

Hebrews

Chapter 1 – The Son is Superior

I. Introduction to the course

A. The course content

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2. Jesus Made Like His Brothers – Chapter 2 –
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8. The High Priest of the New Covenant – Chapter 8-9:5 –
9. Mediator of the Covenant – Chapter 9:6-28 –
10. Christ's Sacrifice and Our Response – Chapter 10 –
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12. God's Disciplines and Warnings – Chapter 12 –
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B. What we will try to learn

1. The role of the high priest in Israel.
2. The nature of Jesus Christ.
3. How Jesus became our high priest.
4. God's view of faith and discipline.

C. How to prepare for each session

1. Read the assigned chapters from the Bible.
2. Answer the questions on the handouts.
3. Consider the issues that are being raised by the readings.

II. Introduction to the book of Hebrews

A. Origin

1. Author – Unknown, but most likely a member of Paul's missionary team, such as Apollos, Barnabus or Aquila.
2. Audience – Believers, particularly Jews, with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament.
3. Date – Probably between 64 AD (beginning of Nero's persecution of Christians) and 70 AD (when Jerusalem fell).
4. Purpose – To strengthen those who were being attracted back to Judaism.

B. Use of Old Testament Scriptures is extensive in Hebrews.

1. Quotation {Hebrews 1:8-9 = Psalm 45:6-7}
2. History {Hebrews 11:3-22 = Genesis 4-50}
3. Symbolism {Hebrews 7:1 = Genesis 14:18}
4. Theology {Hebrews 9:11-28 = Leviticus 16}

C. Who were the Hebrews?

1. People of Palestine {*"For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."* Genesis 40:15}
2. Shepherds/nomads {*They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.* Genesis 43:32}
3. God's chosen people {*Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."* Exodus 5:3}
4. People of the Law {*"circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee."* Philippians 3:5}

III. Nature of God's Son

A. Christ is Superior in His Person

^{1:1} Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. ⁴ So He become as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

1. Contrast of Law and Gospel - **1:1-2a**

There is a great contrast between the LORD speaking His Law to the children of Israel, because as children they were not yet ready for the fulfillment of the His promise, and His manifesting the Gospel directly through His Son. {*And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD."* Num. 12:6-8; *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* John 1:17}

2. At the end He is heir. - **1:2b**

An heir is the one to whom everyone who wants to benefit from an estate (a kingdom) must give his attention. {*"The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand."* John 3:35}

3. In the beginning He is the creator. - **1:2c**
The fact that the Son gets everything in the end should not be surprising because He made everything in the beginning. He was not a spectator, not someone who came along later, but He was there and involved at the beginning of time. *{For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. Colossians 1: 16}*
4. Radiance of God's glory - **1:3a**
To be the radiance of God's Glory, one must be God, because the Lord dwells in unapproachable glory. *{And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14}*
5. Exact representation of His being. - **1:3b**
Jesus' claim that He was one with the Father was hard for His disciples to accept. They could only think of God in terms of Mount Sinai and could not see this awesome power when they looked at Jesus. They did not understand that the things of God are usually hidden from sight. *{Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" John 14:9}*
6. Sustains all things by His powerful word. - **1:3c**
The Son, who is the subject of this chapter, has power over all things. Therefore, one is on the right team when you are on His team. This will be the key to addressing the persecution issue. *{He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17}*
7. Provides purification for sin. - **1:3d**
Every Jew knew from Leviticus 17:11 that blood was required to purify from sin. To make purification, then, Jesus had to do it through the shedding of blood. *{But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7}*
8. Sat down at the right hand of Majesty in heaven. - **1:3e**
Even John Calvin, who believed that after His ascent into heaven Jesus's human nature was at a localized place, understood that the "right hand" of God was the position of absolute power. Having completed His work on Earth, Jesus moved back to the realms of heavenly power. *{Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. Ephesians. 1:18-21}*
9. What is the superior name of the Son? - **1:4**
The name of the Son is LORD of Lords and King of Kings. It is the name of the LORD God Himself. There can be none higher. Likewise His position is above everything that exists in the whole creation. *{Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11}*

B. Christ is the “first born”

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?* {Psalm 2:7} *Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?* {2 Samuel 7:14}

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”* {Psalm 97:7}

1. Why is God “father” to the Son but not to his messengers? - **1:5**

According to Hebrew tradition the oldest son is equivalent to his father. The reason is that when his father dies, he will be the head of the family in his father’s place. Who could replace God except God? The Son is therefore God like His Father. When Jesus claimed to be God’s son to the Jewish leaders, they wanted to stone Him, for they knew precisely what He meant.

{I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” Psalm 2:7-8}

2. The LORD and the firstborn. - **1:6**

In these verses God is not saying that His son was created, but that His Son held the position of firstborn among those who would dwell in heaven. The firstborn has the kingdom of heaven by right; the rest are there by God’s grace. *{For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* Romans 8:29; *“If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn, but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the first fruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.”* Deuteronomy 21:15-17}

C. Comparison with angels/messengers - chiasmus

⁷ *Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”* {Psalm 104:4} ⁸ *But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.* ⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”* {Psalm 45:6-7}.... ¹³ *And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?* {Psalm 110:1} ¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

1. What are the angels? - **1:7 & 1:14**

The word for angel and messenger in Hebrew (מַלְאָךְ) and in Greek (ἄγγελος) is the same. Sometimes this word is used for earthly agents, such as the prophets, who carry a message from God to a person or people. Sometimes this word is used for non-human agents of God, whom we call in English angels. Context determines the meaning. *{He makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.* Psalm 104:4; *The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.* Genesis 19:1a}

2. How is the Son contrasted to the angels? - **1:8-9**

The Son is called God, and He is anointed with the Holy Spirit. An anointed one is a messiah (מָשִׁיחַ) whom God gives a special mission. Isaiah helps us to understand what the Son's anointing is and for what purpose He was anointed. {*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. Psalm 45:6-7; The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. Isaiah 61:1-2*}

3. What is righteousness? - **1:8-9**

Righteousness is behavior that is in total conformity to God's will. Only the righteous will be saved. Because mankind has sinned, no one can live righteously. Only by getting the foreign righteousness which Christ earned by perfect obedience to God's Law can anyone be saved. {*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:21-24*}

4. Why is not even the most powerful angel comparable to the Son? - **1:13**

Angels are created beings. As such they are weaker than their creator, who actively gives them all the power that they have. The Son has the power of God because He was begotten of the essence of God, which is not divisible. {*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!" Psalm 110:1-2*}

D. Comparison with creation

¹⁰ And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." {Psalm 102:26-27}

1. Where did the heavens and the earth come from? - **1:10**

They were created by the LORD God, and the Son was involved in the creation. {*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1; In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3*}

2. What will happen to the world? - **1:11-12**

The heaven and the earth, as they exist, will be destroyed by fire, but the promises of the LORD will endure. {*"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* Matthew 24:35; see 2 Peter 3:10-13}

3. What is the nature of the Son? - **1:11-12**

He is eternal. Everything on the earth will change and grow old, but He will not change, and He will have the glory of God throughout eternity. *{But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18}*

Reading for next time: Exodus 19-24

Chapter 1 – The Son is Superior

1. Who were the Hebrews?
2. Why is the Son superior – by right?
3. Why is the Son superior – by deed?
4. What does Christ's being the firstborn mean?
5. What is chiasmus?
6. Contrast the Son and the angels.
7. What one word might be used to describe the author's quotation concerning creation?
8. What is the point of this chapter?

Hebrews' Supplement

Chapter 1 – Ceremonial Cleanliness Requirements Overview

- I. Issues surrounding ceremonial cleanness
 - A. Personal
 - 1. Birth
 - 2. Contagious Disease
 - 3. Bodily fluids
 - a. Human blood (regardless of source)
 - b. Drainage of any sort
 - c. Menstruation
 - d. Semen discharges
 - 4. Death
 - B. Mold and corrosion
 - C. Eating unclean animals
 - D. Contact with dead (non-butchered) animals
 - E. Contact with unclean people
 - F. Contact with anything involved with pagan worship
- II. Cleaning
 - A. Water
 - B. Red Heifer
 - C. Quarantine
 - D. Offering
 - E. Fire and Burning
 - F. Breaking and discarding
 - G. Burial

Hebrews

Chapter 2 – Jesus Made Like His Brothers

IV. Warning to Pay Attention

A. Importance of the message

^{2:1} Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

1. Do not drift away. - 2:1

The audience to whom the letter was addressed contained those who were troubled by the persecution that had befallen them. They were having second thoughts about having left Judaism with its legal status for a religion that was regarded as a danger to the state. They were forgetting what the powerful message was that had brought them to the Christian faith. They were losing their foundation in the faith and starting to drift. They needed a wakeup call. *{Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:11-12; compare “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” Matthew 21:33-41}*

2. Lesser message of messengers is binding and enforced. - 2:2

The Old Covenant had been put in place by messengers that the LORD had sent, beginning with Moses, because the Israelites feared to hear the voice of the LORD at Sinai. Even though the people heard the words of the Law from Moses and the Prophets, the LORD prescribed severe penalties for those who disobeyed them. *{Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Galatians 3:19}*

3. Greater message is directly from the LORD. - 2:3

The message of the New Covenant came from Jesus Christ, who is the LORD God Himself. If punishment would come to those who ignored a covenant presented by messengers, would not ignoring God Himself bring greater punishment? *{From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17}*

B. Signs and wonders. - 2:4

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into Canaan, the miracles which God had worked for their deliverance from Egypt soon ceased, except for occasional miracles done by the prophets. When Jesus came, miracles again appeared in profusion. Moreover, after Jesus visibly departed the world, the Holy Spirit came upon them in a manner that had not been seen since the time of Moses. All of this was reported by numerous witnesses who had seen these things. {“*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.*” Acts 2:22}

V. Jesus made like his brothers

A. Man’s position versus the angels

⁵For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?” ⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor; ⁸putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

1. Angels will not rule heaven. - 2:5

We are told that angels are ministering spirits {Psalm 103:20-21}, as they were never given dominion over anything {Genesis 1:28}. Perhaps this is even the reason Satan rebelled when he realized the LORD’s highest favor rested on man and not on His angels. In redeeming mankind, the LORD promised to restore the situation that had existed immediately after creation, when man ruled the world as the LORD’s agent. While He left the fallen angels with no help, He became man to redeem man. What an incredible honor! {*But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* 2 Peter 3:13}

2. Man is lower than the angels. - 2:6-7a

In creating man, the LORD had made him less powerful than the angels, but He had given him a dominion over a significant part of creation, which the angels lacked. When one considers how relatively small and weak people are, this is truly amazing. How can we understand such an act of the LORD? {*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings ...* Psalm 8:3-5a}

3. But man will still be ruler over all. - 2:7b-8

When man sinned, He lost the LORD’s favor, and his dominion over the earth ceased. He now had to compete with God’s other creatures. To regain his position, man needed to return to his original relationship with God. Man, however, had no way of accomplishing this. {*... and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the*

- seas. Psalm 8:5b-8; And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23}*
4. Jesus placed in man's shoes. - **2:9**
 The LORD's Old Covenant could not solve man's problem. God promised him only part of the earth, the land of Canaan, if he would obey a large group of commandments and ordinances. It should have been obvious to man that he couldn't come close to keeping the commandments and that the part of the earth he received was not that great. He should have realized he was still in the LORD's doghouse. Therefore, the LORD did what only He could have done. He put His Son in the position in which He had originally placed man, a little lower than the angels, so that He might reestablish man's position. *{Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:5-7; Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. Romans 5:18-19}*

B. Jesus as the means for human salvation

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." ... ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

1. Perfected through suffering. - **2:10, 18**
 Man was not created to suffer and die. Man was created to live on the plateau in the sun. But man slid into a deep pit and could not escape. To get out required more suffering than man could bear. As a result, someone had to endure the agony of climbing out the pit and securing a position on the plateau from which he could pull man out of the pit. Only God could perform this act, and it would only be possible if He became man. Through His suffering He gained the perfection that man needed to stand before God again on the plateau. Because God's Son had to endure what men must endure, He is able to help men in their struggles with temptation. *{And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.' " Luke 13:32-33}*
2. Members of the same family. - **2:11**
 By becoming man, God's Son entered into the human family. He became a person just as we are people. As a human, He had to face the same problems that all humans have to face. But by becoming our brother and taking our place before God's judgment, He earned for us the right to be His brothers and sisters before His heavenly Father. Since His Father is the owner and ruler of all that exists, He too is ruler in that kingdom. As brothers and sisters of the king, we also have places of prominence as rulers in His kingdom. *{Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." Matthew 28:10}*

3. God proclaims brotherhood. - **2:12-13**

Even though we are sinners and weak in body and soul, He is willing to call us His brethren and to identify even with the most lowly of us. We can therefore be confident that He will not desert us. If He was willing to identify with us while we were yet sinners, how much more is He willing to identify with us now that He has cleansed us from our sins. *{I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you. Psalm 22:22}*

C. Jesus human in every way

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1. Destroying death through death. - **2:14**

The LORD did not create mankind to die. There was no death in the six days of creation. The threat of death was intended to deter mankind from making the decision to rebel against God. Moreover, God gave man an easy commandment to obey to make him realize that obeying the LORD was easy and painless. Death is separation, and the LORD never wanted to be separated from His most favored creature. It was the devil, not God, who caused man's separation from God and, therefore, his spiritual death. Physical death naturally followed and eventually eternal death, if God had not intervened. To destroy the separation, the Son had to become man. As man, God's Son was no longer separated from man, but one with him. He was of the same flesh and blood. *{And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14; When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57}*

2. Freeing the captives. - **2:15**

Naturally, man fears death. The soul fears the loss of the body which sustains it. It fears the eternal separation from the LORD. By becoming man, God started the process of bridging the separation. He completed the process by defeating Satan and removing the wedge of separation that Satan had driven between the human race and the LORD. He destroyed death by eliminating the separation between God and man through His body. *{For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:15-17}*

3. Object of Jesus' mission. - **2:16**

Man, man and only man is the object of the LORD's great plan. Man is so highly favored above all of the rest of God's creation, that the rest of the physical creation will be sacrificed for the good of man at the end of time. It has been contaminated by sin and must be destroyed as unclean things under the Old Covenant frequently had to be destroyed. Like man, the angels will not be destroyed, but they will be rewarded or punished based on their faithfulness, without any effort of the part of God to save them. *{And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. Luke 1:69-75}*

4. Both high priest and offering. - **2:17**

A high priest has to go before the LORD on behalf of his people. He must be like them because he has to bear their sins upon his own body. He becomes the sole representative of his people. To be that representative, God's Son had to become Jesus, the God-man, so that He would be like us to make the offering for us, carrying our sins before God. Unlike other high priests, however, He did not have to first atone for His own sins because He had none, and therefore could directly approach the throne of the LORD. *{Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded." Leviticus 9:7 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our grieves and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:2-5}*

Reading for next time: Exodus 1-4; Deuteronomy 31-34

Chapter 2 – Jesus Made Like His Brothers

1. Why must we give such special attention to the New Testament message?
2. What was the role of miracles in Jesus' ministry?
3. In what way is man inherently inferior to the angels?
4. In what way was man superior to the angels?
5. What happened to man's position because of sin?
6. Why did the Son of God need to become man in the strategic sense?
7. Why was it necessary for the Christ to suffer?
8. What is the role of the high priest?

Hebrews' Supplement

Chapter 2 – Jesus Made Like His Brothers (the Covenant People)

- I. Preparations to meet the LORD (Exodus 19:1-25)
 - A. Personal cleanliness
 - B. Do not come too close
 - C. Display of physical power
- II. Moral Law (Exodus 20:1-21)
 - A. God speaks
 - B. The people tremble
- III. Worship
 - A. Idols and Altars (Exodus 20:22-26)
 - B. Sabbath Laws (Exodus 23:10-13)
 - C. Annual Festivals (Exodus 23:14-19)
- IV. Living Together
 - A. Hebrew Servants (Exodus 21:2-11)
 - B. Personal Injuries (Exodus 21:12-35)
 - C. Protection of Property (Exodus 22:1-15)
 - D. Social Responsibility (Exodus 22:16-31)
 - E. Justice and Mercy (Exodus 23:1-195)
- V. The Land (Exodus 23:20-33)
 - A. The LORD will lead the fight
 - B. Faithful to covenant will be rewarded with physical blessings
- VI. The Covenant (Exodus 24:1-18)
 - A. Covenant confirmed by people and by blood
 - B. Visits with the LORD

Hebrews

Chapter 3 – Jesus Greater than Moses

VI. Jesus and Moses

^{2:1} Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

A. Focus on Jesus

1. Keep your attention on Jesus. - **3:1**

If one believes the message of the Gospel, then one has to focus on Jesus who is the center of the Gospel message. He is both the one sent (“the apostle”) to preach the Gospel, and He is also the high priest who effected the Gospel message. Without Him there is no message. His role is pivotal to salvation, so we dare not turn our attention from Him if we wish to be saved. *{And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19}*

2. Jesus and Moses were both faithful. - **3:2**

Jesus and Moses were both faithful servants of the LORD God Almighty in all the duties they were given to carry out. The writer readily acknowledges this. Yet before one concludes that following either one is therefore of equal value, there is more that needs to be considered. *{And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8; Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. Numbers 12:7}*

³ For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. ⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

B. Son versus servant

1. Builder is greater than the building. - **3:3-4**

The people of the LORD, Israel in the Old Testament and the Christians in the New Testament, are the house (or temple) of God. Moses was the leader of the people of the LORD in the Old Testament through whom God gave His instructions. Yet Moses was part of the house of Israel. Jesus, on the other hand, was Himself the LORD who had built the house of God, even when He appeared in the house. As a result, as the builder He was more important to the house than any other member of the house. *{“Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’ or ‘Your work has no handles?’” Isaiah 45:9; To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. Ephesians 3:8-9}*

2. Moses was a servant in the house of Israel. - **3:5**

Moses was indeed faithful, and his words were important because He spoke them as a messenger of the LORD. Before God sent His Son, the words of Moses were to be heeded and Moses honored as the faithful servant of God. A servant is not the owner of the house. *{After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead." Joshua 1:1-2a}*

3. Jesus is the son of the owner. - **3:6a**

The builder and owner of the house is much more to be respected than any servant in the house, even the head steward. In Jewish custom the first-born son was equivalent to his father because he would inherit his father's position and much of his wealth. Therefore, people would honor the son in the same way they honored the father; they had equal importance, except the father exercised the right of ownership now and the son would in the future. *{The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, ... I myself will require it of him. Deuteronomy 18:15-19}*

4. We are the house of the LORD. - **3:6b**

The believers in every generation are the components from which the house of the LORD (the church) is built. But only those who remain faithful will be found in that house when the LORD calls them from their earthly labors. *{Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17}*

VII. Warning against unbelief

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹ where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' ¹¹ As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' " ... ¹⁵ As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

A. Israel in the wilderness

1. Do not harden your hearts. – **3:7-8, 15**

Today is the critical time in our lives. We always live in today and can never do anything except on today. We cannot alter the past, and we do not know whether we will be here in the future to act differently than we do now. Therefore, we should listen to the Holy Spirit while we have the opportunity, and that can only be today. If we hear the LORD's voice, then we should harken to it and not ignore it. We should not be defiant toward it, because we have a clear warning of what will happen to us if we do in the actions of the people of Israel after they were rescued by the LORD from slavery in Egypt. Note the use of chiasmus, where a key thought is used to bracket the main argument. *{Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. Psalm 95:7b-9}*

2. The “fathers” in the desert. - **3:9**

The ancestors of the Jewish people to whom the author was writing were those in the desert who were continually testing the LORD with their disobedience in the wilderness as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan. Even after the LORD inflicted severe punishment upon them, they continued to rebel. By Jewish custom these people were called “fathers,” even though many generations had intervened. Even though they saw God’s glory again and again, they refused to take the LORD seriously and follow His ways. *{For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” Psalm 95:10}*

3. The judgment on unbelief. - **3:10**

The LORD always judges unbelief and impenitence, sometimes quickly, sometimes much later. While the LORD is desirous of showing His mercy, He will not do this when people insist on continuing in their sins. At some point the LORD gets sick of them and judges. *{Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.” Psalm 95:11}*

4. Punishment follows judgment. - **3:11**

After judgment comes punishment. Once the LORD has judged, He does not turn back. This is the reason that we never ask God to give us justice and then hope to plead for mercy where we fall short. One always approaches the LORD asking for mercy and leaves it to His good will to give us what is best for us. *{And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ... they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.” Numbers 14:26-35}*

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

B. Learn from the example of your fathers

1. Don’t rebel against God. - **3:12**

Leaving the faith, abandoning God, is always a disaster, no matter how appealing it appears in the short term. Remember that we always live in today. There may be no tomorrow to repent and to return. We rise every day knowing that it might be the last time we rise and that it might our last chance to repent and serve the LORD. If instead we turn away to our own pursuits, then that evil decision may never be able to be reversed. Once we belong to Satan, the opportunity to return to the LORD may never come again. Therefore, do not rebel. *{This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith. 1 Timothy 1:18-19}*

2. Encourage one another. - **3:13**

We are all one body. The parts of the human body take care of each other. If the eye sees a cliff, the brain tells the feet to stop moving in that direction. If the finger touches something hot, the arm immediately pulls the finger away from the danger. In the same way Christians need to care for each other, not only in earthly needs but even more so in spiritual needs. We are totally depraved by nature, and our old self continually is trying to drag us into sin, particularly sins that we will feel we have to defend and thereby drive a wedge between us and God. We need to help each other in our weakness by alerting each other when we are being tempted with a sin to which we are susceptible. We should not let our brothers and sisters fall away without a word of warning. *{Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2}*

3. Remain in the faith. - **3:14**

The writer returns to the fact that everyone to whom he is writing once received with joy the message that the Savior had come. They rejoiced because they were confident. As time passed and Jesus did not return within a few years, the joy began to fade as persecution arose. To regain that joy they needed to have their confidence restored. This is the purpose of this letter. The writer follows this with the chiasmal warning of verse 15. *{But you shall cling to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day. Joshua 23:8; You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 2 Peter 3:17}*

¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

C. The reason Israelites died in the wilderness

1. Who were the objects of God's wrath? - **3:16**

It is difficult to believe the rebellion of the Israelites who left Egypt. They were the very ones rescued from dreadful slavery and saw the mighty hand of the LORD. Despite this, they were ready to complain and disobey. When they were punished, they repented of their actions, but not of their rebellious hearts. This situation is a strong warning to us who feel that God owes us all the blessings we want and who will throw a hissy fit if we don't get them. *{Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.... Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.}* Numbers 14:1-9

2. Why were they the objects of God's wrath? - **3:17**

They disobeyed, but not just in their actions. Their sins were not venial. It was not the specific actions that they did, but it was their hearts that could not accept the LORD as their Savior. Their minds were so full of themselves that they could see no other way than their way. To them the gods were far off and didn't really care about them. They needed constant proof that the LORD would do what He had promised to do, rather than doing the things they thought He should do. They wanted God to be their servant and not their master. Therefore the LORD told them exactly how He would deal with them and then carried it out in their lives. *{ "Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, }* Numbers 14:29

3. What was the punishment? - **3:18**

The disobedience was almost universal. Only 2 men of 600,000 men were spared the judgment because their hearts were firmly set on the LORD. They believed His promises and trusted His faithfulness. The men who came out of Egypt died at the rate of 15,000 per year in the boring wilderness where one day followed the previous with a mind-numbing sameness as each waited for his day to die, knowing that he had no hope of improving his situation. Hot and hopeless, it is a picture of what hell will be like for the vast majority of mankind. {*“not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.”* Numbers 14:30}

4. The wages of unbelief. - **3:19**

Unbelief seems like such a small sin, so unimportant compared with murder, adultery or armed robbery. Yet what makes it important is who the sin is committed against, against the LORD God Almighty, the creator and preserver of the universe. Here they were, poorly educated manual laborers who thought that they could defy Him. Did they need to learn the real level of their weakness and His strength? Obviously so! The people to whom this epistle was written, however, were much better educated and had a much better perspective on the world. Did they need the same lesson, which came only too late to save in an earthly sense, or would they learn from the mistakes of their ancestors to prevent the eternal punishment of their souls? Unbelief is a fatal sin because those who do not believe do not repent and do not repudiate any of their sins. Those who do not repent and repudiate their sins cannot have them forgiven. {*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.* Romans 11:17-20}

Reading for next time: Sabbath sections in Exodus 16, 20, 23, 31; Leviticus 19, 23, 25, 26; Nehemiah 13; Jeremiah 17

Chapter 3 – Jesus Greater than Moses

1. Explain the role of Moses in Jewish life.
2. Why was it important for a comparison of Jesus and Moses to be made?
3. What is the strategic difference between Jesus and Moses?
4. What was the rebellion in the wilderness? (Find a few examples in the writings of Moses.)
5. What was the final straw that caused God to keep the Israelites in the desert?
6. What is “Today” in verse 13?
7. Why is this point so important to the writer to the Hebrews?

Hebrews' Supplement

Chapter 3 – Jesus Greater than Moses

- I. Situation in Egypt (Exodus 1:1-22)
 - A. Status of Israel
 - B. Pharaoh's efforts at suppression
 - C. Midwife resistance
- II. Moses Youth (Exodus 2:1-25)
 - A. The baby
 - B. The prince
 - C. The refugee
- III. Call of Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:31)
 - A. The burning bush
 - B. Moses resistance to his commission
 - C. Sign and a front-man
 - D. Return to Egypt
- IV. Final acts of Moses
 - A. Naming a successor (Deuteronomy 31:1-8)
 - B. Reading the Law commanded (Deuteronomy 31:9-13)
 - C. Apostasy predicted (Deuteronomy 31:14-29)
 - D. Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47)
 - E. Moses blesses the tribes (Deuteronomy 33:1-29)
- V. Moses' death
 - A. The LORD's death sentence (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - B. Moses dies on Mount Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1-9)
 - C. Place of Moses in Israelite history (Deuteronomy 34:10-12)

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Chapter 4 – Sabbath Rest

VIII. Sabbath

A. Some will enter the rest and some will not

^{4:1} Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. ² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’ ” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” ⁵ And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” ⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,

1. Care is needed to enter. - 4:1

Because of the perfect offering of our perfect high priest, everyone who ever lived has been declared righteous before the LORD. Yet, we must not assume that we can fail to accept the work of Christ, fail to repudiate our sins and fail to seek to please God and still retain that forgiveness. The LORD will not be mocked. The person who remains in the enemy camp will ultimately be condemned with the devils. We are called to build upon Christ with godly living, not with self-indulgence. {*Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.* 1 Corinthians 3:12-14}

2. Some will enter the rest. - 4:2a, 3a, 4, 6a

The kingdom of heaven really exists, and numerous people will enter it. Moreover, most of these will not be the people the world expects or even some who those in the church expect. They will be the ones who remain faithful to the message which is preached and who do not glory in themselves. {*“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* John 14:2-3; *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”* Matthew 7:24-25}

3. Some will never enter. - **4:2b, 3b, 5, 6b**

The people of the world have their ideas of how the LORD should run the world and whom He should take to heaven. They create their own gods which have the properties they would like the LORD to have. They even associate attributes of the LORD with their gods to make them more credible and to convince the LORD that they meant to worship Him. Yet such idolatry cannot fool the LORD, who searches the heart and rightly judges the motivations behind the actions, whether they are rebellious or feigned submission. *{For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest." Psalm 95:10-11; "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20; "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' ... And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:21-23,26-27}*

B. We must commit ourselves to God to enter

⁷again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

1. The call to open our hearts. - **4:7**

Our sinful nature wants to limit the role that the LORD plays in our lives by limiting God to a size with which we can deal. Satan wants us to believe that we have certain rights which the LORD has to respect if we just propound them forthrightly. He tries to convince us to stand up to God and not be cowed by Him. This hardens our hearts against God rather than opening them so that the word of the LORD flows into them and changes us. *{For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. Psalm 95:7-9; "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew 11:15}*

2. The rest of Joshua is symbolic. - **4:8**

To many of the Jews, the kingdom of God in which they wanted to live was the physical land of Israel. The “promised land” was Canaan into which Joshua led the Israelites from across the Jordan. This land gave them rest from their wanderings in the wilderness. But this rest was only symbolic and far from perfect. We are still left to wander in a sinful world, and there is still a heavenly rest in which there is no lack of perfection. {*So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.* Joshua 11:23; *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.* Zechariah 9:9-10}

3. God’s rest is greater than earthly rest. - **4:9-10**

In the land of Canaan the Israelites still had to toil under the curse of Adam to earn their daily bread. They were still threatened by enemies, and they would still die. To think of this as the final rest was to greatly underestimate the LORD. He is a great God who can grant far greater blessings. We should not be content with such meager pickings. {*And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”* Revelation 14:13}

4. Let us strive to enter. - **4:11**

There is nothing we can do to earn heaven. How then can we strive to enter? The striving comes after we have been brought to faith by the Holy Spirit. With a new person in us who wants to do the will of the LORD, we should commit ourselves to that course. We should take the opportunities which the LORD gives us for service, particularly the opportunities to teach His word and tell others of the greatness of our God. We should follow our Savior with joy and eagerness to serve. {*“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”* Luke 13:24; *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.* 1 Corinthians 9:25}

C. God’s power is overwhelming

¹²*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* ¹³*And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

1. The word is a two-edged sword. - **4:12a**

A two-edged sword is a dangerous weapon. If one is not careful, one can easily cut oneself. Such a sword is an attack weapon, allowing one to harm opponents either way it is swung. The two edges of the two-edged sword of the word can be thought of as the Law and Gospel. The Law cuts away all the ropes by which we think we can scale the walls of heaven, and the Gospel cuts away Satan’s bonds so that we are free to enter heaven’s gate. {*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Ephesians 6:17}

2. The power of the sword. - **4:12b**

The two-edged sword of the word really penetrates. It cuts deeply into our nature, showing how frail and vulnerable we are. Everything that we think is so well hidden that no one can ever discover the sinful reality within us is opened to sight by the actions of the word. The power of God acting through His word is immense. *{And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever. 1 Chronicles 28:9; "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." Jeremiah 17:10}*

3. Nothing can be hidden from God. - **4:13**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to hide from the LORD. We all recognize this as folly. Yet we also try to hide from God by the things we do in our lives. We try to hide our impiety by attending church. We try to hide our greed by giving to the right causes. We feign love with tolerance. We want to be us, but we want God and the world around us to believe that we are better than we really are. Yet our aprons of such leaves do not cover much in the sight of the LORD. *{For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:14; "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known." Luke 12:2}*

IX. Jesus the Great High Priest

A. High priest in Jewish worship

1. Nature of sinful mankind.

Man is by nature totally depraved. Under no condition can anyone come before God to seek anything. The force field of the LORD's majesty will consume a sinner in an instant. The repulsiveness of our sinful condition is beyond our imagination. Accepting this view of man is essential to understanding history as it is presented in the Bible. *{For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23; "O LORD, the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this." Ezra 9:15}*

2. Function of a priest.

The priest was the intermediary between man and God. He offered to God what God demanded so that man could stand before God without experiencing God's wrath. It was a bloody job because the priest was really doing detailed killing and butchering of the sacrifices. It demonstrated the awfulness of human sin, which cost people their property and animals their lives. *{Leviticus 1:1-17}*

3. Why the high priest was special.

Even the work of the priests was inadequate because they too were sinful men who had to be purified so that they could do their work. To accomplish this, the high priest had to go before the LORD once a year with a very special offering. Yet even this could not be done in reality because the high priest was also a sinner who could not come before the LORD. Therefore the LORD symbolically blinded His own eyes with smoke so the high priest could enter His presence, purify himself and then purify the people, including the priests who would then for a year be allowed in the LORD's presence. *{Leviticus 16:2-22}*

4. The rules governing the high priest.

No human could be holy enough to be a real high priest, so the LORD placed a lot of restrictions on the high priest so people would realize how high the standards of the LORD were. He had special rules because he had a special assignment. {*“The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil is poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose nor tear his clothes. He shall not go in to any dead bodies nor make himself unclean, even for his father or for his mother. He shall not go out of the sanctuary, lest he profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him: I am the LORD. And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people, that he may not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the LORD who sanctifies him.”* Leviticus 21:10-15}

B. The nature of Jesus as our high priest

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1. Jesus is in the place of power. - **4:14**

Jesus, the perfect high priest, was able to do what a human high priest could not; He could go before the real throne of God. An earthly high priest could only stand before a model of the LORD's throne and perform a symbolic act. The sinless Son of God, however, could go directly into His Father's presence without a "smoke screen" to hide Him. {*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Philippians 2:9-11}

2. Our high priest understands us. - **4:15**

Because Jesus is also a man, He is able to understand the nature of man. He experienced everything we experience in the same way that we do. Therefore He is a fitting representative for us who will not forget to carry all of our cares and concerns to His Father. {*He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.* Isaiah 53:3-4; *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.* Luke 4:1-2}

3. The door to God's mercy is open to us. - **4:16**

When one is approaching a powerful person to ask a favor, one will be blocked by guards who are employed to keep the important person from being burdened by everyone seeking an audience. To reach the person and get a hearing, a favored relative or close friend of the powerful one can bring the petitioner through the security and into the presence of the one who can grant the request. Jesus, God's Son and our great high priest, has done this for us, getting us a perpetual pass to the throne room of the Almighty God. Our welcome is always cordial. {*And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:17-18; In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. Ephesians 3:12*}

Reading for next time: Exodus 25-30; Leviticus 8-10

Chapter 4 – Sabbath Rest

1. What is the importance of the Sabbath in God's plans?
2. In what ways did the LORD impose the concept of "Sabbath" on the Israelites?
3. Why does God compare the land of Canaan to a Sabbath rest?
4. How did God rest on the Sabbath?
5. What is the meaning of the Gospel having been preached in the Old Testament in verse 6?
6. Why is Joshua's name so important in the granting of rest?
7. How did Joshua succeed and how did he fail?
8. Discuss God's word as a two-edged sword.

Hebrews

Chapter 4 – Sabbath Rest

- I. Manna as God's pattern for work (Exodus 16)
 - A. Gathered an omer on each of 6 days, but it would not keep
 - B. Gathered twice as much the 6th day because there was none on 7th
- II. Sabbath attached to creation (Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 31:17)
- III. Days and years (Exodus 23:10-12)
 - A. Rest to land every 7th year
 - B. Rest to people every 7th day
 - C. Exile as punishment for failure to observe (Exodus 31:12-16) - Chiasmus
- III. Reminders
 - A. Sabbath day - Leviticus 19:30
 - B. Sabbath day - Leviticus 23:3
 - C. Sabbath year regulations - Leviticus 25:1-7
 - D. Year of Jubilee regulations - Leviticus 25:8-55
 - 1. Land and houses
 - 2. Hebrew slaves
 - 3. Non-Hebrew slaves
 - 4. Right of redemption
- IV. Enforcement of the Sabbath
 - A. Example before captivity (Jeremiah 17:19-27)
 - B. Example after captivity (Nehemiah 13:15-22)

Hebrews

Chapter 5 – Jesus the Great High Priest

IX. Jesus the Great High Priest (continued)

C. A high priest is a chosen position

5:1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

1. Duties of a high priest. - 5:1

The priesthood was critically important to the people before the birth of Christ. Only a priest could represent the people before a god, and each god or set of gods had their own priests. Sacrifices by a priest gained the favor of the god or turned aside his /her anger. Priests made their living from the offerings they made for the people. To keep the worship of a god uniform, it was common to have a “high priest.” The high priest was believed to have a special link to the god and was usually chosen by the god in some manner (it was supposed), such as heredity, drawing of lots or through some contest. The high priest therefore could gain things that a regular priest might not be able to obtain. The Levitical high priest was the only one who could enter the Holy of Holies to atone for the people. *{Then he presented the people’s offering and took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and killed it and offered it as a sin offering, like the first one. Leviticus 9:15}*

2. How he handles the people. - 5:2

The high priest might be tempted to arrogance because of his special position. Yet a wise high priest realized that to keep his god in the favor of the people was essential, as the high priests of other gods were competitors for the gifts and sacrifices of the people. Dealing well with those who struggled in life would show that the high priest was like the people he served and help to hold their confidence. *{As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103:13-14; And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” Zechariah 7:8-10; also see Deuteronomy 9:13}*

3. The sacrifice routine. - 5:3

The Levitical priests were not regarded as better than the other Israelites, so they had to sacrifice for their own sins. The high priest also could not claim a status above being a lowly sinner. He needed forgiveness as much as any other one of God’s people. In fact, the LORD required much more of him when he came to make an offering for himself and his people. *{Leviticus 9:7-21}*

D. Jesus was chosen as our high priest by God

⁴ *And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.* ⁵ *So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";* ⁶ *as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."* ⁷ *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.* ⁸ *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.* ⁹ *And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,* ¹⁰ *being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*

1. The call of the high priest. - 5:4

High priests would not be respected if they had claimed the honor for themselves. Because the priest business was a good profession and the high priest received more than any of the rest, it was natural for men to seek the priesthood. The LORD did not want His priesthood to be part of the political patronage system, so He established how the priests and the high priest would be chosen. {*They withstood King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God."* 2 Chronicles 26:18}

2. The call of Jesus - 5:5-6

The Old Testament prophecies showed that Jesus followed the same custom. He did not come and proclaim Himself the high priest of a new religion, but He allowed His Father to name Him as the genuine Priest, the Messiah. He realized the Jewish people would not accept a self-proclaimer, but would want a sign from God, which was given several times in Jesus' ministry. {*Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' "* John 8:54; *I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."* Psalm 2:7}

3. Jesus' work on earth. - 5:7

Even before His Passion, Jesus prayed for the people and, on Maundy Thursday, for Himself. Unlike the Levitical high priest, however, He did not first have to atone for His own sins before He could be heard by God for the people. He was righteous before God because He was God. Yet He prayed for the people as part of His ministry, because they could not come to His Father except through Him. {John 17:1-26; *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour: Father, glorify your name."* Then a voice came from heaven: *"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."* John 12:27-28}

4. How Jesus' career progressed. - 5:8-9

While Jesus was always perfect in His Father eyes, He needed to obtain human perfection through the means that humans were required to use. Being in the form of a man, He had to behave like a man, which means accept the burden of obedience that man was given by God. In this regard we see Him learning human wisdom and knowledge like any other human being. He could not redeem us unless He had the same flesh, blood, feelings and temptations that we have. {*Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* Philippians 2:8; *As by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.* Romans 5:19}

5. A special priesthood of Jesus. - **5:10**

To separate Jesus from the Levitical priests with their human limitations and relationship to the old covenant, Jesus needed to be given a different priesthood, yet He needed to be recognized as a legitimate priest. Therefore God used a priest that He had previously introduced to bless His chosen people, namely the people of Abraham, to be the type with which to associate Jesus. No one could deny the high importance of a priest that could bless the ur-father of the Jews, so any priest that was in His order must also be held in high regard. {*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."* Psalm 110:4}

X. Warning Against Falling Away

A. Do not be immature or lazy

¹¹About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

1. One cannot learn if one does not study. - **5:11**

As soon as people learn a little, they think that they know a lot. This is true in every task of life that has any complexity. Teenagers, for example, are bad insurance risks because they assume they know everything about driving an auto as soon as they get their drivers' licenses. Sadly, the same thing holds true concerning religion. With eternity in the balance, people quickly close their ears and their hearts to growing in the wisdom that the LORD wishes to impart. Like a blind man with an elephant, they imagine that the whole beast is like the part that they first touch. They use reason rather than revelation to complete the picture of the things of God. {*Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.* John 8:43; "*No one understands; no one seeks for God.*" Romans 3:11}

2. One must learn to teach. - **5:12**

One cannot immediately feed babies the solid food that adults regularly eat. They must start with milk and then pureed food which their stomachs can digest. Only gradually can other foods be introduced until they have teeth and a digestive track that can deal with more challenging fare. So it is also with the word of God. We all start as babes needing the milk of the word in simple terms. As we gain experience with the things of God, we can handle more complex concepts. But we are to be teachers as well as learners. Others who know less can benefit from what we know. Study and teach is the discipline of the Christian faith. {*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"* Romans 10:14-15}

3. Basic spiritual knowledge is inadequate. - **5:13**

Children are easily deceived. They have no basis for judging whether something is helpful or hurtful. The more they learn, the safer they are in this world. The same thing is true of spiritual matters. If we are to be spiritually safe, we must learn about all the dangers that face us and all the ways that the Holy Spirit can aid us and strengthen our faith. Without this continual growth in knowledge, like children, we become deceived to our harm. *{So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. Ephesians 4:14-15}*

4. One must train to be mature. - **5:14**

One gains maturity through reading, hearing and doing those things which benefit the body and the soul. Some people never learn and act foolishly all their lives. Other people learn how to do things wrong instead of how to do them right. Neither of these situations produces a competent adult. Correct practice makes perfect. We learn by training our bodies and wills to do what is necessary for our health in this world as we age. In the same way we need to train ourselves in God's word for the health of our souls. *{The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 1 Corinthians 2:14-15}*

Reading for next time: Deuteronomy 6, 8; 1 Samuel 15; Galatians 4-5

Contrast facing the Hebrews

	<u>Old Covenant</u>	<u>New Covenant</u>
Established by	LORD	LORD
Announced by	Messengers (men and angels)	Son of God
Nature of announcers	Mortal and/or subordinate	Eternal and ruler
Nature of covenant	Establish chosen people	Establish chosen people
Given to	Descendants of Israel	All people
Ultimate goal	Heaven	Heaven
Earthly domain	Land of Canaan	Visible Church
Spiritual domain	Invisible church	Invisible church
Salvation through	Faith in coming Messiah	Faith in Jesus Christ
Primary human obligation	Study & keep the various laws	Study & proclaim the Gospel
Rescued from	Slavery in Egypt	Slavery to guilt under the Law
Danger	Turning back to “Egypt”	Turning back to Old Covenant
High Priest	Aaron and descendants	Jesus Christ
Sacrifices	Countless clean animals	Jesus Christ

Chapter 5 – Jesus the Great High Priest

1. What were the duties of a Jewish priest? Of a high priest?
2. Describe the tabernacle in which the priests worked.
3. How did the priests remove their own sins?
4. How did Israel's priests differ from the priests of other cultures?
5. How was the call of Jesus similar to that of Jewish high priests? How was it different?
6. Why did Jesus have to establish His perfection as a human?
7. Why were the readers of Hebrews criticized as dull?
8. What is spiritual maturity?

Hebrews

Chapter 5 – Jesus the Great High Priest

I. Furniture of tabernacle

- A. Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22)
- B. Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10)
- C. Table for show bread (Exodus 25:23-30)
- D. Golden lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40)
- E. Bronze altar (Exodus 27:1-8)
- F. Bronze basin (Exodus 30:17-21)

II. Tabernacle

- A. Gifts for the construction (Exodus 25:1-9)
- B. Design of Tabernacle (Exodus 26)
- C. Design of the Courtyard (Exodus 27:9-19)

III. Ongoing needs

- A. Oil for the lamp (Exodus 27:20-21)
- B. Anointing oil and incense (Exodus 30:22-38)
- C. Census tax (Exodus 30:11-16)

IV. Priests

- A. Garments (Exodus 28)
- B. Consecration (Exodus 29 & Leviticus 8)
 - 1. Dress
 - 2. Sacrifice ritual
 - 3. Eating of portions of the offering
- C. Offerings for purification (Leviticus 9)
 - 1. Detailed proceed for making these offerings
 - 2. High priest had to become clean first
- D. Punishment for disobedience (Leviticus 10)
 - 1. Nadab and Abihu struck dead
 - 2. Restriction on mourning
 - 3. Concern for protocol

Hebrews

Chapter 6 – Danger of Falling Away versus Certainty

X. Warning Against Falling Away (continued)

B. Become mature

^{6:1}Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And this we will do if God permits.

1. Moving beyond the elementary. - 6:1a

The writer to the Hebrews is not advocating abandoning the basic Law and Gospel, but rather emphasizing that Christians must continue to grow. The original skeleton of doctrines must be fleshed out or it will collapse under the pressure of temptations. A little child may be able to walk, but is not ready to compete in a marathon. The elementary doctrines should be incorporated into the broader framework of Christian dogma rather than being continually repeated in isolated form. {*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Philippians 3:12*}

2. The content of the basics. - 6:1b-2

The elementary doctrines are those that we now say as part of the Apostles' Creed. They are simple phrases that represent the body of Christian teachings. While we are pleased to see a child learn the creed, it is essential that the child learn the doctrines therein expressed in much more detail. If doctrinal knowledge does not go deep enough, Satan can easily undermine it and topple faith. {*Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Matthew 7:13-15*}

3. The need for God's help. - 6:3

We all need to grow in our understanding, but this can only happen with the help of the LORD because our old self will try to befuddle all our efforts to understand the things of God. {*Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." James 4:15*}

C. The consequences of falling away

⁴For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. ⁷For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

1. The inability to return to grace. - **6:4-6**

We know that those who turn their back on Christ can repent; we have the example of Peter and of the prodigal son. These verses are not denying this. They are rather saying that one cannot come to know and love the LORD and His plan of salvation and then condemn it as demonic and still be saved. Let us consider three approaches. *{For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:20-22}*

a. Once in grace, always in grace.

John Calvin taught that once someone of the elect is brought to faith, God's grace will preserve the person in the faith, even if he appears to rebel and fall back into sin. Like the stamp of the Roman Catholic priesthood, once conversion produces faith, its effects can never be lost. Therefore those who are lost, never really believed, but were always hypocrites. Scripture contradicts this argument. *{Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:12}*

b. Once fallen from grace, forever lost.

The Donatists argued that these verses from Hebrews precluded reconversion. Those who denied Christ, even under persecution, could never again be part of the church. They could cry to God for mercy, but the church could do nothing for them or accept them back. *{“Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.” Mark 3:28-29}*

c. The middle way.

Jesus recognized that sheep could stray. He therefore urged the church to try to reclaim such members. He also realized that a sheep could stray too far or into too dangerous territory to be saved. The fact that the angels rejoice shows that the person really was lost before being reclaimed. *{So he told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:3-7}*

2. Good soil produces growth. - **6:7**

All people start out as spiritually bad soil. It is by working the soil that it becomes capable of bearing fruit. The ground must be worked by the farmer for it to produce abundant fruit. In the same way the continual work on our hearts by the Holy Spirit produces the fruits of faith so that the seed of the word is not lost. *{“Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Matthew 13:8}*

3. Bad soil is unproductive. - **6:8**

Bad soil is soil that resists the efforts of the farmer to make it productive. It continues to be rocky and filled with weeds and thorns. The produce of such a field is of no value, so it might as well as be burned to get rid of it. So it is with the person who resists the work of the Holy Spirit and remains immersed in sinful behavior coming from his hardness of heart. {*“And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.”* Matthew 13:4-7}

D. Remain diligent in action

⁹ *Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.* ¹⁰ *For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.* ¹¹ *And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end,* ¹² *so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

1. We have confidence in you. - **6:9**

The writer to the Hebrews is not ready to concede that his readers have returned to being hard, unproductive ground that can no longer be part of Christ's body, the church. While he sees weakness and danger of backsliding, he still thinks that there is the germ of faith in them and that they desire to be in Christ. He does not want the smoking flax to go out. {*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.* 1 John 2:1,21}

2. The LORD knows your works. - **6:10**

The LORD will not overlook the works that the Hebrew Christians have done in faith. This does not imply that their works will save them, but rather that their works done because of their love for the LORD are evident among them. They can see them, and the LORD can also see them. They have not struggled to do them in vain, for the LORD is still with them, working among them. {*“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.”* Isaiah 49:15-16}

3. One must continue the struggle. - **6:11**

People on a winning team should be eager during the course of a game. They know that good times are coming. They should want to try harder, to encourage the spirit of the team and celebrate every gain the team makes. We are in a spiritual struggle, but we are on the winning team. Motivated by our team's hero, we should be eager about using our opportunities to make the victory feel all the more sweet. {*That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Colossians 2:2-3; *Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”* Luke 9:62}

4. Do not become lazy. - **6:12**

Even the benchwarmers on a winning team should not be idly sitting around waiting for the contest to end. They may contribute nothing to the win, but they are winners by association. So it is with us; we are all benchwarmers in the work that brought our salvation, yet we need to be active because God chose us for salvation. *{Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys. Proverbs 18:9; For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 2 Thessalonians 3:11}*

XI. The Certainty of God's Promise

A. God's promise

¹³For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ¹⁶For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath,

1. God's oath by himself. - **6:13, 16**

The purpose of an oath is to impress upon those hearing the oath that the person making the statement is telling the truth and that he is willing to be held accountable by a powerful higher authority if he is not telling the truth. Because there is no one with more power and authority than the LORD God, the LORD therefore swore by Himself that the promise He was making was true and that He would fulfill it. *{The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored." Isaiah 62:8; "If a man gives to his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep safe, and it dies or is injured or is driven away, without anyone seeing it, an oath by the LORD shall be between them both to see whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property. The owner shall accept the oath, and he shall not make restitution." Exodus 22:10-11}*

2. The promise. - **6:14**

The LORD's promise to Abraham to bless and multiply him was the very word of God. It could not fail. While Abraham did not understand the details of the fulfillment, the LORD did, and His promise included those details. *{And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." Genesis 22:15-18}*

3. The promise fulfilled. - **6:15**

Within Abraham's life, he saw the beginning of the fulfillment of the LORD's promise. The rest of the fulfillment would come as God continued to carry out the plan that He had created to bless the world through Abraham's seed. Abraham remained steadfast even though he knew that he would have to trust God for what He would do long after Abraham's death. *{After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9}*

4. Why God took an oath. - **6:17**

The glories of the reign of King Solomon would have doubtless gladdened the heart of Abraham had he been able to see it. Yet the LORD wanted Abraham to see it in the sense that he could count on it happening. Therefore, the LORD took an oath to reaffirm His word. As a believer, Abraham could have no doubt of the LORD's loving concern for him because He had gone out of his way to assure Abraham of the seriousness that He attached to the promise. *{As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Romans 11:28-29}*

B. The nature of our hope

¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

1. The promise and the oath. - **6:18**

The LORD cannot lie when He makes a promise, and an oath guaranteed by the LORD cannot fail. This was the assurance given Abraham when the LORD promised him a son and a blessing. Because we also have a similar promise and oath from the LORD, we should remain confident in our salvation just as Abraham remained confident. *{“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.” Malachi 3:6; Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17; God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? Numbers 23:19}*

2. The anchor for our soul. - **6:19a**

We are anchored in the LORD's promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. Although the storms of life threaten us, we can feel secure that this anchor will prevent us from drifting onto the shoals that will shipwreck our faith. *{“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24}*

3. The promise and the priesthood. - **6:19b-20**

The Jews had counted on the priesthood of Aaron to make them acceptable before God. Yet these priests could not really remove sin, but they could only bring about a ceremonial cleanness. Even during good times, the effects of sin on the world made life difficult and death certain. But Jesus was a high priest that had made a perfect offering to purify everyone from all sin, and He was always in the presence of His Heavenly Father to act on our behalf. How much more certain could our eternal salvation be made? *{The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Psalm 110:4}*

Reading for next time: Leviticus 17-22

Chapter 6 – Danger of Falling Away versus Certainty

1. What is meant by dead works in verse 1?
2. How do the first verses relate to Deuteronomy 6?
3. Why can't those who fall away in verse 4 return?
4. Compare these verses to the case of Saul.
5. Does verse 10 imply work righteousness?
6. What does it mean that God swore by Himself?
7. What does verse 18 mean?
8. How does this chapter relate to Deuteronomy 8 and Galatians 4 and 5?

Hebrews

Chapter 6 – Danger of Falling Away versus Certainty

- I. Remember the Word of the LORD for it is your life
 - A. Give the obedience that the LORD demands of you
 - 1. Deuteronomy 6:1-6, 17-19
 - 2. Deuteronomy 8:1-9
 - 3. 1 Samuel 15:1-3
 - B. Continue in the Gospel promise
 - 1. Galatians 4:1-7
 - 2. Hebrews 6:13-20
- II. Teach others
 - A. One must teach what one knows to others - Deuteronomy 6:7-9, 20-25
 - B. One must learn that one might teach - Hebrews 5:11 - 6:3
- III. Do not rely on yourselves
 - A. It came from my efforts! - Deuteronomy 8:17-18
 - B. I can decide as king! - 1 Samuel 15:4-21
 - C. How easily you are being deceived - Galatians 4:8-11
 - D. Only the evil ones promote self-reliance - Galatians 5:1-12
- IV. Do not fall away
 - A. Don't get distracted by prosperity and worship other gods
 - 1. Deuteronomy 6:10-16
 - 2. Deuteronomy 8:10-16, 19-20
 - B. To obey is better than to sacrifice - 1 Samuel 15:22-29
 - C. Do not forget how you got here - Galatians 4:12-31
 - D. Remember that you are lost in sin without the Spirit - Galatians 5:13-26
 - E. Fear not, the LORD's promises are certain - Hebrews 6:4-12

Hebrews

Chapter 7 – Order of Melchizedek

XII. Melchizedek the Priest

A. Who Melchizedek was

^{7:1} For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. ³ He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

1. His description. - 7:1, 7:2b

If one were picking events from Abraham's life to glorify Abraham, the meeting with Melchizedek would not likely be included. It puts the great father of the Israelites in the position of a mere worshipper of the LORD rather than someone standing above all others. Melchizedek was never mentioned before or after in the historical part of the Bible. He was both a priest and king, a most unusual situation because kings liked to have priests that they could execute if the gods seemed to not be being handled appropriately. {*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ...And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Genesis 14:18, 20b}

2. His nature. - 7:3

Because Melchizedek is not mentioned in the Biblical genealogies, we do not know from whom he was descended or how he came to be a priest. Was he a Canaanite or a Hebrew or something else? Was he one of the men mentioned in the genealogies under a different name? What happened to him and his descendants? It is unusual for the Bible to give such a person so little space. {*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."* Psalm 110:4}

3. His meeting with Abraham. - 7:1b-2a

Melchizedek brought refreshments (bread and wine) for Abraham. Some people have tried to link this with Holy Communion. Why did he bless Abraham? Was it because kings threatening him had been defeated? Why did Abraham give a tithe to him? What was the understanding between the two men? Why did Abraham need an intercessor before the LORD when the LORD spoke to Abraham directly? {*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Genesis 14:18-20}

B The offering that Melchizedek received

⁴ See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! ⁵ And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. ⁸ In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. ⁹ One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

1. Who the offering came from. - 7:4

It is not certain of what Abraham gave a tenth. If it was of everything he recovered, then his words to the king of Sodom that he would take nothing from him would be false. Could it have been the plunder gained from the enemy camp? Did it include any of Abraham's own property? That Abraham gave the tithe showed he recognized the importance of Melchizedek in God's plan. {*And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Genesis 14:20b}

2. The law of the tithe. - 7:5

This law was introduced by the LORD as part of the law covenant that the LORD gave to Israel. It required that everyone worship the LORD by giving a tenth of their increase to the work of the LORD. It protected the people from extortion by the priest for more. It only applied to the descendants of Israel, i.e., the brethren of the Levites, and such people as would join themselves to Israel. {*Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. If a man wishes to redeem some of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD.* Leviticus 27:30-32}

3. The tithe of Abraham was not dictated by the Levitical laws. - 7:6

The tithe that Abraham gave was not governed by the Levitical tithing law because Abraham's gift was made more than 400 years before the special covenant with Israel was established at Mount Sinai. It was therefore a freewill offering, the type that the LORD wants from all of us. Such a gift by the holder of God's salvation plan promise must elevate Melchizedek in our eyes.

4. Function of the tithe. - 7:7

The function of the tithe was to provide for the house of the LORD, the priests and Levites who served as the ministers of the LORD and the poor in the land. It was therefore functional as well as done to show obedience and devotion to the LORD. God had elevated the office of the tribe of Levi because they were to serve Him on behalf of the people, which was the highest service there could be. As a result, they could bless the rest of the people of Israel in the LORD's name. {*And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. And the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where the vessels of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God.*" Nehemiah 10:38-39; "*Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*" Malachi 3:10; *I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.* Psalm 37:25}

5. The difference in Abraham's tithe. - 7:8

Abraham's tithe did not have the earthly purpose of sustaining Melchizedek. He was a king and therefore had the ability to raise the revenue he needed through taxation. The purpose was wholly spiritual, unlike the tithe given to the Levites whose livelihood depended on the offerings of the Israelites.

6. Even Levi symbolically paid the tithe. - 7:9-10

By Jewish tradition the sons replace the fathers and therefore have all the rights and responsibilities of the fathers. By giving a tithe to a representative of the LORD after the LORD had blessed his efforts, Abraham gave it representing not only himself but also all of his descendants. Jacob followed this precedent after the LORD promised to bless him. The Law of Moses formalized the manner in which it should be given. *{Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you." Genesis 28:20-22}*

XIII. Jesus is like Melchizedek

A. What a priesthood signifies

¹¹ Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³ For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵ This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

1. The priesthood and the Law. - 7:11-12

The Levitical priesthood was not perfect because it could not permanently remove sin. Every day the sacrifices had to be repeated. In fact, the composition and actions of the priesthood were bound to the Mosaic Law. If the LORD wanted to make a change in the priesthood to permanently remove sin, then a change in the Law would naturally follow because the Mosaic Law established the Levitical priesthood as the only one that could serve before God. {e.g., And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem" 1 King 12:26-33}

2. The LORD introduced a new priesthood. - **7:13, 17**

The old covenant had restricted the work of the priesthood to the family of Aaron. Anyone else offering sacrifices to the LORD or to any other god was to be regarded as a blasphemer and to be stoned. *{He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered.... 1 Samuel 13:8-13; But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense.... 2 Chronicles 26:16-20}*

3. Jesus was not part of the tribe of Levi. - **7:14**

Clearly Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi, and therefore He could become a priest of the LORD only through a special call. That such a call was to be expected is drawn from what the Scriptures say about Melchizedek. The Jews needed to understand this to be able to accept Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. *{Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi.... Luke 3:23-33}*

4. The basis of his priesthood is different. - **7:15-16**

The name and titles of Melchizedek (מֶלְכִּי־צֶדֶק) indicate that he was set apart from other men of his time period. The translation of his name is "king of righteousness," and his office is king of Salem (Hebrew שָׁלוֹם = peace (Shalom)). In the same way Jesus was something special. He was "the Righteousness of God" and "the Prince of Peace." One can see how Melchizedek foreshadowed this special priest that the LORD would send. Being God, Jesus was perfect and indestructible. *{The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Psalm 110:1-7}*

B. The change in covenants

¹⁸For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. ²⁰And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.' " ²²This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

1. Why the change. - **7:18-19**

The Law could not save. The best it could do was to show people their sins, keep violence within bounds and give people a view of the cost of redemption through blood and sacrifice. Some better way was needed or all humanity would be eternally lost. *{Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.... Romans 3:19-24}*

2. The introduction by an oath. - **7:20-21**

The LORD God Almighty does not need to use an oath to give commands. Anyone can disobey and hope for the best, but the wrath of God should make anyone think twice. Moreover, God does not need to give an oath to give a *quid pro quo* deal. Since He unquestionably has the resources to give anything He agrees to, why should He swear to provide it? But a promise that is so contrary to human thinking would naturally cause people to doubt that they had understood Him correctly. They would need assurance that the present is not how the future has to be. {*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."* Psalm 110:4}

3. The guarantee. - **7:22**

Jesus, Himself God, is the guarantee that God the Father will really forgive sin. God puts Himself in the position of the one who will make sure it happens. No delegation to weaker beings is involved. {*The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. Psalm 132:11; "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."* 1 Samuel 15:29}

C. The new high priest

²³ *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* ²⁴ *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.*

²⁵ *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.* ²⁶ *For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.* ²⁷ *He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.* ²⁸ *For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.*

1. He does not need a successor. - **7:23-24**

The Levitical priesthood had to have provision for succession. No priest would hold the office forever. Each would die because he was under the curse placed on Adam. He could not save himself, much less the people who depended on him for intercession with the LORD. {*"Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there."* Number 20:25-26; *And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of Phinehas his son, which had been given him in the hill country of Ephraim.* Joshua 24:33}

2. He can complete His task. - **7:25, 27b**

The job of the priest is to offer sacrifices and to intercede. Human priests had to offer the sacrifices repeatedly because they did not really remove sin, and the priests could no longer intercede once they had died. Jesus could offer a perfect sacrifice, so it only had to be offered once. He lives forever and so can intercede for us forever. Moreover, He is in the primary place for intercession, at the throne of God. {*Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* Romans 8:34}

3. He does not have to purify himself. - **7:26-27a**

Moreover, Jesus did not even have to offer a sacrifice for Himself before He could appear before God. He is perfect as God and He lived a perfect life as man. There is nothing hindering Him from being our perfect intercessor. *{Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded." Leviticus 9:7-8}*

4. The difference in the priest appointed. - **7:28**

The Law appointed weak people to be the LORD's spokesmen and our intercessors. They even fought among themselves as to who was greater in both the Old and New Testament times. They often failed to carry out their charge faithfully. But Jesus is the high priest who cannot fail. He is above all things. He has the very glory of God to assure us that His work on our behalf will please God and effect our salvation. *{Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. Numbers 12:1-2 vs. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14}*

Reading for next time: 1 John 1-5

Chapter 7 – Order of Melchizedek

1. Who was Melchizedek?
2. Why is his relationship to Abraham significant?
3. How does the Jewish view of “person” come into play in this section?
4. Describe the Levitical laws from Leviticus 17-20.
5. What are some key points in the rules for priests in Leviticus 21-22?
6. Why couldn’t the Aaronic priesthood produce perfection?
7. Why was the Aaronic priesthood removed?
8. Why is Jesus’ priesthood superior?

Hebrews

Chapter 7 – Order of Melchizedek

I. Rules for sacrificing and killing animals

- A. Sacrificed animals
 - 1. Only at the Tabernacle – Leviticus 17:1-6
 - 2. Sacrificing to other gods forbidden – Leviticus 17:7-9
- B. Improper things to eat
 - 1. Eating blood forbidden – Leviticus 17:10-14
 - 2. Eating things found dead forbidden – Leviticus 17:15-16
- C. Requirements for sacrifices
 - 1. No blemished animals – Leviticus 22:17-25
 - 2. Further about young animals and mothers – Leviticus 22:26-28

II. Prohibited personal activities

- A. Illicit sexual relations forbidden
 - 1. Sexual relations with relatives and in-laws – Leviticus 18:1-20
 - 2. Abnormal sexual relations – Leviticus 18:21-23
 - 3. Punishment for improper sexual activities – Leviticus 18:24-30
- B. Illicit actions toward God and man forbidden – Leviticus 19:1-37
 - 1. Amplification and application of the Ten Commandments
 - 2. Additional rules of civil righteousness
- C. Punishments for illicit actions
 - 1. Punishments detailed – Leviticus 20:1-21, 27
 - 2. Warning not to disobey the LORD – Leviticus 20:22-26, 22:29-33

III. Rules for Priests

- A. On personal behavior – Leviticus 21:1-9
- B. On personal behavior for high priest – Leviticus 21:10-15
- C. Against physical defects – Leviticus 21:16-24
- D. About eating sacred food
 - 1. Not unclean priests – Leviticus 22:1-9
 - 2. Limitations on those of priestly households – Leviticus 22:10-16

Hebrews

Chapter 8-9:5 – The High Priest of the New Covenant

XIV. High Priests and Covenants

A. The service of the new high priest

8:1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” ⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

1. We now have the high priest we need. - 8:1-2

The Levitical high priest could only appear before an earthly representation of the presence of the LORD and perform a ritual which symbolized what needed to be done to pacify the wrath of a just God. That was only symbolic. What was needed was a high priest who could actually enter into the presence of the LORD and there intercede with Him face to face.

{...according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:19b-23}

2. The need for an offering. - 8:3

The key for the priesthood was the sacrifice. To get a favorable hearing before a god, one needed to get permission to appear before him. A sacrifice therefore needed to be offered, either to cancel past offences or to bribe the god into having the audience. The priest was the only one who could do this work because only the priest knew the secrets of placating the god. *{“Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleanness.” Leviticus 16:15-16; Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2}*

3. Priests on Earth. - 8:4-5

Jesus had no role to play if He were merely another priest bringing another sacrifice. The Levitical priests were taking care of this, and no others had the command of the LORD to serve as His priests. Moses had been instructed in great detail to build the tent of meeting and how the priests were to serve. Jesus had nothing to add to this earthly service, which was only a shadow of what was to come. {*“These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.” Exodus 28:4; Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:16-17*}

4. Jesus’ ministry is superior to that of earthly sacrifices. - 8:6

The ministry of Christ was ordained, just as the ministry of the Levitical priests, by the LORD Himself. Yet His mission was much more important because it centered on the heavenly kingdom rather than an earthly kingdom. The promise given to Abraham had already pointed to Christ. The Law of Moses was for the temporary earthly kingdom that would prepare the way for the coming of the Christ and the heavenly kingdom. The substance was much greater than the shadow. {*Our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 2 Corinthians 3:5b-9*}

B. The coming of the new covenant

⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. ⁸ For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” ¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

1. Why the old covenant failed. - **8:7-8a**

The people of Israel were not able to keep the covenant for an earthly realm. Just like Adam and Eve, they blew their opportunity for an earthly kingdom, as the LORD knew they would. Yet He longed to teach them that they could only find true happiness in a kingdom that was not of this world. Even with a detailed set of laws to make their behavior acceptable to God and to each other, they could not keep themselves from the vilest sins. The old covenant therefore was shown to be unworkable, and an earthly paradise impossible. If only modern utopians would learn from this! *{The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left. Isaiah 24:5-6}*

2. The promise of a new covenant. - **8:8b-9**

Having proved His point to the Israelites that they could not live up to the terms of a covenant built on works, the LORD promised a new covenant. That covenant would not be one which depended on the capability of human obedience, but on the strength of the LORD God Himself. *{“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 31:31-32; “Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” Ezekiel 37:26}*

3. The nature of the new covenant. - **8:10-11**

The new covenant would be one of knowledge and grace. People would no longer think that they could earn the LORD’s favor by their deeds, but would realize that His kingdom was a gift. It would not be on earth where moths eat, rust destroys and thieves steal, but would be in eternity where all evils would be purged away. They would serve now, but they would rule with Him later. *{“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 31:33-34a; “I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.” Jeremiah 32:40}*

4. The substance of the new covenant. - **8:12**

The basis of the new covenant would be the forgiveness of sins. Rather than laws to restrict and satisfactions to be made, there would be opportunities for service and free forgiveness to those who repent. *{“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:34b; Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:18-19}*

5. The old covenant has ended. - **8:13**

The LORD's demonstration of the inability of the human race to keep His commandments was at an end. The old covenant served its purpose when any thinking person should have realized that it had not worked and could not work. Once the demonstration was over, it was essential to refocus people's attention to the new covenant through which people will live forever in the eternal paradise. {*God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:13b-14*}

XV. Worship in the Earthly Temple

A. Arrangement of the Tabernacle

^{9:1} Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. ² For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

1. First covenant worship regulations. - **9:1**

The covenant given to Israel at Mount Sinai was heavy with worship regulations. The purpose was to train the people so that they would realize that their God was different from the gods of the nations around them. By creating this difference, the LORD wanted to help the people remain loyal to Him and not drift to the worship of other Gods. {*"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it....And this is the law of the grain offering. The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD in front of the altar....Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD; it is most holy."* Leviticus 6:9, 14, 25; *"This is the law of the guilt offering. It is most holy.... And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings that one may offer to the LORD"....This is the law of the burnt offering, of the grain offering, of the sin offering, of the guilt offering, of the ordination offering, and of the peace offering. Leviticus 7:1, 11, 37*}

2. The Holy Place. - **9:2**

The holy place was critical to the worship of the LORD. Here the ordinary priests would go to offer sacrifices and prayers for the people of Israel. It was, in effect, the anteroom of the court of the LORD, that room before the throne room of a king where the ministers receive petitions for the king's favors and gifts on behalf of the king. Access to the king is always blocked at this level because only those with the appropriate status can continue through to meet with the king. {Exodus 26:1-30}

3. The Most Holy Place. - **9:3-4**

The “Holy of Holies” was the earthly throne room of the LORD. As such, only those who were holy could enter. No human met that standard, so the LORD made a way for the high priest to enter on behalf of the people to gain enough favor for them so that they could present their offerings and petitions in the other room. In this room were the signs of God’s Law, His power and His mercy. {*“And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place.”* Exodus 26:31-34}

4. The Ark. - **9:5**

The ark was a gold-covered box that contained two tables with the Ten Commandments. The cover of the box was the mercy seat of the LORD. The symbolism could not have been stronger – the mercy of God was over the Law. To receive the LORD’s blessing one had to come to the one who sat on the mercy seat. Appealing to the Law would only place one under judgment. {Exodus 25:10-22}

Reading for next time: Isaiah 11, 40-42, 48:12-51:16, 52:1-56:8

Chapter 8-9:5 – The High Priest of the New Covenant

1. In what way is First John like Hebrews?
2. Discuss John's "love" in terms of Hebrews' "high priest of the new covenant."
3. What is the purpose of the first 2 verses of Hebrews 8?
4. Contrast Jesus' priesthood with that of the Levitical priests.
5. Why was the old covenant inadequate? Why should the Jewish readers have known this?
6. How was the new covenant prophesized to be different?
7. What was in the earthly temple?
8. What did its design signify?

Hebrews

Chapter 8-9:5 – The High Priest of the New Covenant

I. Christ the Way

A. Way to God

1. Great High Priest – Hebrews 8:1-6
2. Word of Life – 1 John 1:1-4

B. Sacrifice

1. Once for all time – Hebrews 10:1-18
2. Once for all sin – 1 John 1:5-2:2

C. Jesus changes lives

1. Through faith – Hebrews 11
2. Through love – 1 John 2:3-17, 2:28-3:24

II. Remaining in the faith

A. False prophets

1. Judaizers – Hebrews 5:11-6:12
2. Antichrist – 1 John 2:18-27, 4:1-6

B. God's favor

1. New Covenant – Hebrews 8:7-13
2. God is love – 1 John 4:7-21

C. Faith is essential

1. Christ's perfect sacrifice – Hebrews 9:11-28
2. Christ's perfect service – 1 John 5:1-12

Hebrews

Chapter 9:6-28 – Mediator of the Covenant

XV. Worship in the Earthly Temple (continued)

B. The worship in the Tabernacle

⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

1. Ministry in the Holy Place. - 9:6

Things in the anteroom of the temple were busy, because it was here that the priests worked on behalf of the people of Israel. Because sins were continually being committed and help from the LORD was constantly being needed, the priests had plenty to do. It was both an honor to serve, but also a very messy, bloody business. Blood, burning flesh and grain and incense were the order of the day, every day. {Numbers 28:1-9; *Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. Luke 1:8-11*}

2. Ministry in the Most Holy Place. - 9:7

Beyond the anteroom, the LORD figuratively sat enthroned with the cherubim. He heard all, but He was not accessible to the people directly. To keep the way to the LORD open to the people, the high priest on one day each year carried out special offerings and entered the Most Holy Place to offer the submission of the people to the mercy of their God. {*The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat."* Leviticus 16:2, also 11-17}

3. Meaning of the Most Holy Place restriction. - 9:8

The way to the LORD was restricted in two ways. First one had to be of the correct family to get into the Holy Place. The common people could not enter it, because the LORD would only accept them if they worked through His appointed mediators. Secondly, God would not accept the unrighteous under any condition. Even the mediators could not stand before Him, but had to be yearly cleansed so they could serve. There was only limited access through imperfect mediators. {*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6; *"And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy."* Exodus 26:33; *And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. Matthew 27:51*}

4. Old covenant sacrifices were ineffective. - **9:9**

The righteousness of the LORD and the unrighteousness of the people formed a gap that could not be bridged by any human effort or ritual. To dramatize this to the people and give them aid without minimizing the deadliness of sin, the LORD created the priesthood and the scheme of limited access. It did not really allow the people to placate the LORD, but it did show that there was a need for redemption or they could never stand in the presence of the LORD. *{Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Galatians 3:21-22; "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats." Isaiah 1:11}*

5. New covenant ends old covenant sacrifices. - **9:10**

The priests could only do rituals that were symbolic of the sacrifice that God really required to satisfy His justice and appease His wrath. It was only natural then for these rituals to become useless and discontinued when God and man were reconciled by the true sacrifice of Jesus Christ. *{For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances. Ephesians 2:14-15a}*

XVI. The Blood of Christ

A. Contrast of the offerings

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

1. The perfect tabernacle. - **9:11**

The Lord of Lords and King of Kings is hardly going to be satisfied with being worshipped in a manmade tent. That would be humiliating for such a great God. He would expect to be approached through a celestial anteroom into a heavenly throne room. He would expect a high priest who was not contaminated with human sin and filth to mediate between Him and sinful man. *{Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. Revelation 11:19}*

2. The perfect sacrifice. - **9:12**

The LORD God Almighty would also expect a sacrifice that was truly able to expiate the guilt of sin, not just give it a symbolic covering through which the guilt quickly again became readily apparent. He would not forever be mollified by such pitiful efforts. *{Know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:18-19}*

3. Ceremonial cleanliness. - **9:13**

Ceremonial cleansing was just that, a shadow, not the reality. When a king is crowned, the ceremonial is incidental to the rule. *Pomp and Circumstances* being played as graduates walk across a stage does not give them their college education; it merely symbolizes that it was obtained. In the same way, while the acts of worship of the old covenant could show a people willing to serve God externally, it could not cleanse the heart so that God's judgment would be averted and so truly good works would be performed. {Exodus 29:16-21}

4. Spiritual cleanliness. - **9:14**

It is the sacrifice of Christ that cleanses the heart of its sin and rebellion. It is substance rather than ceremony. It is the education rather than the cap and the gown of faith. Its effects are seen by God rather than by man. *{But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7}*

B. Cleansing with blood

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

1. How the new covenant addresses the old. - **9:15**

The covenant given through Moses was a covenant for an earthly kingdom, which was a teaching device to prepare the people for the eternal kingdom. They failed to keep the covenant for the earthly kingdom and therefore were also under wrath that would keep them out of the heavenly kingdom. While animal sacrifice could serve as a way to restore their relationship under the old covenant, a much better sacrifice was needed to restore the relationship required to enter the heavenly kingdom. *{For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6}*

2. The nature of a will (testament). - **9:16-17**

As was the custom throughout Old Testament times, the making of a covenant required blood sacrifices. The covenant was not in effect until the blood had been shed, showing that the terms were to be met. The writer now places this in a New Testament context of a will which also does not go into effect until a death has occurred. *{To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. Galatians 3:15-18}*

3. Why blood was needed. - **9:18**

The blood of a covenant was needed to show that the covenant was a serious business. It was no common buy-and-sell transaction, but something that would change the lives of the people involved. It required their total commitment to its terms. Breaking it would mean war and death. *{Genesis 15:8-18; Exodus 12:7-13}*

4. How blood related to the old covenant. - **9:19-20**

The Mosaic Covenant was serious business. It was life or death for the people of Israel. If they kept the covenant, they would be a great and peaceful nation, showing forth the LORD's power on earth. If they failed to keep it, there would be bloodshed, often their blood and that of their descendants, as the LORD would raise up oppressors to deal justice to them. The sprinkling with blood showed the seriousness of the covenant. When the covenant was broken, blood was needed to set things right again. *{And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Exodus 24:4-8}*

5. Cleansing the Tabernacle with blood. - **9:21**

Even the worship facility, since it was built by sinful hands, needed to be symbolically cleansed by blood. Everything in the tent was also sprinkled since these things also had been made by sinful hands. *{And he killed it, and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar around it and purified the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it to make atonement for it....And he killed it, and Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar....And he killed it, and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. Then he presented Aaron's sons, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar. Leviticus 8:15, 19, 23-24}*

6. The extent of blood used in cleansing. - **9:22**

Not only did those things made by sinful men need to be cleansed with blood, but the men themselves could not become righteous except by the shedding of blood. However, the human soul is too valuable to be cleansed by animal blood, and human sin is too serious to be merely covered over by a few flecks of blood. We needed a thorough washing in the blood of someone whose blood was so precious to the LORD God that He would use it to cleanse our souls. *{For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. Leviticus 17:11}*

C. The reality versus the foreshadowing

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

1. The old covenant was a model of reality. - **9:23**

It is clear that the heavenly things of God do not need purifying. Still, the heavenly things that will serve man must not be infected by man's sin. The purification is therefore effected by the purification of man so that his guilt which contaminated the world cannot be brought into the heavenly realms. *{You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:13-17}*

2. Christ did the real thing. - **9:24**

The Levitical high priest entered the copy of God's throne room to sprinkle the blood of the animal sacrifice before the LORD. Christ entered into the real throne room of God to sprinkle His own blood before God the Father. It was the reality in place of the symbolic. *{Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:34}*

3. The reality only needed to be done once. - **9:25-26**

The priests of the old covenant gave the decrepit stone wall a coat of whitewash. They did nothing to repair it, so they had to repeat the whitewashing again and again to keep up the appearance of a healthy wall. Christ was able to replace the wall with an uncorrodeable one which will never need replacement or recoating. Therefore, no further sacrifice is needed. *{For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. 1 Peter 3:18}*

4. The sacrifice and the judgment. - **9:27-28**

When we die, we will face God's judgment. This will only happen once. Because Christ's sacrifice, being divine, is timeless, it need only be applied once for each of us. Having been exonerated at our judgment, we will no longer be able to sin, so no further sacrifice for our sins is needed. The next appearance of Christ will be to end the world, not to save it. *{For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10; "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26:28}*

Reading for next time: Acts 2

Chapter 9:6-28 – Mediator of the Covenant

1. Describe the servant of the LORD from Isaiah.
2. What is the purpose of his service?
3. Why were the tabernacle and the temple illusions without reality?
4. Why is the heavenly tabernacle better than the earthly?
5. Why is cleansing so important for the believer? Why must blood be involved?
6. How does the writer compare “covenant” and “will”? Why?
7. Why does the writer emphasize “man-made” when the tabernacle was specified by God?
8. Why is “once only” so important in the work of Christ?

Hebrews

Chapter 9:6-28 – Mediator of the Covenant

I. The God of the Covenant

- A. Covenant remains
 - 1. Branch of Jesse brings peace – Isaiah 11:1-16
 - 2. Invitation of the thirsty – Isaiah 55:1-13
- B. All is not lost
 - 1. Comfort for God's people – Isaiah 40:1-31
 - 2. The Helper of Israel – Isaiah 41:1-29
 - 3. Future glory of Israel – Isaiah 54:1-17

II. Israel lost and restored

- A. Israel state of depravity
 - 1. Israel blind and deaf – Isaiah 42:18-25
 - 2. Stubborn Israel – Isaiah 49:1-11
 - 3. Isaiah state of punishment - Isaiah 52:1-12
- B. Israel freed
 - 1. LORD's redemption – Israel 48:12-22
 - 2. Restoration of Israel – Isaiah 49:8-26
 - 3. Song of praise to the LORD – Isaiah 42:10-17

III. The LORD's salvation

- A. Servant of the LORD
 - 1. Nature of the Servant – Isaiah 42:1-7
 - 2. The Servant's commission – Isaiah 49:1-7
- B. The Servant's work
 - 1. Israel's sin and the Servant's obedience – Isaiah 50:1-11
 - 2. The suffering and glory of the servant – Isaiah 52:13-53:12
- C. Salvation
 - 1. Everlasting salvation for Zion – Isaiah 51:1-16
 - 2. Salvation for Others – Isaiah 56:1-8

Promises and Covenants

First Test – Eden	Gift: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Earthly paradise Don’t eat from the forbidden tree Adam and Eve ate forbidden fruit Mankind cast out of Eden
Second Test – New world	Promise 1a: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from Eve’s offspring Worship the LORD and obey the moral law Became abysmally sinful Extermination by flood
Third Test – Revamped world	Promise 1b: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from Noah’s seed Worship the LORD and obey the moral law Ignored the LORD, tried to make a name for himself Confusion of languages at Babel
Fourth Test – Egyptian exile	Promise 1c: Promise 2: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from Abraham’s seed Land of Canaan as an inheritance to Abraham’s tribe Worship the LORD and obey the moral law Followed foreign gods in Egypt Slavery to the Egyptians
Fifth Test – Canaan fulfilled)	Promise 1c: Covenant: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from Abraham’s seed Land of Canaan under Mosaic Law (Promise 2 Worship the LORD and keep the Mosaic Laws Each one followed his own heart Continual attacks by neighboring tribes
Sixth Test – Kingdom	Promise 1d: Covenant: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from David’s seed Land of Canaan under Mosaic Law with royal rule Worship the LORD and keep the Mosaic Laws Continual wandering off after other gods Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
Seventh Test – Remnant	Promise 1d: Covenant: Requirement: Man’s failure: Result:	Savior to crush Satan from David’s seed God’s providential care for the remnant in Canaan Worship the LORD and keep the Mosaic Laws Legalism and apostasy Loss of the Old Covenant and right to Canaan
Rescue of the LORD	Covenant: Requirement: Man’s response: Result:	Free salvation through Christ (Promise 1a-1d fulfilled) None, salvation is by grace through faith Acts reflecting the love of the LORD & telling others Eternal life

Hebrews

Chapter 10 – Christ’s Sacrifice and Our Response

XVII. Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

A. Ceremonial Law was a shadow

^{10:1} For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

1. Only the shadow. - **10:1a**

To the Jews the Law of Moses was a reality because it governed every aspect of their lives. They had lost sight of the God that loved them and replaced Him with a God whose favor they could earn. They had been looking at the shadow too intently. *{These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:17}*

2. Human offering cannot remove sin. - **10:1b, 4**

The Pharisees were right when they raised the objection to Jesus that only God could forgive sins. Yet they were hypocritical because they believed that they could obtain the forgiveness of sins by the temple sacrifices. These were works of man, not of God. *{With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?} He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:6-8}*

3. What would have happened if they did remove sin? - **10:2**

If the sacrifices did remove sin, then they would not need to be repeated in a prescribed fashion, but would only have been needed when someone sinned. *{And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:31-32}*

4. Role of the sacrifices. - **10:3**

The sacrifices reminded people of their sins and how terrible they were. Something had to die to remove the guilt of those sins. In fact, in the larger scheme, the reality before the LORD, it was someone and not something. *{“And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments.” Leviticus 16:29-32}*

B. The undesired offerings

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.' " ⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1. The denouncement of sacrifices. - 10:5-6, 8

The LORD did not want sacrifices for the sake of sacrifices. They did nothing for Him that He needed. They were for the purpose of demonstrating the costliness of sin. They took a real bite out of the income and property of the people. The sacrifices were meant to be a slap across the face to the sinner to inspire genuine repentance. {*In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. Psalm 40:6-7; What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. Isaiah 1:11; "What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me."* Jeremiah 6:20}

2. Fulfilling God's will. - 10:7, 9

Samuel told Saul that to obey was better than to sacrifice. The LORD wants willing obedience, not obedience forced by His divine power. The sacrifices were to remind the people that unless their hearts were changed, the death of the sacrifice could not replace their own death (separation) at the judgment of God. {*I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8}*

3. Effect of keeping God's will. - 10:10

Because Christ kept God's will perfectly, we obtain that perfection (righteousness) so that we can appear holy before God. {*"And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."* John 17:19}

C. The perfect sacrifice

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

1. Daily repeated sacrifices. - 10:11

The Roman Catholics patterned the "mass priests" of the Middle Ages after the Levitical priesthood. They too stood at the altar all day long offering sacrifices (i.e., the mass) again and again despite the fact that it did not remove sin. {*"And you shall say to them, 'This is the food offering that you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs a year old without blemish, day by day, as a regular offering.' "* Numbers 28:3}

2. What the perfect sacrifice did. - **10:12, 14**

Christ's sacrifice was effective at removing our guilt because He expiated all of it through His suffering and death. He could then go into the presence of the Father without any stain of our sin on Him and therefore be our advocate in the heavenly temple. {*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1*}

3. Fulfilling God's will. - **10:13**

All that remains is for Christ to fulfil His Father's will by being our intercessor until the end of the world when all His enemies will become forever inert and unable to harm the elect. {*"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet' "? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" Matthew 22:44-45; The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Psalm 110:1*}

D. The new covenant

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," ¹⁷ then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." ¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

1. Witness of the spirit. - **10:15**

We have the word of the LORD Himself, given to us through the Holy Spirit. {*For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21*}

2. The promised covenant. - **10:16**

Now that the LORD has given His new covenant, we have everything that we need for our salvation. No longer are we waiting for another prophet or to hear from someone else some new thing that has been revealed. We have the full revelation, and we merely need to read it, study it and believe it. {*"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah 31:33*}

3. The nature of forgiveness. - **10:17**

When Jesus atoned for our sins, He effectively wiped them off the books at God's "grace window." When we come there, all our sins and unrighteousness will have been erased through Jesus' blood. If we go to the "works window," however, they will all be there to guarantee our condemnation. {*"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:34b*}

4. No guilt, no sacrifice. - **10:18**

Because Christ has blotted out our sin at the grace window, we need no sacrifice when we go there. It would be foolish for us to go the works window with sacrifices because they will do no good to atone for our sins on the books there. {*Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded." Leviticus 9:7; "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Luke 15:7*}

XVIII. A Call to Persevere

A. Let us draw near

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

1. The way into the Most Holy Place. - **10:19-20**

To reach the LORD, the Levitical high Priest had to go around a curtain and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, covering the offenses against the Law which lay beneath the mercy seat. When Jesus entered the real Holy of Holies, He parted the curtain for us forever and placed His blood on the mercy seat which will remain there forever, always granting us access to God. {*The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat."* Leviticus 16:2; *Behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.* Matthew 27:51}

2. The great high priest. - **10:21**

Because He is our High Priest, we are His people and always have access to God through Him. {*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Romans 5:1-2}

3. The new in the words of the old. - **10:22**

Because we have been made clean before the LORD, like the people of the old covenant had been made symbolically clean, let us not hesitate to come before God. {*Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.* Ephesians 3:12}

4. Stand firm. - **10:23**

Because the great prize is ours, let us not waver in our faith, but instead stand firm, knowing that it is just a matter of time until we are in God's heavenly kingdom. {*I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.* Revelation 3:11}

5. Working and meeting together. - **10:24-5**

The victory is ours, but we still have responsibilities while we are here on earth. Let us encourage each other, so that we can work in joy while we remain in this vale of tears. Let us not put our armor down, but be ever eager to spread the message of our victory through Christ. {*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* Acts 2:42}

B. Deliberate disobedience

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

1. Deliberate sinning is damning. - **10:26-27**

If we make light of the cause of which we are a part and treat our LORD's salvation with contempt and disdain, we have put ourselves outside the church. Despising the work of the Holy Spirit cuts us off from our only access to the means of grace. {*"But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people."* Numbers 15:30; *And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.* Isaiah 2:19}

2. The wrath of the old covenant. - **10:28**

The old covenant, although only aimed at earthly rewards, did not tolerate those who were unwilling to abide by its terms, but wanted to do things their own way. The punishment for rebellion was death. {*"If there is found among you, within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing his covenant, and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden, and it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death."* Deuteronomy 17:2-6a}

3. The wrath of the new covenant. - **10:29**

Because the new covenant is so much more important, involving the humiliation and suffering of the God-man Himself, one can also expect a much worse punishment for disobedience. {*"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."* Matthew 12:31-32}

4. The LORD promises wrath. - **10:30**

The LORD has reserved giving retribution for sins to Himself. However, that should be no comfort to the sinner who hopes to finesse God the same way he finessees men. The LORD will not be mocked and is omniscient. {*"Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly."* Deuteronomy 32:35}

5. Stark terror. - **10:31**

There can be no greater terror than to have to face the LORD God Almighty with nothing that can placate His wrath. {*"But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"* Luke 12:5}

C. Remember the initial battles

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

1. Willingness to be persecuted. - **10:32**

From the very beginning the Jewish Christians had faced hardships because of their faith. Perhaps they found this not so difficult because they expected that Jesus Christ would return in only a few years, so they could do without and endure for a relatively short while. {*Did you suffer so many things in vain – if indeed it was in vain?* Galatians 3:4}

2. Response to the persecution. - **10:33-34a**

The affliction had not been light. Enemies looked for every excuse to get Christians in legal trouble and publicly humiliate them. So far the Hebrews Christians had taken it in stride, giving active support to those who bore the brunt of the persecution. {*For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.* 1 Corinthians 4:9; *"They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God."* John 16:2}

3. Why you stood firm. - **10:34b**

They had started with their eyes on the prize and were able to endure. They needed to keep their focus, even though the wait was longer than they had expected. {*"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Matthew 6:20-21}

D. Continue to stand

³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

³⁷ For, *"Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."* ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

1. Reward depends on perseverance. - **10:35-36**

Even though the length of their time of suffering would be greater than at first expected, they should not become weary and lose salvation. The arguments regarding the promise had not changed because of the longer timeframe. It also took a long time for Christ to come the first time. {*"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* Matthew 5:11-12; *"And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."* Mark 13:13}

2. A little while. - **10:37**

We should trust the LORD that He has a reason why He has not yet returned for the final judgment. He is not delaying nor has He forgotten about us. His gracious will still includes others for heaven whom He must gather. *{The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9; For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Habakkuk 2:3}*

3. Living by faith. - **10:38**

Our faith must remain constant and not be shaken by events. We must not retreat or abandon our faith and run. We must live according to the faith we have professed, and we will receive eternal life that through faith. *{For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17}*

4. Believe and be saved. - **10:39**

The apostle here makes clear that he expects that his readers are not the type that want to cut and run. Yet he also knows that they need encouragement and a reminder of the reasons that underlie their faith, which he has provided in this letter. *{For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:9}*

Reading for next time: 1 Kings 17-19; Judges 6-7

Chapter 10 – Christ's Sacrifice and Our Response

1. Comment on God's view of time as indicated in the first 4 verses.
2. Relate verses 5-7 to Saul's rejection as king (1 Samuel 15).
3. Is "your will" Law or Gospel?
4. Comment on verse 18. Can Holy Communion be a sacrifice?
5. Why were verses 19 to 22 so amazing to the Jewish readers?
6. What do verses 23 to 25 say about the Christian life?
7. Why should we expect terrible punishment for falling away from Christ?
8. What does the end of the chapter warn about that is very relevant to us today?

Hebrews

Chapter 10 – Christ's Sacrifice and Our Response

I. The promise of the covenant

- A. The prophet Joel
 - 1. Pouring out of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:17-18
 - 2. Signs in the heavens – Acts 2:19-20
 - 3. Universal salvation – Acts 2:21
- B. Words of David
 - 1. The LORD's help is secure – Acts 2:25-26
 - 2. His promise does not end with death – Acts 2:27-28
 - 3. The LORD Himself will be our Savior – Acts 2:34b-35

II. Peter's message

- A. History of Jesus
 - 1. Jesus authentication – Acts 2:22
 - 2. His treatment by Israel – Acts 2:23
 - 3. God overrules man's actions – Acts 2:24
- B. Significance of David's words
 - 1. David was human – Acts 2:29
 - 2. David was given insight of prophet – Acts 2:30-34a
- C. The needed response
 - 1. Jesus is the Christ – Acts 2:36
 - 2. The way of salvation – Acts 2:37-39
 - 3. Do not tolerate evil in your lives – Acts 2:40

Hebrews

Chapter 11 – By Faith

XIX. Heroes of Faith

A. Pre-Abraham

11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

1. Creation

a. Definition of faith. - 11:1

Faith is to trust in something that is not seen. That “something” can be a thing that is known but currently absent (e.g., a person) or an entity that may be present but is undeterminable (e.g., the strength of a bridge). {*For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.* Romans 8:24-25}

b. Faith is what God’s recognizes. - 11:2

Saving faith is a faith in the teachings of the word of God. We cannot see God or His promises, but we have faith when we believe in their existence anyway. {*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.* Galatians 3:8-9}

c. How we believe in creation. - 11:3

Actions of a supernatural God cannot be understood through the laws of nature. Therefore, we accept the Biblical account of creation by faith. {*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* Genesis 1:1; *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.* Psalm 33:6}

2. The ancients

a. Abel. - 11:4

Abel offered up a sacrifice based on a belief that the LORD would be faithful to His promises. {*In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.* Genesis 4:3-5}

b. Enoch. - **11:5**

Enoch was valuable to the LORD while he was on earth, but the LORD taught us that he was even more valuable as a demonstration of His power by taking him bodily to heaven. *{When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Genesis 5:21-24}*

c. Faith is essential. - **11:6**

While Enoch's works might have been highly regarded by men, they were regarded highly by God only because Enoch had faith in God's promises and not his own works. *{If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8}*

d. Noah. - **11:7**

Noah had an incredibly strong faith because it had to endure adverse conditions for such a long period. Building an ark appeared to be a fool's errand, causing him to be assailed with doubts from within as well as ridicule from without. *{Genesis 6:12-22}*

B. Abraham

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

1. The believing stranger

a. The journey. - **11:8**

Abr(ah)am accepted a call from the LORD to go to a distant place he knew nothing about to father a race of people even though he had no sons. *{Genesis 12:1-5}*

b. He accepted being a stranger. - **11:9-10**

After arriving, he wandered through the land for a long time, seeing no progress being made in fulfilling the promise which he had been given. Abraham was looking far beyond the immediate. *{So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD. Genesis 13:18}*

c. Other believers are like Abraham. - **11:13**

The patriarchs accepted their status as wanderers who would not receive an earthly domain in their lifetime. They would receive a heavenly reward because they trusted the promise that their descendants would become an earthly nation. {*Her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened. Luke 8:56; "I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."* Genesis 23:4}

d. They don't look back. - **11:14-15**

They stayed the course when things became difficult rather than returning to the land of their family where things might have been easier for them. {*But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. Genesis 19:26; Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."* Luke 9:62}

e. God's people. - **11:16**

They understood that the LORD's plan involved more than a piece of land sometime in the future, but a kingdom in which they would be with Him who called them. {*But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20*}

2. The covenant promise

a. Faith led to parenthood. - **11:11**

Abraham and Sarah knew they were too old to have children, yet they trusted that the LORD would find a way to fulfill His promise. {*Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"* Genesis 18:11-12}

b. Father of many peoples. - **11:12**

This faith led not just to one nation but many. The LORD blessed even the misguided efforts of Abraham to help Him fulfill His promise by turning even Ishmael's descendants into a nation. {*"I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."* Genesis 22:17-18}

3. The test

a. The sacrifice of Isaac. - **11:17-18**

The command to sacrifice was one of the greatest challenges to faith that one can imagine. It was more than a command to offer a child; it was rather a command to offer the child on whom the promise was based. Who could be asked to do more? {Genesis 22:1-10}

b. Faith in God's power. - **11:19**

Abraham's faith was great because it accepted that the LORD could do things that were beyond human power or even ability to understand. When the LORD said two things that were mutually exclusive, He could still do both. {*No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."* Romans 4:20-22}

C. The patriarchs

²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

1. Isaac. - 11:20

Isaac passed the LORD's promise to Jacob. {Genesis 27:27-29}

2. Jacob. - 11:21

Jacob distributed the promise appropriately among his descendants. {Genesis 48:13-20}

3. Joseph. - 11:22

Joseph indicated his belief by asking that his bones be buried in the promised land. {Genesis 50:24-25}

D. Moses

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹ By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

1. Birth & education

a. Moses' parents. - 11:23

Moses' parents recognized the evil of Pharaoh's command and the value that the LORD puts on all human life, particularly the lives of His people. They chose to serve God rather than man. {Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. Exodus 2:1-3}

b. Moses' upbringing. - 11:24

Moses rejected being a party to a ruling class that oppressed his people but rather sought to identify with them. {When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water." One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Exodus 2:10-12}

2. Early life

a. Choosing God's people over wealth. - **11:25-6**

Obviously, Moses could not have it both ways. He could not associate with the children of Israel and still retain his status as one of the elite of Egypt. He either had to turn his back on his life of wealth or on his people. *{For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Psalm 84:10}*

b. Departure from Egypt. - **11:27**

Moses' defiant behavior caused him to do things that forced him to flee Egypt and to become a shepherd for a third of his life. Certainly this was a humbling experience for someone used to luxury. *{When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. Exodus 2:15}*

3. Deliverer

a. Passover. - **11:28**

The prediction that the angel of death would visit Egypt to kill all the first born was something beyond what anyone could imagine. The remedy of the blood of a lamb was also unbelievable. Yet Moses convinced the Israelites to carry out the appropriate preparations despite the fact that he must have been tempted to wonder how this could be. *{Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. Exodus 12:21-23}*

b. Crossing the Red Sea. - **11:29**

The parting of the sea was amazing, but could one really trust the water to remain parted long enough for the whole multitude to cross? With the Egyptian army behind them, however, who could afford to doubt? *{Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Exodus 14:21-22}*

E. Post-Moses

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. ³² And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated – ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy – wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

1. In Canaan

a. Jericho. - **11:30**

The attack plan on Jericho would have made any military leader wonder, but faith in the LORD's promise was rewarded. {*So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city.* Joshua 6:20}

b. Rahab. - **11:31**

The LORD can save even the worst of sinners who turn to Him in faith. That should be comforting to all of us. {*So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel.* Joshua 6:23}

c. The long and incomplete list. - **11:32**

Those who trusted in the LORD through faith, found him to be faithful. Many of these people committed terrible sins, but they were saved because they believed that the LORD was powerful to save. {Judges; 1 Samuel; 2 Samuel}

2. Heroic acts

a. Civil leadership. - **11:33**

David built a nation, and Solomon was able to enrich it. {1 Kings 4:20-29}

b. Military leadership. - **11:34**

The nation of Israel was often out-numbered, but the LORD fought for them when they trusted in Him, leading to tremendous victories. {*And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them with a great blow, so that they fled before him.* 1 Samuel 19:8}

- c. **Gruesome treatment. - 11:35-38**
 The people of faith, however, often faced persecution from those who did not want to hear about their sins and the demands of a righteous God. {*Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.' "* But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 2 Chronicles 24:20-21; *When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water. 1 Kings 18:4*}
3. Still waiting for the promise
- a. **Commended but unfulfilled. - 11:39**
 All the LORD's faithful servants during the Old Testament could only believe, serve and wait. They did not see the ultimate promise of a Savior fulfilled in their day. {*Luke 2:25-32; "For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."* Matthew 13:17}
 - b. **The better kingdom. - 11:40**
 The Savior has come and will come again. The first coming was worth waiting for and trusting in and so is the second coming. {*"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."* John 14:2-3}
4. Heroes today
- a. **Holding the doctrine.**
 The time for heroes of faith has not ended. We are still waiting for Christ's return, and we must be bold in that faith. The Great Commission remains at the top of agenda. Let us not become weary. {*Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16*}
 - b. **Eyes on the prize.**
 We must be ready at all times for the arrival of Jesus Christ. The message is urgent, and the ways to fall from faith are numerous. We must stand with the heroes by never losing sight of our goal – living forever with the LORD. {*"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."* Revelation 2:10-11; *"I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."* Revelation 3:11}

Reading for next time: Deuteronomy 27-28, 30

Chapter 11 – By Faith

1. What does “by faith” imply about creation?
2. List some examples of what made Abraham’s faith so great.
3. What events strengthened Isaac’s, Jacob’s and Joseph’s faith?
4. List some examples of what made Moses’ faith so great.
5. Describe why was Gideon named as a man of faith and his struggles.
6. Describe Elijah’s faith and weakness related in 1 Kings 17-19?
7. What made the faith of the later heroes of faith so notable?
8. Aside from their faith, what is characteristic of all the heroes of faith?

Hebrews

Chapter 12 – God’s Disciplines and Warnings

XX. God Disciplines His Sons

A. Understanding the standard

^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

1. Stripping down for the race. - **12:1**

Those who are part of the communion of saints are those who have turned their back on the sinful world and the trappings of respectability to whole-heartedly serve the LORD. If we want to stand with them, we must do the same. {*But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Colossians 3:8; So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 1 Peter 2:1*}

2. Look at Jesus’ accomplishments. - **12:2**

Jesus redeemed us by abandoning His eternal superiority and becoming one of us to save us, even though it led to unspeakable misery. {*“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Luke 24:26-27*}

3. Do not grow weary. - **12:3**

Vince Lombardi said, “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” The Christian life is a marathon where we must deal with the agony of the stress that befalls our souls and press onward to the goal. {*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9*}

B. Expect hard service

⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

1. Expect a bloody battle. - **12:4**

Christians must constantly prepare for the worst from Satan. That may be physical torture, ridicule and death or it may be the allurements of wealth and power. {*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13; And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:59-60*}

2. You have God's assurance. - **12:5a**

We must understand that the LORD is in complete control. He tests us to strengthen us, and we must accept that discipline as we would any training in life. *{Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death. Psalm 68:20}*

3. Sons should expect discipline. - **12:5b-6**

Every raw recruit into the army can expect to undergo a program of intense physical and mental conditioning to prepare for dangerous duty. It isn't pleasant, but it is necessary so that the person will be useful to the army. People become more than they think they can be through such training. *{Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law. Psalm 94:12}*

C. The discipline of a father

⁷ *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?* ⁸ *If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.* ⁹ *Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?* ¹⁰ *For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.* ¹¹ *For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

1. True sons are disciplined. - **12:7-8**

Sons are expected to grow up to be like their fathers; therefore, the fathers must give their sons the experiences that will help them grow into that image. To force the sons to endure the experiences, the fathers must exercise discipline. *{Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. Deuteronomy 8:5; Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. Proverbs 13:24}*

2. As with a human father, so with God. - **12:9-10**

The LORD's discipline is much better than a father's discipline because the LORD understands us perfectly, while fathers are burdened by human limitations. God is truly a full-time father with nothing else to distract Him. *{My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11-12}*

3. Purpose of discipline. - **12:11**

Education, training and discipline are seldom fun. They stress us. They make body and mind do what they do not want to do. Our bodies and souls ache. Yet who would be a concert musician or a sports star without innumerable hours of practice under a demanding director or coach. *{“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” John 15:2}*

D. Shape up

¹² *Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,* ¹³ *and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*

1. Strengthen yourselves. - **12:12**

“And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph song.” We must fight off the weariness by setting our minds on the triumph in heaven. {“*Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”* Isaiah 35:3-4}

2. Pave the way by diligence. - **12:13**

To run a successful race, one must have one’s head in the race, but one also has to have one’s eyes on the ground before you. The ground may not always be level, and the pace or path may need to be changed because of conditions, lest one fall or injure oneself. {*Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.* Proverbs 4:26-27}

XXI. Warning against Refusing God

A. Live in harmony

¹⁴ *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

¹⁵ *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶ that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.*

1. Live in peace and holiness. - **12:14**

“Don’t look for trouble” is a counsel that all parents give their children. As far as it is consistent with the Christian faith, we need to separate ourselves from petty squabbles and show ourselves humble. {*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”* Romans 12:18-19}

2. Avoid any “bitter root.” - **12:15**

Active church members can become bitter about occurrences within a congregation and turn from serving the LORD to serving one’s own intentions. This can poison one’s own faith and can also corrupt the faith of others. It is a leaven affecting the whole loaf of believers. {*Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit.* Deuteronomy 29:18}

3. Sexual immorality. - **12:16a**

Men love to talk of sexual exploits, and women love to hear gossip about them. It is such public airing of immorality that sends carnal pleasures into the heart more than some secret act that never becomes known. The entertainment media are a chief source of the type of scandal that gets everyone talking and that undermines the LORD’s purpose for sexuality. Enjoying sexual immorality vicariously is still enjoying it. {*But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.* Ephesians 5:3}

4. Esau. - **12:16b-17**

Is the pleasure of the moment worth the loss of a lifetime? Esau saw only the present and failed to consider the future. The present is always urgent in our minds, but the future is where we will be living. Those who fail to understand the consequences will eventually find it is too late to avoid them. {*Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Genesis 25:29-33*}

B. The giving of the Law

¹⁸*For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest* ¹⁹*and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.* ²⁰*For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."* ²¹*Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."*

1. What happened at Sinai was real. - **12:18**

Mount Sinai was spectacular when the Israelites stood before it to receive the law. The LORD wanted them to realize how great He was so that they would obey Him and realize that He had the power to uphold His side of the covenant. {*And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death....Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. Exodus 19:12, 18-19*}

2. It was overpowering. - **12:19**

It was so overwhelming that the people feared to hear the voice of the LORD lest they die. The LORD can certainly produce momentary fear, but as the Israelites continually demonstrated, such fear does not last very long. {*Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Exodus 20:18-19*}

3. It was demanding. - **12:20**

The stipulations for hearing the law were severe, and those of the law even more severe. It is little wonder that the people feared to be there. {*No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live. 'When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.'On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Exodus 19:13, 16*}

4. Even the prophets were afraid. - **12:21**

Even the prophets of the LORD were awestruck by His glory. Not even Moses probably ever grew completely comfortable with the power that the LORD could display at His choosing. {*My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments. Psalm 119:120*}

C. The invitation of the Gospel

²² *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

1. The inner sanctum. - **12:22a**

The kingdom of the LORD does not find itself confined to a place on earth, no matter how elegant, but it is located in realms unimaginable to the human mind. *{And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. Revelation 21:10}*

2. The holy host. - **12:22b-23a**

Inside heaven there is no need for the LORD to show His power to command respect. All who are there, saints and angels, are delighted and in a festive mood. The saints are all like first-born sons, enjoying all the glories of that position. *{Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands. Revelation 5:11}*

3. Judgment and justification. - **12:23b-24**

The whole of assembly of those washed by the blood of Jesus are present with their God and Lord. Those justified have passed through the final judgment unscathed and are now in eternal joy. *{Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?}* Genesis 18:25; *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"* Revelation 6:10; *Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* 2 Timothy 1:9-10}

D. Grace or Wrath

²⁵ *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷ This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.*

1. Blunt warning. - **12:25**

If the earthly warning to repent and obey the LORD led to death for those who ignored it, how much worse will be the punishment of those who ignore the heavenly warning? Ignore the teacher, and you will face the principal! *{But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Ezekiel 33:9}*

2. Shaken and shaken again. - **12:26-27**

The LORD has promised a final judgment in which the heaven and earth, as we know them, will be destroyed and in which all people will be held accountable for their rebellion against God. *{For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. Haggai 2:6-7; They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. Psalm 102:26-27}*

3. The case for thanksgiving. - **12:28**

When the final day comes, all that can be destroyed will be destroyed. The LORD's kingdom, however, will endure because it is not built of the visible and the physical, the things after which people so eagerly seek. If that is the kingdom we are attached to, then we will survive; otherwise, we will be condemned by God's wrath with the rest of creation. *{“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 10:12; Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Psalm 2:11}*

4. Looking into an inferno. - **12:29**

The brilliance of the LORD's glory is like the explosion of a hydrogen bomb. Who can endure that heat and light? It destroys all that it touches. In the same way the LORD will destroy all who resist Him. *{Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Exodus 24:17; For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. Isaiah 66:15}*

Reading for next time: 1 Kings 8:22 -9:9; John 15:18-17:26

Chapter 12 – God’s Disciplines and Warnings

1. What was included in the promises to the Israelites in the Deuteronomy readings?
2. What were the Israelites warned against? How would they be punished?
3. What reason does the opening of chapter 12 give the readers to remain loyal to Christ?
4. How should the readers of Hebrews view their sufferings?
5. Why do we often have a harder time accepting God’s discipline than man’s discipline?
6. What is the danger of “loose living” by Christians?
7. Why was the giving of the Law at Sinai so terrifying?
8. Contrast Mount Zion with Mount Sinai.

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Chapter 12 – God’s Disciplines and Warnings

I. Mount Ebal – mountain of witness

A. Altar – Deuteronomy 27:1-8

1. Field stones
2. Built without iron tools
3. Words of Law written on it

B. Curses and blessings – Deuteronomy 27:9-26

1. Blessings from Mount Gerizim
2. Curses from Mount Ebal
3. People to accept curses as just

II. Jesus’ prayer

A. Blessings for obedience – Deuteronomy 28:1-14

1. Bountiful produce and flocks
2. Numerous descendants
3. Victory over your enemies
4. Respect before the nations
5. The presence of the LORD among you

B. Curses for disobedience – Deuteronomy 28:15-68

1. Failure of crops and decline of flocks
2. Frequent diseases and plagues
3. Defeat by your enemies
4. Your descendants captured and killed
5. Aliens from within will overpower you
6. Exile, misery and death

III. Repentance and renewal

A. Repentance and renewal – Deuteronomy 30:1-10

1. Repentance required
2. The LORD will restore you to your land
3. Things will be as they were before your rebellion

A. Life or death – Deuteronomy 30:11-19

1. The covenant is clear and doable
2. Disaster for disobedience is certain
3. Choose life

Hebrews

Chapter 13 – Concluding Exhortations

XXII. Exhortations

A . Serve the household of faith

^{13:1} Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.... ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

1. Love your fellow members. - **13:1**

The Jews had been trained by the Law of Moses to be a close-knit community where helping others was part of a God-pleasing life. The writer to the Hebrews wanted this aspect of Jewish custom to be preserved, so he included it so people would not adopt the self-centered practices of their pagan neighbors. {*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* Romans 12:10}

2. Show hospitality. - **13:2, 16**

Receiving and helping strangers was another part of the culture of the Old Testament people. This too was to be retained because no one knows what plans the Lord has for those who are passing through. {“ *For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.* ” Matthew 25:35; Genesis 19}

3. Remember those suffering for the Gospel. - **13:2**

In the dog-eat-dog world of Roman times (and of today), we should remember that we are not dogs. We are redeemed sinners, and we should take opportunities to help others just as the Lord has helped us. {“ *I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.* ” Matthew 25:36}

B. Serve and trust the Lord

⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. ⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶ So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” ⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

1. Refrain from sexual immorality. - **13:4**

God always linked adultery and idolatry because both were examples of supreme unfaithfulness. The marriage bed was the place a Jewish wife set aside for sexual relations with her husband because they normally did not sleep together due to issues of ceremonial cleanliness. {*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Corinthians 6:9-10}

2. Do not love wealth. - **13:5**

The desire to have wealth will direct a people away from serving the LORD to serving the things necessary to gain wealth. Our focus should be kept on God who gives the wealth, who will be with us always and take care of us. {*“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”* Matthew 6:25; *“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:20b}

3. Trust in the Lord’s providence. - **13:6**

And beyond wealth, we should not fear the machinations of the society around us because the LORD has seen and will be there to deal with its schemes. {*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamps against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arises against me, yet I will be confident.* Psalm 27:1-3}

4. Follow and imitate your spiritual leaders. - **13:7**

The LORD calls our spiritual leaders not only to preach the word of God to us but also to live the word of God among us. We should honor them and follow their example of life. {*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.* 1 Thessalonians 5:12}

5. Jesus is a constant. - **13:8**

Since God is not a creature of time, He does not change. There will be no new Gospel somewhere down the road, so we can count on His message. {*Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”* John 8:58}

C. Do not get drawn into false doctrine

⁹Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

1. Avoid strange teachings. - **13:9a**

To human nature Biblical teaching is boring. People like new things, and the Bible does not change. Therefore many people look to those who teach something else as the true witnesses of God through whom God wants to speak to them. This is great folly. {*So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.* Ephesians 4:14}

2. Don’t worship with unconverted Jews. - **13:9b-10**

The Jews who continued to follow the old customs were in danger of going back to the old religion. At some point they needed to make a break with the past and concentrate on what was important for their future. {*Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?* 1 Corinthians 10:18}

3. Difference between symbolism and substance. - **13:11-12**

Once the blood of the animal for the sacrifice was removed from the offering to purify the people, the rest of the animal was taken outside the camp to be disposed of by burning. Those who burned it became unclean. It was not prime duty. Jesus too was thought to be unworthy and so was taken outside the holy city to be disposed of through the shameful process of being hung upon a wooden cross. {*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* Matthew 16:24; *He went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.* John 19:17}

4. Following Jesus means disgrace. - **13:13**

To identify with Christ is to identify with His shame. Our attitude should not be "let's party" but "let's rejoice" in the opportunity to identify with His shame in redeeming us. {*If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.* 1 Peter 4:14}

5. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. - **13:14**

The more we hope to make this world comfortable for us, the less we will look to the kingdom of the LORD. It is why the social gospel destroys the Gospel of Jesus Christ. {*But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Philippians 3:20}

D. Sacrificial Living

¹⁵ *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.* ¹⁶ *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

1. Let us live in thankfulness. - **13:15**

The Law of Moses required the giving of the first fruits to the LORD. The writer to the Hebrews calls now for a sacrifice of praise, a kind of first fruits of the lips. We praise God when we remember what He has done for us and tell others. {*Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephesians 5:20}

2. Do good. - **13:16**

Once again, the writer reminds his readers that the LORD still wants them to help those around them. {*Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.* Romans 12:13; *For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.* 2 Corinthians 9:12}

E. Follow and support your spiritual leaders

¹⁷ *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.* ¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.* ¹⁹ *I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

1. Obey your leaders. - **13:17**

One should do more than live as one's spiritual leaders live, one should obey and honor them. One should not ignore them or make their life more difficult for them. One should not break their hearts by living sinful lives or falling away from the church completely. *{Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 1 Timothy 5:17; "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul." Ezekiel 3:17-19}*

2. Pray for them. - **13:18**

Your leaders need your prayers because they have difficult work to perform for the LORD. In a world which does not want to hear the Biblical message and certainly does not want to live lives of service to the LORD, their tasks will never be easy. They will need divine help every step of the way. *{At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison. Colossians 4:3}*

3. Pray for the writer of the letter. - **13:19**

The writer wanted to come to them to be able to rejoice with them and help them in their struggle of faith. Something was preventing him, and he knew that their prayers would help overcome his problem. *{I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf. Romans 15:30}*

XXIII. Concluding remarks

A. Blessing

²⁰Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. The great gift of God. - **13:20**

Think always of what great thing the LORD has done for us. Everything needs to be done in His name for He means everything to us. *{Zechariah 9:9-11}*

2. The wherewithal to persevere. - **13:21**

We continue to need the LORD's help in all we do, both to sustain our faith and also to aid us in dealing with the things of this life. Without Him we can do nothing. *{For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13}*

B. Messages

²²I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

²³You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. ²⁴Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. ²⁵Grace be with all of you.

1. Plea to accept what was written. - **13:22**

No one likes to be told to shape up. We all think that we can get it right on our own. We should not be so cocky. We all need to accept spiritual guidance. *{By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. 1 Peter 5:12}*

2. Status of Timothy. - **13:23**

That the writer of this epistle is not Timothy is clear from this sentence. However, the writer is a co-worker with Timothy, and therefore almost certainly a member of Paul's extended ministry team. *{Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. Acts 16:1}*

3. Greetings. - **13:24**

Exchange of greetings was common at the end of letters. *{Romans 16:3-16}*

4. Final blessing. - **13:25**

The last word is a word of blessing. *{All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Titus 3:15}*

C. Summary

1. The contrast of the messengers - humans & angels vs. Son
2. The contrast of covenant - ownership of land vs. service in church
3. The contrast of reach of covenant - people of Israel vs. people of world
4. The high priest - descendant of Aaron vs. the Christ
5. The constant - need for faith and to be faithful

Contrast facing the Hebrews (Lesson 13)

	Old Covenant	New Covenant
Established by	LORD	LORD
Announced by	Messengers (men and angels)	Son of God
Nature of announcers	Mortal and/or subordinate	Eternal and ruler
Nature of covenant	Established chosen people	Established chosen people
Given to	Descendants of Israel	All people
Intermediate goal	Prepare for coming Messiah	Proclaim the Messiah who came
Ultimate goal	Heaven	Heaven
Earthly domain	Land of Canaan	Visible Church
Spiritual domain	Invisible church	Invisible church
Salvation through	Faith in coming Messiah	Faith in Jesus Christ
Primary human obligation	Study & keep the various laws	Study & proclaim the Gospel
Rescued from	Slavery in Egypt	Slavery to guilt under the Law
High Priest	Aaron and descendants	Jesus Christ
Sacrifices	Countless clean animals	Jesus Christ
Awaiting	Coming of the Messiah	Return of Jesus Christ
Human opposition	Godless neighboring nations	Godless neighbors
Spiritual danger	Turning back to “Egypt”	Turning back to Old Covenant
Physical danger	Subjugation & captivity	Persecution & ridicule
Constant	- - - - - The need for faith and to be faithful - - - - -	

Chapter 13 – Concluding Exhortations

1. Discuss Solomon's dedicatory prayer as a picture of the coming Christ.
2. In what ways did Jesus care for His flock in the reading from John?
3. What sins does the writer particularly want the readers to avoid? Why?
4. How should the spiritual leaders be treated?
5. How is the religious fellowship issue presented?
6. Why was Jesus' sacrifice viewed as disgraceful even by Jews who believed He was the Messiah?
7. How does prayer help people if God already knows what He will do?
8. What type of reception did the writer to the Hebrews expect his letter to receive?

Hebrews

Chapter 13 – Concluding Exhortations

I. Solomon's prayer

A. Thanks

1. The kingdom – 1 Kings 8:23-26
2. The temple of refuge – 1 Kings 8:27-30

B. Petitions

1. Judgment – 1 Kings 8:31-32
2. Defeat – 1 Kings 8:33-36
3. Famine and plague – 1 Kings 8:37-40
4. Foreigners – 1 Kings 8:41-43
5. War – 1 Kings 8:44-45
6. Exile – 1 Kings 8:46-51
7. Continued help – 1 Kings 8:52-53

C. Aftermath

1. Solomon blesses the people – 1 Kings 8:54-61
2. Dedication of the temple – 1 Kings 8:62-66
3. The LORD's renewed promise – 1 Kings 9:1-9

II. Jesus' prayer

A. Discourse on the ministry

1. Opposition of the world – John 15:18-16:4
 - a. They have hated me.
 - b. They will hate you.
 - c. I will send Holy Spirit.
2. The Work of the Holy Spirit – John 16:5-16
 - a. I must leave you.
 - b. I and the Father are equal.
 - c. There is much more for you to learn.
3. Grief turned to joy – John 16:17-28
 - a. I must leave for "a little while."
 - b. My Father loves you because you have believed.
 - c. My Father will answer prayers in my name.
4. Flight before the crucifixion – John 16:29-33

B. High priestly prayer

1. Prayer for Himself – John 17:1-5
2. Prayer for His disciples – John 17:6-19
 - a. I have served and trained them
 - b. Sanctify and help them after I leave
3. Prayer for all believers – John 17:20-26