthew 28:20; John 14:23.

13:6a Psalm 118:6-7.

13:10a The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

13:14a Revelation 21:9 to 22:5.

13:17a ... *as long as what they ask you to do is God-honoring and in obedience to the Lord and His word.*

13:17b ... *for the truthfulness of what they taught you, and the zeal with which they taught.*

If any of the sheep are lost, he must give an accounting to the Chief Shepherd, and prove that the blame did not lie with him.

er carefully the words of instruction I've written you. I have tried to be as brief as possible in what I've said.

²³Did you know that our brother Timothy has been set free? If he comes here soon, I'll visit you together with him.

²⁴We send our greetings to all who are leaders, and to all of you there who love the Lord. The Lord's followers here in Italy send you their greetings.

²⁵May God's rich blessings be showered upon all of you. So be it.

So because we are surrounded by such a great cloud of faithful witnesses, let us also throw aside all the dead weight that keeps holding us back. We must especially do so with whatever sin it is that would so easily get us all entangled and trip us up. Let us give our full and undivided attention to the race marked out for us, running hard, with strong determination and unyielding endurance, until we finally reach the finish line.

²And we must constantly keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, because He's our Leader, and the Perfecter of our faith—the Supreme Example of a Man of faith, who finished His race in a blaze of glory! As He looked ahead and saw the joy that was waiting for Him at the end of His race, He willingly endured being nailed to a cross, and utterly despised all the shame connected with it. Now He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God!

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¹²So lift up those hands that have been hanging down, unused, and stretch those feeble, shaking knees!

¹³Clear out all that rubbish from the pathway on which you are walking, so you won't stumble and also cause those who are weak to stumble because of you! Then they may experience healing instead.

¹⁴Be diligent in trying to live at peace with everyone. But especially continue to work at living a holy life, because unless you are sincerely aiming to please God in all things, you will not be with Him in Heaven.

—Hebrews 12:1-3, 12-14