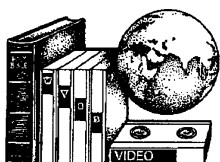


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



H E B R E W S

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HEBREWS

Syllabus

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Warren Wilcox.
- B. This course consists of 23 lessons on 8 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This is an in-depth study of the Letter to the Hebrews.
- B. It will provide a working knowledge of the book, including an understanding of the proper relationship between the Old and New Testaments and confirm the superiority of Jesus and His gospel.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 23 video lessons.
 - 3. Spiral bound class notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on Hebrews.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read Hebrews in its entirety at least three times.
- B. View each video lesson in its entirety.
- C. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- D. Submit a term paper (explained below).

- E. Take two written tests (explained below).
- F. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your original VBI application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.

- C. For *Hebrews*, the following verses must be memorized.

1:1,2	7:14
1:14	9:14
2:1	10:4
2:9	11:6
4:12	13:4
4:15	13:17
5:8,9	

- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your second written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There are two written tests.
- B. The first test covers chapters 1-6. The second covers chapter 7-13. When near chapter 6, contact VBI to request the first test. When you near the end of the course, contact VBI to request the second test.
- C. When you receive a test you have permission to look at it and study it prior to taking it.
- D. However, when you actually take the test you must do so completely from memory with no help from notes, Bible, textbook or tapes.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write a paper contrasting the Law of Moses with Christianity and demonstrating the superiority of the New Covenant as discussed in Hebrews.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of six pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of eight pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your second test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and tests will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the written tests counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all invoices for this particular course have been paid in full.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS

by
DAVID RICHARDSON

PRESENTED TO
WARREN WILCOX
BEAR VALLEY SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

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HEBREWS INTRODUCTION

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE EPISTLE.

- A. Shows the proper relationship between the Old and New Testaments.
- B. Explains more fully certain Old Testament passages and ideas.
- C. Contains sublime descriptions of dignity and glory of Christ.
- D. Shows the excellence of His sacrifice.
- E. Demonstrates the superiority of His gospel.
- F. Has important “exhorting” passages.
- G. Is of superior literary quality (finest style in the New Testament).

II. NAME OF THE EPISTLE AND RECIPIENTS.

- A. “To the Hebrews” is found in all our present MSS.
- B. Definitely to those familiar with the Jewish system - all contrasts are with Jewish background ideas.
- C. Probably to those in Palestine who were Jewish Christians.
 - 1. Many early historians agree.
 - 2. Certain passages would so indicate:
 - a. Jewish practices - 13:13.
 - b. Deprived of possessions - 10:34.
 - c. Sacrifices are still being offered - 8:4; 10:11.
 - d. From Italy - 13:24.
 - e. (Apparently) - A day of trial ahead - 10:25.

f. Not resisted unto blood - 12:4.

III. CHARACTER OF THE READERS.

2:3;	2:4;	3:1;	3:12;	5:12;	6:1;
6:10;	6:12;	10:32-34;	10:36;	12:4;	12:16;
13:4,5;	13:7;	13:9;	13:18,19;	13:23,24	

IV. PURPOSE - TO PREVENT APOSTASY FROM CHRISTIANITY TO JUDAISM.

- A. By showing it superior to Judaism (a God-given religion).
- B. By showing perfection and finality of Christ's priesthood.

V. DATE - ABOUT 63 (DEPENDING ON AUTHOR) BUT BEFORE 70.

VI. EARLY EVIDENCE OF ITS BEING COUNTED SCRIPTURE.

- A. Quoted as Scripture 96 A.D. by Clement of Rome.
- B. Justin - A.D. 140.
- C. Found in oldest versions of the New Testament.
- D. Found in oldest listings of the New Testament books.
- E. All its doctrines are in harmony with other Scripture.

HEBREWS OUTLINE

- I. Christ is superior to all other mediators and messengers. 1:1-3**
- II. Christ is superior to the angels. 1:4-2:18**
 - A. Showed Himself better. 1:4,5
 - B. He is to be worshiped by angels. 1:6
 - C. Angels are servants. 1:7
 - D. He is called God. 1:8
 - E. He is anointed. 1:9
 - F. He is the unchanging creator. 1:10-12
 - G. He is to be served by angels. 1:13,14
 - H. His gospel more binding than the Law. 2:1-4
 - I. As man He overcame and is superior to angels. 2:5-9
 - J. By being man He cannot be the propitiation. 2:10-18
- II. Christ is superior to Moses. 3:1-19**
 - A. Christ as son is greater than Moses as servant. 3:1-6
 - B. Beware of unbelief. 3:7-19
- III. Christ is superior to Joshua. 4:1-13**
 - A. Christ's rest superior to Joshua's. 4:1-10
 - B. Beware of disobedience. 4:11-13
- IV. Christ is superior as High Priest. 4:14-6:20**
 - A. Christ is High Priest in heaven. 4:14-5:3

B.	Christ is appointed by God Himself.....	5:4-10
C.	Beware of immaturity.	5:11-6:12
D.	God's "hope" for us.	6:13-20
V.	Christ is superior to Melchizedek.....	7:1-8:5
A.	Melchizedek priesthood superior to Levitical priesthood.....	7:1-10
B.	Christ superior by the power of an endless life.	7:11-25
C.	Christ superior by His superior sacrifice.	7:26-8:5
VI.	A better covenant.....	8:6-9:28
A.	The new covenant established.	8:6-13
B.	What the old covenant was.....	9:1-10
C.	Christ and the new covenant are superior.....	9:11-28
VII.	A better sacrifice.	10:1-31
A.	The inferiority of the old Law.....	10:1-4
B.	The superiority of Christ's sacrifice.....	10:5-18
C.	Beware of returning to the old Law.....	10:19-31
VIII.	Faith.	10:32-12:29
A.	The faith that saves.....	10:32-39
B.	By faith.	11:1-40
C.	Faith purified by chastening.	12:1-17
D.	The new Zion is superior.....	12:18-24
E.	Beware of losing faith.	12:25-29
IX.	Social and spiritual duties.	13:1-17
A.	Social duties.	13:1-6

B.	Spiritual duties.....	13:7-17
X.	Salutation.....	13:18-25

CHAPTER ONE

1. GOD AFTER HE SPOKE LONG AGO TO THE FATHERS -

God has always spoken to man (cf. Mt. 10:20; Lk. 1:45,70; Jn. 9:29; Acts 3:21; 7:6). Thus, the Hebrew writer begins by confirming that God did indeed reveal the Jewish system to “the fathers and prophets.”¹

IN THE PROPHETS -

According to Arndt and Gingrich, the Greek word, EN, shows that the prophets were the instrument by which God spoke.² Thus, a prophet was anyone who spoke for God. Cf. Num. 12:2; Amos 3:7,8.³

IN MANY PORTIONS -

POLUMEROS is a combination of POLUS and MEROS meaning “in many parts or parcels.”⁴ Nicoll explains that this adverb...

“points to the fragmentary character of former revelations. They were given piece-meal, bit by bit, part by part, as the people needed and were able to receive them. The revelation of God was essentially progressive; all was not disclosed at once, because all could not at once be understood.”⁵

AND IN MANY WAYS -

¹ Arthur W. Pink, An Exposition of Hebrews, Vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954, p. 21.

² William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 260.

³ W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. III, Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966, pp. 247,248.

⁴ Analytical Greek Lexicon, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, p. 335.

⁵ W. R. Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. IV, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 247,248.

POLUTROPOS is an adverb meaning “in various or manifold modes.”⁶ This is a reference to the various ways that God spoke to man in the Old Testament (i.e. voice, Ex. 24:4; dreams, Dan. 2:1; fingers, Dan. 5:5).⁷

2. IN THESE LAST DAYS -

What is meant by “last days?” There are three positions:

- “1. They refer simply to the closing period of the Jewish age (Moll).
2. They refer exclusively to the Christian age (Stuart).
3. They refer to the closing period of the prophetic era, embracing both the ministry of Christ and of His apostles (Luther).”⁸

Wright and Boatman see it as the third view.⁹

HAS SPOKEN TO US -

The verb, ELALESEN, is aorist tense and thus signifies that the speaking has been completed once for all time.¹⁰ (cf. Jude 3). God’s work was not final until Jesus came.¹¹

IN HIS SON -

“His” is not in the Greek text. The absence of the article is important.¹²

WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS -

“Heir,” KLERONOMON, means:

⁶ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 336.

⁷ Don Earl Boatman, Helps From Hebrews, Joplin: College Press, 1960, p. 18.

⁸ R. Milligan, “Epistle to the Hebrews,” The New Testament Commentary, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1963, p. 47.

⁹ J. E. Wright, Commentary on the Book of Hebrews, No listed publisher or place of publication, n.d., p. 28; Boatman, Helps from Hebrews, p. 18.

¹⁰ A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. V, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932, p. 334.

¹¹ F. F. Bruce, “The Epistle to the Hebrews,” The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964, p. 3.

¹² B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, p.7.

1. One who obtains a lot or portion.¹³
2. One who inherits anything by the will of another.¹⁴

Being “heir” was dependent upon Jesus being God’s son.¹⁵

THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLD -

“World,” AIONAS, use to mean “ages,” but now means “universe.”¹⁶

3. AND HE IS THE RADIANCE OF HIS GLORY -

“Radiance,” APAUGASMA, is a light coming from a luminous body; a light that you can see.¹⁷ cf. Jn. 14:9; Col. 1:15; 2:9. Jesus is the visible manifestation of God.

THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS NATURE -

“Exact representation,” CHARAKTER, originally referred to “a graving-tool,” but later came to refer to “the impression” made by that tool.¹⁸ “His nature,” HYPOSTASIS, originally meant “a substructure; a foundation,” but later came to be translated as “nature, substance, person, confidence, etc.”¹⁹ In substance Jesus is the same as God.

AND UPHOLDS ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER -

Barnes says Jesus does this “by His powerful word or command.”²⁰ Genesis chapter one and Mt. 8:23-27 tell of the power that is to be found in God’s word.

WHEN HE HAD MADE PURIFICATION OF SINS -

“Had made,” POIESAMENOS, is an aorist participle.²¹ This means that something was done in the past that will last for all time. And that something is the “purification of sins.”

¹³ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 212.

¹⁴ R. Milligan, p. 52.

¹⁵ B. F. Westcott, p. 7.

¹⁶ F. F. Bruce, p. 4; B. F. Westcott, p. 9.

¹⁷ Albert Barnes, Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975, p. 1224; William Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957, pp. 4,5.

¹⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. IV, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975, p. 383.

¹⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1224.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 1225.

²¹ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 333.

The middle voice indicates that the work of purification was done by Christ personally and not through some other agent.²²

HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH -

The “right hand,” DEXIOS, speaks of honor, power and dignity.²³

4. HAVING BECOME MUCH BETTER THAN THE ANGELS -

Jesus is superior to angels in rank, dignity and reverence.²⁴

HE HAS INHERITED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY -

The argument here is even though angels and saints, generally, are called “sons of God,” the title “The Son of God” has been given only to Jesus.²⁵

5. THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE -

The apostle Paul says this took place at the resurrection (Acts 13:33) to which Bruce agrees.²⁶

I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM -

According to Milligan, this thought is introduced to show the close relationship that exists between the Father and the Son.²⁷

6. AND WHEN HE AGAIN BRINGS THE FIRST-BORN INTO THE WORLD -

“First-born,” PROTOTOKOS, in this instance does not mean the first to be born, but rather indicates Christ’s “priority to, and preeminence over, creation.”²⁸

“The world,” OIKOUMENEN, means “the inhabited earth.” See Acts 17:6.²⁹

AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM -

²² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 384.

²³ Arthur W. Pink, p. 40.

²⁴ J. W. Wright, p. 37.

²⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1225.

²⁶ F. F. Bruce, p. 13.

²⁷ R. Milligan, p. 60.

²⁸ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 104.

²⁹ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 338.

These words occur in Dt. 32:43 where the Hebrew word “gods” becomes “angels” in the LXX.³⁰ Robertson says that PROSKUNESATOSAN, “worship,” is used here in “the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy.”³¹ The author’s point is: Nobody but God can be worshiped! cf. Rev. 22:8,9.

7. WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE -

“The Greek words describe the mutability, the materiality, and transitoriness of angelic service.”³² The point is “...they are only what God makes them according to the needs of their service, and are, therefore, changeable, in contrast with the Son, who is ruler and unchangeable.”³³

8. THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER -

“Thy Throne, O God,” HO THRONOS SOU THEOS, is the Articular Vocative. This occurs when there are two nominatives with the article and one cannot be the subject. This is the case here, HO THRONOS...HO THEOS are both in the nominative. This is not a strange construction. cf. Mt. 27:29; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 8:54; 12:32; 18:11,13. Barnes, Bruce and Lenski agree with the construction for this verse.³⁴

AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM -

“Scepter,” RHABDOS, is used here to mean “a ruler’s staff.”³⁵ Thus, the outstanding characteristic of Christ’s rule is righteousness.

9. THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS -

Christ was obedient to the Law of God, He was holy and upright. This truly describes the character of Jesus because He was “holy, harmless, undefiled who did no sin and in whose mouth no guile was found.”³⁶

HATH ANOINTED THEE -

³⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1227.

³¹ A. T. Robertson, p. 338.

³² B. F. Westcott, p. 25.

³³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 390.

³⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1229; F. F. Bruce, p. 19; R. C. H Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961.

³⁵ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 302.

³⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1229.

Anointing was an act of consecration common to ancient times.³⁷ It was used of; (1) Prophets, 1 Ki. 19:16; (2) Priests, Ex. 40:15; and (3) Kings, 1 Sam. 10:1.³⁸

ABOVE THY COMPANIONS -

Various scholars attribute “companions,” METOCHOUS, to angels, Christ’s disciples or to kings as the associates of Christ.³⁹ Regardless of what the Hebrew writer meant, the point is, Jesus is above them all.

10. AND...DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH -

It is important to recognize that this conjunction “and,” KAI, refers back to verses eight and nine (“But of the Son He says...”).⁴⁰ God is “exhibiting the superior dignity of the Son as creator in contrast with the creature.”⁴¹

“Didst lay,” ETHEMELIOSAS, is in the aorist tense⁴² which indicates that the “laying of the foundation of the earth” was not a continuous action.

11. THEY WILL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST -

“Will perish,” APOLOUNTAI, is the middle voice of APOLLUMI.⁴³ It is used in the sense of “to be lost, pass away, be ruined.”⁴⁴ “The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being.”⁴⁵

“But thou remainest,” DIAMENEIS, is in the present tense. This points up the contrast between the unchanging existence of Christ as opposed to the changing nature of the physical universe. cf. Heb. 1:8; 13:8.⁴⁶

12. AND AS A MANTLE THOU WILT ROLL THEM UP -

³⁷ Ibid.,
³⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 39.
³⁹ R. Milligan, p. 68.
⁴⁰ B. F. Westcott, p. 28.
⁴¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 391.
⁴² Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 115.
⁴³ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 340.
⁴⁴ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 95.
⁴⁵ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 302.
⁴⁶ Don Earl Boatman, p. 41.

The word for “mantle,” PERIBOLAION, “suggests a costly robe.”⁴⁷ The universe is represented as a “garment or mantle that might be folded up - language borrowed from folding up and laying aside garments that are no longer fit for use.”⁴⁸

AS A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED -

“Changed,” ALLAGESONTAI, is from the verb ALLASSO and means “to make other than it is (from ALLOS, another), to transform...”⁴⁹ In other words, like “another” of a different kind. cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END

-

Here is the contrast. While the physical universe will be changed Christ does not change, therefore, He is Divine.⁵⁰

13. SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND -

“Sit,” KATHOU, or “be sitting,” as distinguished from EKATHISEN, v.3, which marked the act of assuming the place.”⁵¹ “Right hand” is used in the same sense as v.3.

UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET -

“Footstool for thy feet” refers to an ancient custom of kings to tread on the necks of their vanquished enemies in token of their complete victory over them.⁵² All enemies of Christ will be defeated at His second coming. “The Messiah is to be exalted until all those foes are subdued. Then he will give up the kingdom to the Father. cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28.”⁵³

NOTE: This thought (vv. 1-13) is a refutation of Millennialism because, for one thing, if Millennialism was true Christ would be demoted from His throne in heaven to the earth as His “footstool.”

14. ARE THEY NOT MINISTERING SPIRITS? -

⁴⁷ B. F. Westcott, p. 29.
⁴⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1230.
⁴⁹ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 180.
⁵⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1230.
⁵¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 392.
⁵² Albert Barnes, p. 1231.
⁵³ Ibid.

“Ministering spirits,” LIETOURGIKA PNEUMATA, according to Vincent, is the summation of “the function of the angels as compared with Christ. Christ’s is the highest dignity. He is co-ruler with God. The angels are ‘servants,’ appointed for service to God for the sake of...the heirs of redemption.”⁵⁴

SENT OUT TO RENDER SERVICE -

“Sent out,” APOSTELLOMENA, means “sent forth repeatedly, from time to time as occasion requires.”⁵⁵ Robertson goes on to say, “We do not have here the doctrine of special guardian angels for each of us, but simply the fact that angels are used for our good.”⁵⁶ Thus, angels, do aid Christians, but how is not known.

FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO WILL INHERIT SALVATION -

Note that “salvation” is “inherited,” KLERONOMEIN. It is not “that which is received as the reward of law-keeping.”⁵⁷

So, the writer of Hebrews argues that Christ is superior to angels because of Who He is and What He is. He is Lord and Creator and angles minister to Him and His disciples.

CHAPTER TWO

1. FOR THIS REASON -

“For this reason,” DIA TOUTO, literally means “on account of this, for this cause, signifying the ground or reason.”⁵⁸ This suggests that a conclusion is to be drawn from the previous chapter, namely, since Jesus is superior to prophets and angels we need to pay more attention to what He has to say to us.

WE MUST -

Note the “we.” This shows the writer included himself in the admonition. “Must,” DEI, is “an impersonal verb, signifying ‘it is necessary’ or one ‘must,’ ‘one ought...’”⁵⁹ Westcott

⁵⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 392.

⁵⁵ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 341.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 258.

⁵⁸ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, p. 175.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 93.

explains that “the word marks a logical necessity and not a moral obligation: ‘we must’ rather than ‘we ought.’”⁶⁰

PAY MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION -

“Pay much closer attention,” PERISSOTEROS PROSECHEIN, literally means “to give heed more abundantly.”⁶¹ In other words, “Pay more attention to the words of Jesus.”

LEST WE DRIFT AWAY FROM IT -

The word “lest” indicates that one can “drift away.” cf. Jn. 5:19,20; Gal. 6:1, 2; 1 Jn. 1:7. “Drift,” PARARUOMEN, used in the sense:

1. Of a ship that was not moored and drifting uncontrolled with the tide.
2. For snow slipping off a solidifier’s dead body.⁶²

Apostasy does not happen all at once. The writer is warning that it will not even be noticed because it happens so slow and gradual.

2. FOR IF -

“For if,” ‘EI GAR,’ means this is a First Class Conditional sentence, “assumed as true.”⁶³

SPOKEN THROUGH ANGELS -

Angels are connected with the Law and the giving of the Old Law. cf. Dt. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19; Josephus, ANTIQUITIES., XV.v.3.⁶⁴ The exact function of angels is unknown, but in some way they were involved. Since the Old Law was spoken by angels (Dt. 33:2) and Jesus is superior to the angels (Heb. 1: 4) it follows that what Jesus has to say is better in all ways.

EVERY TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE -

“Transgression,” PARABASIS, refers to breaking a positive command.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ B. F. Westcott, p. 36.

⁶¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 393.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 342.

⁶⁴ W. R. Nicoll, Vol. IV, p. 259.

⁶⁵ B. F. Westcott, p. 38.

“Disobedience,” PARAKOE, is neglecting to obey what you hear.⁶⁶

RECEIVED A JUST RECOMPENSE -

“Recompense,” MISTHAPODOSIAN, “indicates a payment of wages earned. The wages of sin is death - that is fair payment earned by sin.”⁶⁷ God punishes justly our disobedience.

3. HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE -

The “we” is emphatic. The author here uses a rhetorical question to express denial.⁶⁸ There is no escape.

IF WE NEGLECT -

“Neglect,” AMELESANTES, carries with it the idea of “having disregard.”⁶⁹ “To ‘neglect’ salvation is to disregard it or fail to show concern and care for it. Neglect is a positive wrong consisting of a lack of action. By doing nothing one does wrong.”⁷⁰

SO GREAT A SALVATION -

“Salvation,” SOTERIAS, here refers to the Gospel.⁷¹ The writer is contrasting the Gospel with the Law. The Gospel is “great” because:

1. It was first proclaimed by the Lord Himself (Heb. 1:1-3).
2. It was confirmed by those who heard (Heb. 2:4).
3. It was certified by God through signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:4).

CONFIRMED TO US BY THOSE WHO HEARD -

Some think that the use of the word “us” is proof that Paul could not have written Hebrews.

⁶⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 394.

⁶⁷ Edward Fudge, Our Man in Heaven, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973, p. 26.

⁶⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 394.

⁶⁹ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 107.

⁷⁰ Edward Fudge, p. 26.

⁷¹ Arthur W. Pink, Vol. I, p. 87.

4. SIGNS, WONDERS, VARIOUS MIRACLES, GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT -

This verse indicates four terms to describe “miracles.” cf. Acts 2:22.⁷² “Signs,” SEM-EIOIS, emphasizes their design and purpose.⁷³ “Wonders,” TERASIN, emphasizes their effect.⁷⁴ “Miracles,” DUNAMESIN, (“powers,” according to the NASV footnote) emphasizes their might.⁷⁵ “Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” PNEUMATOS HAGIOU MERISMOS, emphasizes the source of distribution.⁷⁶ “Freely translated, our author says that God added witness upon witness, piling testimony together.”⁷⁷

ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL -

These gifts were distributed by the Holy Spirit as He willed. cf. 1 Cor. 12:11.

5. FOR HE DID NOT SUBJECT TO ANGELS THE WORLD TO COME -

The NASV is accurate in rendering “the world to come,” OKIOUMENE, as “the inhabited earth.”⁷⁸ God put “the inhabited earth” under the subjection of man, not angels.

6. ONE TESTIFIED SOMEWHERE, SAYING -

This phrase does not mean “that the writer is ignorant of the author or of the place, but assumes that the readers know it...”⁷⁹

THE SON OF MAN -

“Son of Man,” HUIOS ANTHROPOU, does not refer to Jesus here.⁸⁰ Barclay gives three reasons why the phrase does not apply to Jesus: (1) The reference in Psalm eight (from which the phrase is taken) is to man; (2) in Hebrew the phrase means a man, cf. Ezk. 21:2; 30:2; (3) the two parallel phrases in v.6 are different ways of saying the same thing.⁸¹ Thus, “Son of Man” - refers to mankind, not Christ, here.

7. FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS -

⁷² A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 343.

⁷³ R. Milligan, p. 79.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ NASV, footnote.

⁷⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 27.

⁷⁸ William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 561.

⁷⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 397.

⁸⁰ William Barclay, pp. 15,16. Edward Fudge, p. 28. A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 344. Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 397.

⁸¹ William Barclay, pp. 15,16.

“Little,” BRACHU, can mean “little of degree” or “little of time.”⁸² Thus, It makes no difference whether it reads “a little lower” (NASV footnote) or “little while lower,” the end result is the same.

“Lower than the angels,” ELATTOSAS PAR’ AGGELOUS, is “lower than God (ELO-HIM)” in the Hebrew Text.⁸³ Since the Septuagint translators understood this to mean that which is divine they applied it to angels as having divine qualities.⁸⁴ The original meaning of this phrase was probably: “Man was made ‘a little less than one of divine nature.’”⁸⁵

8. THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET -

This has reference to man’s original dominion over “all things” back in the Garden of Eden. cf. Gen. 1:26-28.

WE DO NOT YET SEE ALL THINGS SUBJECTED TO HIM -

Man lost his ability to rule over “all things” through disobedience.⁸⁶ But Heb. 2:9 tells us that man can regain what was lost through Jesus. William Barclay sums up vv. 5-9 by saying the writer of Hebrews shows us three things: (1) the ideal of what man should be; (2) the actual state of man; and (3) how the actual man can be changed into what he should be, ideally.⁸⁷

9. JESUS -

While man is not what he should be, we do see somebody who is what He should be, “Jesus,” IESOUN.⁸⁸

BECAUSE OF THE SUFFERING -

“Suffering” caused Jesus to be glorified and honored.⁸⁹

GLORY AND HONOR -

⁸² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 398.

⁸³ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 345.

⁸⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 398.

⁸⁵ B. F. Westcott, p. 44.

⁸⁶ J. E. Wright, p. 51.

⁸⁷ William Barclay, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 29.

⁸⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 400.

Interestingly, these same two words are used to describe Aaron's priestly garments (Ex. 28:2).⁹⁰ It is interesting because of the author's upcoming discussion of Christ's Priesthood.

10. FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM -

"Fitting," EPREPEN, carries with it the idea of a moral obligation.⁹¹ The writer seems to be saying: It was morally necessary for God to send His Son to die if He wanted to save man and "bring many sons to glory."

FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND THROUGH WHOM ARE ALL THINGS -

"For whom," DI' HON, refers to God and "through whom," DI' HOU, expresses the agent by whom the universe came into existence... cf. Ro. 11:36; Heb. 1:2.⁹²

BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY -

This is done through the death of Jesus.⁹³

TO PERFECT THE AUTHOR OF THEIR SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERINGS

"Perfect," TELEIOSAI, does not mean that Jesus was imperfect, but that He was incomplete until He suffered death.⁹⁴ "Author," ARCHEGON, means "leader, ruler, prince, originator, founder."⁹⁵ This word is translated "Prince" in Acts 3:15; 5:31.⁹⁶ It literally means "Chief Leader."⁹⁷

Westcott says, "The ARCHEGON first takes part in that which he establishes."⁹⁸ Through His death, Jesus became the partaker of that which He established, salvation.

11. HE WHO SANCTIFIES AND THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED -

⁹⁰ W. E. Vine, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London: Oliphants Ltd., 1965, p. 25.

⁹¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 401.

⁹² A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 347.

⁹³ F. F. Bruce, p. 44.

⁹⁴ B. F. Westcott, p. 49.

⁹⁵ Arndt & Gingrich, p. 112.

⁹⁶ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 88.

⁹⁷ Arthur W. Pink, p. 114.

⁹⁸ B. F. Westcott, p. 49.

“The Sanctifier is Jesus and the Sanctified are the many sons who are being brought to glory.”⁹⁹

ALL FROM ONE -

“All from one,” EX HENOS, literally means “out of one.” This can refer to one family, spirit, Father or nature.¹⁰⁰ In view of the fact that Jesus is not “ashamed to call them (the sanctified) brethren,” it appears the phrase is saying “out of one Father or source.”

12. IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING THY PRAISE -

“Congregation,” EKKLESIAS, refers to the church.¹⁰¹ Thus, “those whom the Son of God is pleased to call His brethren are the members of His church.”¹⁰²

13. I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM -

This quote may come from either Ps. 18:3 or 2 Sam. 22:3, but more than likely comes from Isa. 8:17.¹⁰³ Note that the word is “trust,” PEPOITHOS, not “faith,” PISTIS. Jesus did not have faith in God, but He did trust in God.¹⁰⁴ Like Jesus, we also must trust in God, but unlike Jesus, we must also believe in God.

14. SINCE THEN THE CHILDREN SHARE IN FLESH AND BLOOD -

According to the marginal reading, “flesh and blood” reads “blood and flesh” in the original. Apparently it was “a standing phrase for human nature in contrast with God in Rabbinical writings.”¹⁰⁵ Jesus became flesh (Jn. 1:14) in order to help us who live in the flesh.

THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT RENDER POWERLESS -

“Through death” was the way that God planned to render Satan powerless.¹⁰⁶ “Powerless,” KATARGESEI, literally means “to reduce to inactivity.”¹⁰⁷ The KJV says “destroy him” (the devil), but this is not true. Jesus rendered him “powerless.” cf. 1 Jn. 3:8. Jesus took away the “sting” of death. cf. 1 Cor. 15:55,56. As Edward Fudge expresses

⁹⁹ Arthur W. Pink, p. 119.
¹⁰⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1239.
¹⁰¹ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 348.
¹⁰² F. F. Bruce, p. 46.
¹⁰³ Edward Fudge, p. 31.
¹⁰⁴ Don Earl Boatman, p. 75.
¹⁰⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 404.
¹⁰⁶ B. F. Westcott, p. 53.
¹⁰⁷ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 13.

it, "When Christ entered the grave...He was not bound. Rather He walked in free-handed, picked up the keys and came out again in triumph! (See Rev. 1:7,18)."¹⁰⁸

15. MIGHT DELIVER THOSE WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH -

According to Milligan (quoted by J. E. Wright) "fear of death" is caused from three things. (1) Fear of separation from this material world; (2) Fear of the darkness and corruption of death; (3) Fear of the unchangeable destiny beyond.¹⁰⁹ Jesus died to free us from this fear. cf. 2 Tim. 1:10.

16. HE DOES NOT GIVE HELP... BUT HE GIVES HELP TO THE SEED OF ABRAHAM -

While "give help," EPILAMBANETAI, does literally mean "take hold of" (NASV footnote), it can also carry the idea of "helping."¹¹⁰ Again, while the "seed of Abraham," SPERMATOS, does mean "offspring" (marginal reading), it does not refer to Abraham's physical descendants, but rather to those who are children of faith. cf. Gal. 3:7.¹¹¹ "The absence of the article shows that a character and not a concrete people ('the Jews') is described."¹¹² This "help" that Jesus gives us comes through His blood (v.14).

17. HE HAD TO BE -

Jesus "had" or "was obligated to be" (NASV footnote) out of "a necessity, owing to the nature of the matter under consideration..."¹¹³ If Jesus was going to save us, He had to do something.

MADE LIKE HIS BRETHREN -

Jesus had to be like us, except for yielding to sin, in order to be a faithful High Priest.¹¹⁴

THAT HE MIGHT BECOME A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST -

"Merciful," ELEEMON, "is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him

¹⁰⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ J. E. Wright, p. 64.

¹¹⁰ B. F. Westcott, p. 54.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, p. 115.

¹¹⁴ A. T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 350.

who shows it.”¹¹⁵ Jesus is a High Priest that will give us the benefit of the doubt. “Faithful,” PISTOS, carries with it the idea of “trustworthiness” and “fidelity.”¹¹⁶ The idea is that because He had become like man in all things, He was better qualified to have compassion on the erring and to discharge with reliability, as a High Priest, all His duties to God (3:2,6) and to man (10:23).¹¹⁷

TO MAKE PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE -

“Propitiation,” HILASKESTHAI, means “a covering.”¹¹⁸ The same Greek word is used to translate the word “mercy-seat” which the blood was sprinkled on to cover sins in the Septuagint.¹¹⁹ Note that HILASKESTHAI is present infinitive and as such refers to a continuous application to man. This application is for the sins of all the obedient. It is not a sacrifice limited to the Jews, but to those of “the faith.”¹²⁰ In order, however, for all of this to take place, it was necessary for Christ to become like man in all things, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Then, and only then, could He make the perfect sacrifice once for all.¹²¹

18. FOR SINCE HE HIMSELF WAS TEMPTED IN THAT WHICH HE HAS SUFFERED -

“Christ had been tempted through every possible allurements and enticement of Satan including an undeserved death.”¹²² He knew temptation and suffering in the whole area of life and because of that can be sympathetic concerning the whole life.¹²³

HE IS ABLE TO COME TO THE AID OF THOSE WHO ARE TEMPTED -

To be “tempted,” PEIRAZOMENOIS, is to be “tried,” “tested,” or “proved.”¹²⁴ Christ is capable and ready to help the tempted because of His own experience with human temptation. Albert Barnes expresses it like this:

“The idea is, that one who has himself been called to suffer, is able to sympathize with those who suffer; one who has been tempted, is able to sympathize with those who are tempted in like manner; one who has been

¹¹⁵ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 60.

¹¹⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 408.

¹¹⁷ R. Milligan, p. 123.

¹¹⁸ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 224.

¹¹⁹ Arndt & Gingrich, p. 375.

¹²⁰ B. F. Westcott, p. 58.

¹²¹ R. Milligan, p. 125.

¹²² Edward Fudge, p. 34.

¹²³ B. F. Westcott, p. 58.

¹²⁴ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 116.

sick, is qualified to sympathize with the sick; one who has lost a child, can sympathize with him who follows his beloved son or daughter to the grave; one who has had some strong temptation to sin urged upon himself, can sympathize with those who are now tempted; one who has never been sick, or who has never buried a friend, or been tempted, is poorly qualified to impart consolations in such scenes.”¹²⁵

Since Jesus has experienced temptations as a human being, He can provide us with three things (1 Cor. 10:13):

1. Strength - to withstand (Eph. 6:13).
2. Consolation - for the spirit (Ro. 8:28).
3. Deliverance - (1 Cor. 10:13).¹²⁶

CHAPTER THREE

1. THEREFORE, HOLY BRETHREN -

“Therefore,” HOTHEN, “gives a connecting link between the two chapters which precede and the two that follow.”¹²⁷ In calling the people “holy brethren,” ADELPHOI HAGIOI, the writer does so not because of their race or nationality, but because of their belief.¹²⁸ They are brethren in Christ and they are called holy not because of a holy heart required by the Gospel, but because of their belief in Christ and having put Him on.¹²⁹ The word for “holy,” HAGIOI, literally means “brothers who are set apart (from the world and sin) and are dedicated (to the service of God through Christ).”¹³⁰ This is the only place in the New Testament where Christians are referred to by this term.¹³¹

PARTAKERS OF A HEAVENLY CALLING -

The word “partaker,” METOTCHOI, means “to have a share of, to share with, take part in...”¹³² The word for “calling,” KLESOS, “is always used in the New Testament of that calling the origin, nature and destiny of which are heavenly (the idea of invitation being

¹²⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1243.
¹²⁶ Don Earl Boatman, pp. 83,84.
¹²⁷ Arthur W. Pink, p. 153.
¹²⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 89.
¹²⁹ R. Milligan, p. 111.
¹³⁰ Edward Fudge, p. 35.
¹³¹ A.T. Robertson, p. 353.
¹³² W.E. Vine, p. 162.

implied); it is used especially of God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation ..."¹³³ That invitation comes by way of the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).

CONSIDER JESUS, THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST -

The word for "consider," KATANOESATE, means literally "to learn thoroughly..., hence, to note accurately, consider well..."¹³⁴ They were to do this regarding Jesus. They were to consider Him as an APOSTOLON, an "Apostle." "In calling Jesus 'Apostle,' the writer is thinking of Moses as one 'sent' by God to lead Israel to Canaan."¹³⁵ While Moses was sent by God, he is "never called an apostle."¹³⁶ They were also to "consider" Jesus as ARCHIEREA, "High Priest." We, too, need to consider Jesus as our High Priest. As "Apostle" Jesus was God's representative, as "High Priest" He is our representative before God.¹³⁷ F. F. Bruce expresses it in this manner: "He is marked out as being both God's representative among men and men's representative in the presence of God. For He is not only, as has been emphasized already, the one in whom God has revealed Himself finally and completely, but also the perfect embodiment of man's obedient response to God."¹³⁸

OF OUR CONFESSION -

The word for "confession," HOMOLOGIAS, means literally, "to speak the same thing ..., to assent, accord, agree with..."¹³⁹ This refers to our "confession" at baptism where we acknowledge Jesus as Christ and Lord. cf. Ro. 10:9,10.¹⁴⁰ Addressing his audience to "consider Jesus well," the writer of Hebrews gives four reasons for considering Jesus:

1. He was faithful to God (3:2).
2. He was appointed by God (3:2).
3. He is worthy of more glory than Moses (3:3-5).
4. He is God's Son (3:6).

2. HE WAS FAITHFUL TO HIM WHO APPOINTED HIM -

¹³³ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 165.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 230.

¹³⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 410.

¹³⁶ Edward Fudge, p. 36.

¹³⁷ Arthur W. Pink, p. 155.

¹³⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 55.

¹³⁹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 224.

¹⁴⁰ Edward Fudge, pp. 36,37.

Boatman suggest four ways in which the faithfulness of Jesus stands out:

1. "He was faithful to God in temptation."
2. "He was faithful to God in the miracles, giving God the glory."
3. "He was faithful in God's work, His Father's business. Lk. 2:49; Heb. 3:2."
4. "He was faithful even in death. Mt. 26:42; Jn. 17:4;19:30. We may believe that He is now faithful in being our High Priest."¹⁴¹

"Appointed," POIESANTI, means "to make, constitute, appoint to some office," Mt. 4:19; Mk. 3:14.¹⁴² Jesus was officially appointed by God to serve as High Priest.

AS MOSES ALSO WAS IN ALL HIS HOUSE -

Moses was faithful in all of God's house (Nu. 12:6-8). "House" in Nu. 12 refers to the nation of Israel, the family of God.¹⁴³

3. HE HAS BEEN COUNTED TO BE WORTHY OF MORE GLORY THAN MOSES

"Glory," DOXES, is used "of good reputation, praise, honor," Lk. 14:10; Jn. 5: 41.¹⁴⁴ It was not a matter of Moses having no glory, but rather Jesus having more praise and honor.

JUST SO MUCH AS THE BUILDER..HAS MORE HONOR THAN THE HOUSE -

"The idea here is...that he who is the maker of the house - the architect is worthy of more respect than the house itself."¹⁴⁵

4. EVERY HOUSE BUILT BY SOMEONE...BUILDER OF ALL THINGS IS GOD -

"The purpose of this verse is to establish the deity of Jesus."¹⁴⁶ "Christ has not only built 'the house,' but 'all things.' Christ is not only Mediator, 'appointed' by God (v.2), but He is God."¹⁴⁷ In the words of F. F. Bruce:

¹⁴¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 91.

¹⁴² Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 332.

¹⁴³ J.E. Wright, p. 73.

¹⁴⁴ W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 153.

¹⁴⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1244.

¹⁴⁶ Don Earl Boatman, p. 92.

¹⁴⁷ Arthur W. Pink, p. 160.

“No distinction can be made between the Father and the Son in this regard: God the Father, the Maker of all things, is inevitably the founder of His own household and it was through His Son that He brought into being all things in general and His own household in particular.”¹⁴⁸

This seems like it would go against the Jehovah Witness position of Christ as a created being and that He is not God.

5. NOW MOSES WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE AS A SERVANT -

The term used of Moses as “servant,” THERAPON, is “akin to THERAPEUO, to serve, to heal, an attendant, is a term of dignity and freedom.”¹⁴⁹

FOR A TESTIMONY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE TO BE SPOKEN
LATER

Boatman suggests Moses served as a witness in the following ways:

1. “He was a herald of a doctrine to be published later .”
 2. “He was forerunner of a coming prophet. Dt. 18:15.”
 3. “His example is for all. 1 Cor. 10:11”¹⁵⁰
6. BUT CHRIST WAS FAITHFUL AS A SON OVER HIS HOUSE WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE, IF WE HOLD FAST OUR CONFIDENCE AND THE BOAST OF OUR HOPE FIRM UNTIL THE END -

This verse is stressing the superiority of a son over a servant. The Hebrews writer is making the same argument in his Moses/Christ comparison as he did in his comparison of Christ and the angels in chapter one. The angels are servants (1:14) and so was Moses a servant also.¹⁵¹ The church is the house of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15). Remember the writer is talking to “holy brethren.” Because they are “holy brethren” they are a part of the house of God, even as much as “living stones” (1 Pet. 2:4,5). “If we hold fast” definitely indicates the possibility of not staying in His house if we don’t “hold fast our confidence and boast.” According to Boatman (quoting Milligan), “confidence” PARRESIAN, means “an inward state of full and undisturbed confi-

¹⁴⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 57.

¹⁴⁹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 348.

¹⁵⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 93.

¹⁵¹ James Thompson, “The Letter to the Hebrews,” The Living Word Commentary, Austin: R.B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1971, p. 51.

dence.¹⁵² Regarding “the boast of our hope” cf. 1 Cor. 1:31; 2:2; Gal. 6:14. A Christian who turns back has lost everything!¹⁵³

7. THEREFORE, JUST AS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE” -

The point the writer is trying to make is though Moses was faithful, the Israelites still fell in the wilderness. The comparison for the Hebrews is: “Just because you have a superior leader (Christ) and just because you have been brought out of bondage of sin does not mean you are automatically going to get to the promise land, either.” In the following warning the author relates the story of Israel’s failure to persevere in order to warn the church against falling by the same kind of disobedience (4:11).¹⁵⁴ When the writer states that the “Holy Spirit says” he gives reference to the fact that Psalm 95:7-11 is inspired scripture.¹⁵⁵ In his applying the passage from Psalm 95 to those to whom he is writing he is showing that the admonition is as relevant to those under the Christian age as it is to those who were under the Jewish age.

8. DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS -

In the Septuagint, the words from which “provoked,” PARAPIKRASMOI and “the day of trial,” PEIRASMOU, come are MERIBAH and MASSAH in Hebrew. These words refer back to the Israelites murmuring for water in Ex. 17:1 (cf. Nu. 27:14) where Moses called the name of the place “temptation” (MASSAH) and “strife” (MERIBAH).¹⁵⁶ The comparison the Hebrews writer is making to the Jewish Christians is that the real problem in their potential apostasy was a lack of trust in the work of Christ as Priest and Savior. This “hardening of one’s heart” was sinful and the same kind that led to the Israelites’ destruction in the wilderness.¹⁵⁷

9. WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED ME BY TESTING ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS -

“Testing,” DOKIMASIA, means “tempted by putting to the test.” It carries with it the idea of “trying with a view to seeing how far one can go.”¹⁵⁸ By testing God, Israel found out by experience (forty years) that He was indeed Who He said He was. The Israelites had been told not to try God (Dt. 6:16), hence, they should not have done it. Their

¹⁵² Don Earl Boatman, p. 94.
¹⁵³ B.F. Westcott, p. 78.
¹⁵⁴ James Thompson, p. 53.
¹⁵⁵ B.F. Westcott, p. 80.
¹⁵⁶ J.E. Wright, p. 77.
¹⁵⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 40.
¹⁵⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 416.

actions were very trying on the patience of God, yet it proved that He meant every word He spoke.¹⁵⁹

10. THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART; AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS;' -

"This generation" (referring to the people who were just brought out of Egypt) had by their repeated transgressions caused God to be angry. The original Hebrew word carries the meaning of "being disgusted with a person or thing."¹⁶⁰ The word for "go astray," PLANONTAI, means "to get off the path. cf. Jas. 5:19,20; 1 Pet. 5:25.¹⁶¹ It is the wanderings of their "hearts" that is mentioned here. Note that they "always" strayed, thus giving us a picture of the hopeless state they were in.¹⁶² cf. Dt. 9:24. If the Israelites had "known God's ways," they might have entered the promised land rather than "getting off the path."

11. AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'" -

In Nu. 14:30-35 God stated that they shall not enter His rest.¹⁶³ The sentence God pronounced was final, being confirmed by His oath, "swore." The "rest" they were not going to enter was that of the promised land. It is called "rest" because it ends their wilderness trials and travels.¹⁶⁴ This is also a type of eternal rest of heaven and so the warnings in the coming verses.¹⁶⁵

12. TAKE CARE, BRETHREN, LEST THERE SHOULD BE IN ANY ONE OF YOU AN EVIL UNBELIEVING HEART, IN FALLING AWAY FROM THE LIVING GOD -

"Take care," BLEPETE, means "to look, see, usually implying more especially an intent, earnest contemplation..."¹⁶⁶ The Hebrews writer is making the point: "The Israelites fell in unbelief, you 'holy brethren' (3:1), take care to see that you don't fall like they did." An "unbelieving heart," APISTIAS, "denotes obstinacy, obstinate rejection of the will of God; hence, 'disobedience...'"¹⁶⁷ Let the "heart" become evil and distrustful and a "falling away" begins. In context, the temptation was not to become atheists, but to

¹⁵⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 100.
¹⁶⁰ J.E. Wright, p. 78.
¹⁶¹ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 326.
¹⁶² Albert Barnes, p. 1246.
¹⁶³ Don Earl Boatman, p. 101.
¹⁶⁴ Arthur W. Pink, p. 173.
¹⁶⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1246.
¹⁶⁶ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 210.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 319.

abandon Christianity for Judaism.¹⁶⁸ NOTE: Many commentators speak of the “falling away” as supporting the theory of “Once-Saved-Always-Saved.” God is also called the “Living God” (as opposed to dead idols) in 9:14; 10:31; 12:22. (See NASV footnote).

13. BUT ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER DAY AFTER DAY, AS LONG AS IT IS STILL CALLED “TODAY,” LEST ANY ONE OF YOU BE HARDENED BY THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN -

“Encourage,” PARAKALEITE, is the same word from which “advocate” and “comforter” is derived and carries with it the idea of “calling to one’s side, and so to one’s aid...”¹⁶⁹ The point is, they were to “encourage one another” as a group. (cf. 1 Tim. 6:2). The reason they were to do it as a group is because sin deceives us. That is, if we allow it to happen. So they needed to encourage one another as a group so that would not happen. And so should we. “Sin,” here, does not refer to individual sins, but to the general failure of disobedience (cf. 3:18,19).¹⁷⁰

14. FOR WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS OF CHRIST, IF WE HOLD FAST THE BEGINNING OF OUR ASSURANCE FIRM UNTIL THE END -

This statement is conditional as was v. 6b. Note the similarities: “... whose house we are...” (“...partakers of Christ...”) if we hold fast “until the end.”¹⁷¹ “Assurance,” HUPO-STASEOS, literally means “standing under” or, in other words, “confidence, assurance, conviction.”¹⁷² This refers to the basis for their becoming a Christian, they believed. The Hebrew Christians were sharers in Christ, but only if they held their faith firm “until the end.” “As the Israelites under Moses fell after they had begun, so Christians will be Christ’s partners in glory only if they are faithful until the conclusion of life and the attaining of the goal.”¹⁷³

15. WHILE IT IS SAID, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.” -

As in 4:7, the author of Hebrews quotes Psa. 95:7 in order to emphasize that the warning applies to his own day.¹⁷⁴ “When they provoked Me” refers to what the Israelites had done under Moses and it provoked God.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ Arthur W. Pink, p. 175.
¹⁶⁹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 60.
¹⁷⁰ James Thompson, p. 57.
¹⁷¹ Ibid.
¹⁷² W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 225.
¹⁷³ Edward Fudge, p. 42.
¹⁷⁴ James Thompson, p. 58.
¹⁷⁵ J. E. Wright, p. 80.

16. FOR WHO PROVOKED HIM WHEN THEY HAD HEARD? INDEED, DID NOT ALL THOSE WHO CAME OUT OF EGYPT LED BY MOSES? -

The word for “provoked,” PAREPIKRANAN, means “to make bitter.”¹⁷⁶ Those who came out of Egypt under Moses aroused God to anger by their unbelief, even though they had heard God’s word. Hearing does not guarantee salvation. The fate of Christians who follow One superior to Moses and yet disobey (commit apostasy) will also be severe.¹⁷⁷

17. AND WITH WHOM WAS HE ANGRY FOR FORTY YEARS? WAS IT NOT WITH THOSE WHO SINNED, WHOSE BODIES FELL IN THE WILDERNESS? -

“Angry,” PROSOCHTHISEN, means “to be vexed, offended...”¹⁷⁸ God felt this way about the Israelites for forty years. The word for “bodies,” KOLA, is literally the word “carcass” and “primarily denotes a member of a body, especially the external and prominent members, particularly the feet, and so, a dead body...”¹⁷⁹ The writer’s point is that because of their disobedience, they paid severe consequences.¹⁸⁰

18. AND TO WHOM DID HE SWEAR THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ENTER HIS REST, BUT TO THOSE WHO WERE DISOBEDIENT? -

“His rest,” KATAPPAUSIN AUTOU, “denotes a causing to cease or putting to rest...it is used of God’s rest...”¹⁸¹ That it was disobedience which prevented “those who were disobedient” from entering the promise land is shown here and affirmed in 4:6.¹⁸²

19. AND SO WE SEE THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO ENTER BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF -

“Unbelief” was the reason for the Israelites’ failure to enter the promised land and the same unbelief will have similar consequences for the church.¹⁸³ “Those who were disobedient” (v.18) and “not able to enter because of unbelief” (v.19) is a Hebrew parallelism meaning that “unbelief” and “disobedience” are equal.¹⁸⁴ Both words imply a lack of confidence in God and His promises. The exhortation for Hebrew Christians (and so for

¹⁷⁶ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 228.

¹⁷⁷ James Thompson, p. 59.

¹⁷⁸ Analytical Lexicon, p. 351.

¹⁷⁹ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 168.

¹⁸⁰ James Thompson, p. 59.

¹⁸¹ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 288.

¹⁸² James Thompson, p. 60.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ F. F. Bruce, p. 69 (footnote); B. F. Westcott, p. 88.

us today) is to trust in God and His promises and show it through obedience, not apostasy.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. THEREFORE, LET US FEAR LEST, WHILE A PROMISE REMAINS OF ENTERING HIS REST, ANY ONE OF YOU SHOULD SEEM TO HAVE COME SHORT OF IT -

The author continues his line of reasoning begun in chapter three, especially verses 18 and 19. There is no break of thought in dealing with Psalm 95. The writer of Hebrews is admonishing the Hebrews to take very seriously the warning from the Israelites' history. The writer exhorts them to be fearful. Why? Lest they should come short of the "rest" of God which is still available to them. If Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land (Nu. 14: 29-31), how can the author say that the promise to enter his rest remains? According to Thompson...

"Despite the fact that Joshua led the people into Canaan, the author says that Joshua did not bring the promised rest (4:8), thus leaving the promise open for a later day. How is this conclusion derived? Psalm 95, which was quoted at 3:7-11, was written hundreds of years after Joshua. Yet it still speaks of 'today,' indicating that the promise was neither fulfilled nor withdrawn in Joshua's day. Thus the 'today' of the psalm (cf. 3:15; 4:7) can point to a later day. Since the 'today' of the psalm points to another day, the promise of rest has not been fulfilled. There is still an opportunity for Christians to enter."¹⁸⁵

The word for "come short," HUSTEREKENAI, means "to come too late through one's own fault; to miss, fail to reach, and be excluded."¹⁸⁶ For us today the goal of heaven is set before us. Will we be diligent in our faith and reach it or will we "come short?"

2. FOR INDEED WE HAVE HAD GOOD NEWS PREACHED TO US, JUST AS THEY ALSO; BUT THE WORD THEY HEARD DID NOT PROFIT THEM, BECAUSE IT WAS NOT UNITED BY FAITH IN THOSE THAT HEARD -

"Good news," EUEGGELISMENOI, is not the gospel of the New Testament. It is rather, the "good news" that the Israelites could come out of bondage and enter into God's rest.¹⁸⁷ This same message was preached to the Hebrew Christians. The word for "united," SUGKEKEPASMENOS, literally means "having been mixed together." The

¹⁸⁵ James Thompson, p. 61.

¹⁸⁶ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 849.

¹⁸⁷ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 421.

word (good news of rest) did not mix with faith. They heard the good news, but just hearing is not enough. The word must be received with faith that the promise will be kept.¹⁸⁸ This message is just as true for us today.

3. FOR WE WHO HAVE BELIEVED ENTER THAT REST, JUST AS HE SAID, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," ALTHOUGH HIS WORKS WERE FINISHED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD -

McKnight says (quoted by Boatman) that "the rest here spoken of is all future rest. It is an inward rest on earth for us, although the final rest will be future."¹⁸⁹ The Hebrews writer is again quoting from Psalm 95:11 (cf. 3:11). In God's wrath, He swore the Israelites would not enter His rest! If they didn't enter it, it is still available. God's rest has been a reality ever since God completed His works. It has been waiting for man since man was first created. cf. Mt. 25:34. The phrase "foundation of the world" merely suggests the eternity of God's plan of salvation."¹⁹⁰

4. FOR HE HAS THUS SAID SOMEWHERE CONCERNING THE SEVENTH DAY, "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS" -

The writer uses a literary device characteristic of ancient writers. He was not ignorant of the source of this quotation.¹⁹¹ (cf. 2:6). The actual reference is Gen. 2:2. From this quote we see the institution of the sabbatical rest by God. This rest is not the Canaanite rest that the Israelites were denied. This one was established long before.¹⁹²

5. AND AGAIN IN THIS PASSAGE, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST" -

Again the writer uses Psalm 95:11. He is proving that there is another rest of God beside that which followed after creation.¹⁹³ "The object of quoting this here seems to be twofold: (1) To show that even in this Psalm God spoke of 'his rest,' and said that they should not enter it; and (2) it is connected with verse six, and is designed to show that it was implied, that a rest yet remained."¹⁹⁴

6. SINCE THEREFORE IT REMAINS FOR SOME TO ENTER IT, AND THOSE WHO FORMERLY HAD GOOD NEWS PREACHED TO THEM FAILED TO ENTER BECAUSE OF DISOBEDIENCE -

¹⁸⁸ James Thompson, p. 63.

¹⁸⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 120.

¹⁹⁰ James Thompson, p. 63.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁹² Don Earl Boatman, pp. 124,125.

¹⁹³ Arthur W. Pink, p. 205.

¹⁹⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1252.

The point is the Israelites under Moses failed to enter, all but their children and two adults. Since God has a rest, and His work is not in vain, it follows that someone will enter it.¹⁹⁵ cf. 4:2. Again, because of disobedience, the Israelites failed to enter into the rest. Vincent says, “It is desirable to avoid the word ‘preached.’”¹⁹⁶ At this juncture Boatman says, “If a believer, a Christian, cannot be lost, then Paul wasted much time in this book.”¹⁹⁷

7. HE AGAIN FIXES A CERTAIN DAY, “TODAY,” SAYING THROUGH DAVID AFTER SO LONG A TIME JUST AS HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS” -

The idea of “today” is that there is a time of opportunity. That time of opportunity is now. Any day is a day of salvation in which God’s word comes to man and is received in faith.¹⁹⁸ The “long” time refers to the interval which elapsed after the Israelites perished in the wilderness and the writing of that Psalm. In that Psalm (95), is the exhortation for the people living then to not disobey God but to enter the rest as the invitation to do so has been given again.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the writer says that God again has fixed a day for men to hear His voice and respond, and if they do they will enter into that rest.

8. FOR IF JOSHUA HAD GIVEN THEM REST, HE WOULD NOT HAVE SPOKEN OF ANOTHER DAY AFTER THAT -

We can see from passages such as Jos. 22:4; 23:1; 1:15; 21:44 that Joshua brought the Israelites into Canaan and that they received rest.²⁰⁰ But since the Israelites were in possession of Canaan during this time, we can see that the Canaanite rest was not God’s rest.²⁰¹ Yet they were in danger of forfeiting God’s rest by their stubbornness, thus the promise was still waiting fulfillment.²⁰² The Hebrews writer is saying that if God’s rest had been fulfilled in the time of Joshua, then He would not have spoken through David of another day of entering into rest.²⁰³ The writer’s point for his readers is this: There was a rest under Joshua, not the rest, but a promised rest. The Israelites, however, failed to believe and were disobedient, and therefore did not enter that rest. Even now, there still remains a rest, the rest of God. If the Hebrew Christians fail to believe and disobey, by returning to Judaism, they won’t enter this rest either.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 1253.
¹⁹⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 423.
¹⁹⁷ Don Earl Boatman, p. 127.
¹⁹⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 46.
¹⁹⁹ Arthur W. Pink, p. 207.
²⁰⁰ James Thompson, p. 65.
²⁰¹ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 424.
²⁰² James Thompson, p. 66.
²⁰³ Edward Fudge, p. 46.

9,10. THERE REMAINS THEREFORE A SABBATH REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD. FOR THE ONE WHO HAS ENTERED HIS REST HAS HIMSELF ALSO RESTED FROM HIS WORKS, AS GOD DID FROM HIS -

“Therefore,” ARA, is used to draw a conclusion from the preceding argument.²⁰⁴ The rest that God has for his people still remains, for those who remain faithful. The “Sabbath rest,” SABBATISMOS, “is nothing less than that which God enjoyed at creation. The Sabbath rest involves ceasing one’s labors as God did (cf. Rev. 14:13).²⁰⁵ Pink says, “The object in thus describing our rest is to show that it is not to be found in this world, but is reserved for the world to come.”²⁰⁶ We will reach that rest only in heaven. This “Sabbath rest” is not a Sabbatarian day because this entire section (4:1-11) shows that it is only a shadow of something better to come.

11. LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT TO ENTER THAT REST, LEST ANYONE FALL THROUGH FOLLOWING THE SAME EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE -

“Be diligent,” SPOUDASOMEN, signifies “to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, endeavour, give diligence.”²⁰⁷ Westcott explains the word in this manner: “There is need of active exertion that we may secure what God has promised...”²⁰⁸ The use of the word clearly refutes the position of “once saved, always saved,” for one would hardly have to “actively exert” oneself concerning anything involving one’s personal salvation if he is “once saved, always saved.” The “rest” of this verse obviously refers to God’s eternal rest as seen from the author’s use of the word in the two preceding verses. “Example,” HUPODEIGMA, means “a copy.” The Israelites set a terrible example and it is so easy to copy the bad examples.²⁰⁹ The “example” is that of falling into destruction as a result of disobedience. The writer calls them to diligence in entering God’s rest. If they do not, they will as a result of following the example of the Israelites.

12,13. Verses 12 and 13 enforce the warning given at verse 11.

12. FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, AND PIERCING AS FAR AS THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW, AND ABLE TO JUDGE THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART -

²⁰⁴ B. F. Westcott, p. 98.
²⁰⁵ James Thompson, p. 66.
²⁰⁶ Arthur W. Pink, p. 210.
²⁰⁷ W. E. Vine, p. 311.
²⁰⁸ B. F. Westcott, p. 99.
²⁰⁹ A. T. Robertson, p. 363.

Why does the writer jump to a statement concerning God's word? According to Thompson...

"The author's purpose in his references to the effect of God's word is to warn the church of the urgency of obeying God (cf. 2:3;12:25), and the author concludes his account of Israel's disobedience (3:7-4:11) by declaring that to disregard God's word in Psalm 95:7-11 is a serious mistake."²¹⁰

That "the word of God is living" is a thought found elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Pet. 1:23; Acts 7:38). The five qualities which follow indicate in what sense the word is "living." The word is "active," ENERGES, in the sense it produces results. (cf. Isa. 55:11). Thompson says...

"Soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and thoughts and intentions refer to the different aspects of man's existence. Soul and spirit point to man's spiritual life. Joints and marrow refer to man's bodily existence. Thoughts and intentions have origin in the heart of man. The author is saying that no aspect of human existence is free from the power of the word of God."²¹¹

"Thoughts," ENTHUMESEON, means "pondering" or "thinking, reflections." "Intentions," ENNOION, is the "definite conception; a conscious train of thought." Used only one other time in the New Testament, 1 Pet. 4:1.²¹²

13. AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT, BUT ALL THINGS ARE OPEN AND LAID BARE TO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO -

The teaching here is essentially the same as that of verse twelve. The intent of the author is to stress that since all things are under God's watchful eye, then no one with a dishonest heart is able to escape God's judgment. The specific meaning of the word translated "open," GUMNA, is "bare, uncover, stripped, naked."²¹³ The word translated "laid bare," TETRACHELISMENA, comes from a word connected with "neck, throat." Two original meanings of the word are: (1) It referred to a criminal with his neck bent back, fully exposed and (2) it was used in reference to animals, with head bent back, slaughtered in sacrifice. The phrase "with whom we have to do" can literally be

²¹⁰ James Thompson, p. 68.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Marvin R. Vincent, pp. 428,429.

²¹³ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 167.

translated “with whom is our account.”²¹⁴ Westcott comments, “The negative statement that nothing is hidden from the sight of God is supplemented by a positive statement that all things are stripped of every disguise which might conceal their true nature (GUMNA) and brought by an overmastering power into full view before His eyes...”²¹⁵ The New Testament repeatedly stresses the certainty of each individual having to render an account for his deeds, whether good or bad (Ro. 14:10,12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

14. SINCE THEN WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO HAS PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, LET US HOLD FAST OUR CONFESSION -

“The apostle here resumes the subject which had been slightly hinted at in chapter 2:17; 3:1 and pursues it to the end of chapter 10.”²¹⁶ Barnes suggests that since in New Testament times the term “high priest” possibly referred to those who retired from the office, the deputy to the high priest himself, the description “great” would make it clear that Christ was head over all other priests.²¹⁷ The word “passed through,” DIELELUTHOTA, means “to go through.” The perfect tense indicates that Jesus has “passed through the heavens” and is still there.²¹⁸ “Let us hold fast,” KRATOMEN, means “to be in control of, to exercise power over, to hold to...”²¹⁹ Westcott says that “holding fast” speaks of “... Grasping and clinging to that to which we attach ourselves, as distinguished from the act of holding firmly that which is already completely in our possession ...”²²⁰ For comment on “confession” see note at 3:1. The idea of this verse is that Christians should “hold fast” to their confession and not fall away. The specific reason given for “holding fast” is because Jesus is the “great high priest.”

15. FOR WE DO NOT HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO CANNOT SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES, BUT ONE WHO HAS BEEN TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN -

“Sympathize,” SUNPATHESAI, means “to share the experience of someone.”²²¹ Bruce says (quoting Westcott), “Such endurance involves more, not less, than ordinary suffering: ‘Sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless

²¹⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 429.

²¹⁵ B. F. Westcott, p. 104.

²¹⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1256.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 99.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 239.

²²⁰ B. F. Westcott, p. 106.

²²¹ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 430.

can know in its full intensity.”²²² Jesus suffers together with the weakness of the one tempted. “Tempted,” PEPEIRASMENON, means “to tempt, test, try.” The perfect tense emphasizes the complete state and the continuing results.²²³ “As we are,” HOMOIOTETA, can also be translated “like as we” meaning “likeness.”²²⁴ Jesus, our High Priest, can sympathize with our weakness because He has shared our experience. He, too, has been tempted exactly corresponding to the way we are tempted. Yet He did not once yield to that temptation, therefore, He is without sin.

16. LET US THEREFORE DRAW NEAR WITH CONFIDENCE TO THE THRONE OF GRACE, THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND MAY FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED -

“In time of need,” EUKAIRON, meaning “convenient, good time, well timed, at the right time.” Today, we would say, “Just in the nick of time.”²²⁵ “Mercy,” LABOMEN, refers to forgiveness and “grace,” CHARIN, refers to the power we need to help overcome our trials.²²⁶ In other words (to use the words of F. F. Bruce), “...the presence of the Christian’s high priest on the heavenly throne of grace bespeaks a word of propitiation completed not in token but in fact, and the constant availability of divine aid in all their need...”²²⁷ So since they have such a “great high priest,” the writer tells his readers to “draw near” for themselves to “the throne of Grace” (note that the responsibility is on the individual to respond to what God has done for him and draw near for himself). He is to do this “with confidence” in Christ, and therefore, with boldness in his faith. When he does this he will receive forgiveness (“mercy”) for his sins, and the strength and power (“grace”) he needs to overcome temptations when they come his way. This message of encouragement to the Hebrews regarding their High Priest applies to us today as well for we have access to the same High Priest.

CHAPTER FIVE

In 5:1-10 the author’s aim is to compare the qualifications of the Jewish high priest with Jesus’ qualifications as high priest, thereby showing the superiority of Christ. Two conditions are given in verses 1-4 as essential for a valid priesthood. A high priest must be (a) “able to sympathize with those whom he represents and (b) divinely appointed to his office.”²²⁸ The qualifications for a Jewish high priest are:

²²² F. F. Bruce, p. 86.
²²³ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 314.
²²⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 430.
²²⁵ A. T. Robertson, p. 366.
²²⁶ B. F. Westcott, p. 109.
²²⁷ F. F. Bruce, pp. 86,87.
²²⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 88.

1. He was taken from among men - v.1a.
 2. He must have something to offer - v.1b.
 3. He served as mediator between man and God - v. 1c.
 4. He must be acquainted with the weaknesses of men - v. 2.
 5. He must be appointed by God - v. 4.²²⁹
1. FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST TAKEN FROM AMONG MEN IS APPOINTED ON BEHALF OF MEN IN THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES FOR SINS -

The passive tense²³⁰ of “appointed,” KATHISTATAI, indicates he does not appoint himself. The high priest was appointed from among men to offer up gifts and sacrifices to God on behalf of men, therefore men themselves could not do what the high priest did for them, namely, offer gifts and sacrifices. According to Edward Fudge, “gifts,” DORA and “sacrifices,” THUSIAS,

“...stand for the total offerings of the high priest to God on behalf of the people (see also 8:3; 9:9). Some have explained gifts as non-blood offerings and sacrifices as blood offerings. This is not consistent, however, with other passages (Gen. 4:3,4 in the Greek Old Testament, for example) where these words appear with the meanings exactly reversed. A better distinction is made in terms of purpose. Gifts are thank offerings (eucharistic); sacrifices are sin-offerings (expiatory).”²³¹

2. HE CAN DEAL GENTLY WITH THE IGNORANT AND MISGUIDED, SINCE HE HIMSELF ALSO IS BESET WITH WEAKNESS -

A high priest must be able to “deal gently” with others. Thompson says, the word “deal gently,” METRIOPATHEIN, “is never applied to the high priest in the Old Testament. The word is a philosophical term referring to the proper moderation between excessive passion and apathy.”²³² The difference in meaning between “ignorant,” AGNOOUSIN and “misguided,” PLANOMENOIS, is small. Those who are referred to as being “misguided” were apparently also “ignorant” because the high priest was not to deal gently with those who sinned presumptuously and arrogantly against God (cf. Nu.

²²⁹ Merrill F. Unger, pp. 756,757.

²³⁰ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 207.

²³¹ Edward Fudge, p. 50.

²³² James Thompson, pp. 73,74.

15:30,31).²³³ Thus, the meaning may be in reference to “those who go astray through ignorance.”²³⁴ The reason the high priest was able to “deal gently” with the “ignorant” and “misguided” is because he has weaknesses “lying around him like a chain. Not so Jesus.”²³⁵

3. AND BECAUSE OF IT HE IS OBLIGATED TO OFFER SACRIFICES FOR SINS, AS FOR THE PEOPLE, SO ALSO FOR HIMSELF -

The “it” refers to the weakness that he has on the Day of Atonement. Even in the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly sacrifices for the sins of the nation he (high priest) was included.²³⁶ Because of the high priest’s guilt of sin, it was necessary for him to make an atonement for himself before he could make atonement for others (cf. Lev. 4:3-12). A specific example is found in Aaron, who presented a bullock as a sin offering for himself and his family, in accordance with Lev. 16:6, before he proceeded the atoning ritual on behalf of the people.²³⁷ Though the author is making a comparison between the qualities of the Jewish high priest and Christ, the comparison breaks down to some degree because Christ is not obligated to offer a sacrifice for Himself before He makes atonement for others (cf. 7:27).²³⁸

4. AND NO ONE TAKES THE HONOR TO HIMSELF, BUT RECEIVES IT WHEN HE IS CALLED BY GOD, EVEN AS AARON WAS -

This verse refers to a necessary requirement for the priesthood, divine appointment. The high priest does not take office of himself, but is chosen and appointed by God.²³⁹ Rarely would anyone under the Law of Moses do such a thing, but one notable case is that of Korah (Nu. 26).²⁴⁰ The intention of the author of Hebrews is to show that a true high priest does not take office, but is appointed by God; he further states, in the following verses, that Christ being a true High Priest was appointed by God.²⁴¹

5. SO ALSO CHRIST DID NOT GLORIFY HIMSELF SO AS TO BECOME A HIGH PRIEST, BUT HE WHO SAID TO HIM, ‘THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE’ -

²³³ Edward Fudge, p. 51.

²³⁴ F.F. Bruce, p.91.

²³⁵ A.T. Robertson, p. 368.

²³⁶ Don Ear Boatman, p. 149.

²³⁷ F.F. Bruce, p. 92

²³⁸ James Thompson, p. 74.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ J.E. Wright, p. 101.

²⁴¹ Albert Barnes, p. 1259.

“So also Christ did not glorify himself” is comparable to verse four (cf.v.10). According to Westcott, “The title of the office emphasizes the idea of the perfect obedience of the Lord even in the fulness of His appointed work. It is not said that ‘Jesus’ glorified not Himself, but ‘the Christ,’ the appointed Redeemer, glorified not Himself.”²⁴² Jesus, the Christ was the One who was willing to humble Himself, not to exalt Himself (cf. Jn. 5:30,43; 8:54; 17: 5).²⁴³ According to Vine, “begotten,” GEGENNEKA, “is used of the act of God in the Birth of Christ, Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5 quoted from Psa. 2:7, none of which indicate that Christ became the Son of God at His Birth.”²⁴⁴ Wright puts it this way:

“Jesus usurped no authority even though He was the Son of God. He accepted the position of the lowliest bond-servant, and in this degraded position He died upon the cross. Then after three days in the tomb God brought Him forth and made the declaration, ‘Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee.’ (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33). Again Paul says that Christ ‘was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.’ (Ro. 1:4). Thus, it was after the separation of the spiritual nature from His physical body that He was made a High Priest.”²⁴⁵

6. JUST AS HE SAYS ALSO IN ANOTHER PASSAGE, ‘THOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK’ -

“As he says also in another passage” refers to Psa. 110:4. Vincent says in “this verse Christ is prophetically pointed out in Ps. cx as an eternal priest, independent of fleshly descent, a king, and superior in dignity to the Levitical priests.”²⁴⁶ According to Robertson, “the point lies in the meaning of the phrase ‘After the order of Melchizedek’ (KATA TEN TAXIN MELCHISEDEK). But at this point the only thing pressed is the fact of the divine appointment of Jesus as priest. He returns to this point (5:10-7:28).”²⁴⁷ It was God who begat Jesus as Son. He appointed Jesus as High Priest “forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Boatman says, “forever,” AIONA, means “while time endures.”²⁴⁸

7. IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, WHEN HE OFFERED UP BOTH PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS WITH LOUD CRYING AND TEARS TO HIM WHO WAS

²⁴² B.F. Westcott, p. 122

²⁴³ A.T. Robertson, p. 368.

²⁴⁴ W.E. Vine, p. 109.

²⁴⁵ J.E. Wright, pp. 101,102.

²⁴⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, p.434.

²⁴⁷ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 369.

²⁴⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 154.

ABLE TO SAVE HIM FROM DEATH, AND WHO WAS HEARD BECAUSE OF HIS PIETY -

“Supplications,” HIKETERIOS, denotes “of a suppliant...formerly an olive-branch carried by a suppliant...then later, a supplication...”²⁴⁹ Boatman says when these two words (“prayers and supplications”) are used together, “it means a prayer prompted by a deep sense of helplessness.”²⁵⁰ According to Barclay, “crying,” KRAUGES, is a cry which man does not choose to utter, but which is wrung from him involuntarily in the stress and agony of some tremendous tension or some searing pain.”²⁵¹ “Him who was able to save him from death” refers to God who was able to save Jesus from death, but was not willing to compromise His plan of redemption.²⁵² “From death,” EK THANATOU, is an interesting construction. Notice the EK (out) instead of the usual APO (from). It literally means “out of death” (see NASV footnote). Thus, Jesus did not avoid death, but was brought “out of death” by the resurrection.²⁵³ The word for “heard,” EISAKOUSTHEIS, carries with it the idea “to hear so as to answer...”²⁵⁴ “Piety,” EULABEIAS, can mean “reverence” or “anxiety.”²⁵⁵ The author points to Jesus as an example of One who overcame temptation through “piety.” The readers of Hebrews may overcome their temptations in the same manner. The writer of Hebrews is saying that while Jesus was here on this earth, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and pain to God and was heard for His piety.

8. ALTHOUGH HE WAS A SON, HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE FROM THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED -

According to Thompson, “he learned obedience from the things which he suffered,” EMATHEN APH’HON EPATHEN, poses a problem. One has no difficulty in understanding this phrase when it refers to the ordinary experiences of mankind. But the difficulty comes when the phrase is applied to Jesus.”²⁵⁶ Robertson explains the phrase by saying that it is a play on words in the Greek and that Jesus “grew in experience as in wisdom and stature and in the power of sympathy with us.”²⁵⁷ Albert Barnes goes on to elaborate that

“...it cannot be supposed that he did not know what obedience was; or that he was indisposed to obey God before he suffered; or that he had, as

²⁴⁹ W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 94.
²⁵⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 154.
²⁵¹ William Barclay, p. 45.
²⁵² Don Earl Boatman, p. 155.
²⁵³ Ibid.
²⁵⁴ W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p.205.
²⁵⁵ James Thompson, p. 77.
²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 78
²⁵⁷ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 370.

we have, perversities of nature, leading to rebellion, which required to be subdued by suffering; - but willing to test the power of obedience in sufferings; to become personally and practically acquainted with the nature of such obedience in the midst of protracted woes. cf. Phil. 2:8.”²⁵⁸

The Hebrews writer is saying that even though Jesus was a Son, He did not receive special treatment while here on earth. He learned to be obedient from the experience of suffering. It was for this reason that He was qualified to be appointed as our High Priest.

9. AND HAVING BEEN MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME TO ALL THOSE WHO OBEY HIM THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL LIFE -

“Perfect,” TELEIOTHEIS, according to Vincent, “is the bringing of a person or thing to the goal fixed by God. cf. vii. 11,19; ix. 9; x. 1,14; xi. 40; xii. 23. Here of Christ’s having reached the end which was contemplated in His divinely appointed discipline for the priesthood. The consummation was attained in His death...”²⁵⁹ In other words, the suffering Jesus underwent made Him fit for the purpose for which He came into the world, to author our salvation. The same connection between Christ’s suffering and perfection is made at 2:10. The word “obey,” HUPAKOUCOUSIN, means “to listen and obey.”²⁶⁰ Boatman suggests that the concept of “all those who obey Him” leaves no room for the doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”²⁶¹ “Source,” AITIOS, means “that which causes something...”²⁶² So, because Jesus was a Son, and learned obedience by the things He suffered, He was made fit for the task of being High Priest. Thus, He not only became the author (KJV) of our salvation, but the cause or reason for it as well.

10. BEING DESIGNATED BY GOD AS A HIGH PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK -

As a result of His suffering (vv. 7,8), Jesus is elevated “to a much higher order than the High Priesthood of Aaron, and being the only one who could meet the requirements of so high an office, He was made our eternal High Priest and as such shall have no successors.”²⁶³ The idea of Christ having “no successors” refutes the Mormon claims of an Aaronic priesthood since “the order of Aaron was only for the duration of the Mosaic system...”²⁶⁴ By way of summary, three facts are presented to show Christ as a

²⁵⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1261.
²⁵⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 436.
²⁶⁰ W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 124.
²⁶¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 156.
²⁶² W.E. Vine, Vol. I, p. 88.
²⁶³ J.E. Wright, p. 105.
²⁶⁴ Don Earl Boatman, p. 157.

superior high priest: (1) He is the Son of God [v.5], (2) He is true and perfect humanity [v.7] and (3) He is officially appointed to a superior priesthood [v.6].²⁶⁵

11. CONCERNING HIM WE HAVE MUCH TO SAY, AND IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN, SINCE YOU HAVE BECOME DULL OF HEARING -

According to Thompson, “the discussion at 5:11-6:20 is a parenthetical insertion into the author’s argument concerning Christ as the ‘high priest after the order of Melchizedek.’”²⁶⁶ “Concerning him” could refer to Melchizedek or to the topic that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (note marginal reading “him” or “this” in NASV).²⁶⁷ In either case, the readers had “become dull of hearing” making their understanding difficult. “Dull,” NOTHROI, is a combination of NE, “no” and OTHEO “to push,” literally “no push in hearing;” hence, “slow and sluggish in mind as well as in the ears.”²⁶⁸ The point is that when the writer begins to explain all of this to them, it will be difficult for them to understand because their hearing is numbed and sluggish.

12. FOR THOUGH BY THIS TIME YOU OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YOU HAVE NEED AGAIN FOR SOME ONE TO TEACH YOU THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD, AND YOU HAVE COME TO NEED MILK AND NOT SOLID FOOD -

“Ought,” OPHEILONTES, implies an obligation.²⁶⁹ “Principles,” STOICHEIA, “can mean ‘elements,’ ‘fundamentals,’ or even ‘letters of the alphabet.’” One might paraphrase here: ‘You need to learn your ABC’s of Christianity again.’”²⁷⁰ Their problem was that they had let the fundamentals of Christianity (cf. 6:1,2) slip from them. The phrase “oracles of God,” LOGION TOU THEOU, refers to inspired writings.²⁷¹ “Milk,” GALAKTOS, refers to “elementary principles” and “solid food,” STEREAS TROPHEIS, relates to “more advanced doctrinal teaching” (i.e. the explanation of the Melchizedekian priesthood).²⁷² The Hebrews really could not handle the word of God. If they were asked a deep question concerning God’s word they would be lost.

13. FOR EVERYONE WHO PARTAKES ONLY OF MILK IS NOT ACCUSTOMED TO THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR HE IS A BABE -

²⁶⁵ Merrill F. Unger, p. 757.

²⁶⁶ James Thompson, p. 79.

²⁶⁷ Don Earl Boatman, p. 161; Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 437.

²⁶⁸ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 371.

²⁶⁹ W.E. Vine, Vol. I, p. 115.

²⁷⁰ James Thompson, pp. 80,81.

²⁷¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 438.

²⁷² Ibid. p. 439.

“Not accustomed,” APEIROS, means “unskilled or inexperienced.”²⁷³ The writer’s point is that Christians who stay in the basics (“partakes only of milk”) are unskilled in the use of God’s word. “The word of righteousness” has been taken to refer to an infant’s inability to speak correctly.²⁷⁴ According to Westcott, the absence of the definite articles indicate that “the word of righteousness” is not “the full exposition of the Christian Faith but... teaching which deals at once with the one source of righteousness in Christ, and the means by which man is able to be made partakers of it.”²⁷⁵

14. BUT SOLID FOOD IS FOR THE MATURE, WHO BECAUSE OF PRACTICE HAVE THEIR SENSES TRAINED TO DISCERN GOOD AND EVIL -

“Mature,” TELEION, means “full grown.” The word is for adults, relative perfection (TELEIOI) in contrast with babes in 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1; 13:11; Phil. 3:15; Eph. 4:4, not absolute perfection.²⁷⁶ “Because of practice,” DIA TEN HEXIN, means “habit.”²⁷⁷ The word “trained,” GEGUMNASMENA, is used in Greek writings for the training which an athlete undergoes. It suggests the tremendous self-discipline which an athlete must have if he is to develop his muscles.²⁷⁸ Thus, a determined, purposeful effort is required on the part of the readers in order to be able “to discern good and evil.” The writer’s point is that “solid food” (the deeper things of God’s word) is for those who are “mature” (those who have had their senses trained by habitual exercise) so that they may be able to come to a deeper understanding of God’s word and thus be able to discern good from evil.

CHAPTER SIX

In regards to vv.1-3, according to B. F. Westcott,...

“A question has been raised whether these verses contain an exhortation to the Hebrews or a declaration to the writer’s own purpose. The two ideas seem to be inseparable. If the readers are to strain forward to a higher knowledge the writer must lead them. If the writer is to aim at the exposition of deeper truth it must be with the conviction that his readers will endeavour to follow him.”²⁷⁹

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ James Thompson, p. 81.

²⁷⁵ B.F. Westcott, p. 134.

²⁷⁶ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 372.

²⁷⁷ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 440.

²⁷⁸ James Thompson, p. 81.

²⁷⁹ B.F. Westcott, p. 142.

So, since there is a break in development, and since “the two ideas seem to be inseparable,” according to M. R. Vincent, the writer of Hebrews has thus far said:

“Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (ch. v. 10). There is much to be said on this subject, and it is hard to explain, because you have become dull, and need elementary teaching, whereas, by reason of your long Christian standing, you ought to be teachers yourselves (ch. v. 11,12). For you all recognize the principle that baby-food is for babes, and solid food only for men, whose powers have been trained by habitual exercise (ch. v. 13,14). Wherefore, in order that you may be aroused from your sluggishness and have your perceptions brought up to the matured condition which befits men in Christ, and in order that I may, at the same time, complete the development of my theme, I propose that we together move forward to completion: I to the full exposition of the subject of Christ’s high-priesthood, and you to that maturity of discernment which becomes you. This will require us both to leave the rudimentary stage of teaching concerning Christ.”²⁸⁰

1. THEREFORE LEAVING THE ELEMENTARY TEACHING ABOUT THE CHRIST, LET US PRESS ON TO MATURITY, NOT LAYING AGAIN A FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS AND OF FAITH TOWARD GOD -

A. T. Robertson agrees with Vincent that “therefore,” DIO, refers to “the argument already made about the difficulty of the subject and the dulness of the readers.”²⁸¹ “Leaving,” APHENTES, (as used here) means “to leave, leave alone, forsake, neglect.”²⁸² Literally “leaving the word of the beginning (NASV footnote) about the Christ.” Again, according to Vincent,...

“APHENTES, leaving or dismissing does not imply ceasing to believe in elementary truths or to regard them as important, but leaving them ‘as a builder leaves his foundation in erecting his building’ (Bruce). The word of the beginning of Christ is practically = the rudiments of the beginning, ch. v. 12; that rudimentary view of Christ’s person and office which enfolds into the doctrine of his priesthood. Up to this point the writer has shown only that the permanent elements of the old covenant remain and are exalted in Christ. The more difficult point, which it will require matured perception to grasp, is that Christ’s priesthood involves the entire abolition of the old covenant.”²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 441.

²⁸¹ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 373.

²⁸² W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 325.

²⁸³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 441,442.

The point is, that the beginning is not a stopping place. They were to leave (“leave alone,” if you will) the elementary teachings of Christ and press on towards maturity. The word “maturity,” TELEIOTETA, (“perfection,” NASV footnote) can also be rendered “completeness.” It means the writer is going to develop his argument and readers are to strive to full Christian knowledge.²⁸⁴ Thus, he tells his readers there is no need for a foundation to be laid a second time. Again, according to Vincent, “the illustrative proposition is that a building is not completed by lingering at the foundation; and so Christian maturity is not attained by going back to subjects which belong to the earliest stage of Christian instruction.”²⁸⁵ The author of Hebrews now goes on to list six elementary teachings that make up this “foundation.” They are:

1. Repentance from dead works - v.1b.
2. Faith toward God - v.1c.
3. Teaching of baptism - v.2.
4. Laying on of hands - v.2.
5. Resurrection of the dead - v.2.
6. Eternal judgment - v.2.

The meaning of “dead works,” NEKRON ERGON, is as varied as there are commentators. For example: (1) Barnes says they are “works that cause death or condemnation.”²⁸⁶ (2) Boatman says it is “the vain effort to relieve a troubled conscience by legal obedience.”²⁸⁷ Vincent says they are “works without the element of life which comes through faith in the living God.”²⁸⁸ Based on 9:14, Barnes is probably closest to being correct. “Faith toward God” includes both faith in God and Jesus. Boatman explains: “Few men disbelieve in a higher Power, but this is not sufficient. The Jew had faith in God. What he needed was a faith that included Jesus Christ.”²⁸⁹

2. OF INSTRUCTION ABOUT WASHINGS, LAYING ON OF HANDS, AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT -

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 442.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1264.

²⁸⁷ Don Earl Boatman, p. 170.

²⁸⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p.442.

²⁸⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 171.

“Washings,” BAPTISMON, refers to the Old Testament washings of purification. The word is used here, 9:10 and Mk. 7:4.²⁹⁰ When BAPTISMA meaning “immersion, submersion...” is contrasted with BAPTISMON the distinction is obvious.²⁹¹ The “laying on of hands” was a common Jewish custom “used especially in commissioning someone for office (Nu. 27: 18,23; Du. 34:9) and in presenting sacrifices (Ex. 29:10; Lev. 1:4).”²⁹² It was also common in the New Testament “as a sign of blessing (Mt. 19:13), of healing (Mk. 7:32), in the choice of the Seven (Acts 6:6), in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6), in separation for a special task (Acts 13:3), in ordination (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6).”²⁹³ The teaching of the “resurrection of the dead” is first seen in the Old Testament (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2).²⁹⁴ The doctrine is seen in the New Testament in numerous references, a couple of which are Jn. 5:29; Acts 24:15.²⁹⁵ The importance of the doctrine is expressed by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:12-18. The concept of “eternal judgment” is found in both the Old and New Testaments. cf. Dan. 7:9ff; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27.²⁹⁶ Note that all six “foundational” points are to be found both in the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrews had remained in the fundamentals so long that they were somehow confusing their meaning under the New Testament with their meaning under the Old. The author is saying it is time to leave these things and press on to maturity. They are not to keep laying the same old “foundation” over and over again.

3. AND THIS WE SHALL DO, IF GOD PERMITS -

“This we shall do” refers back to the exhortations in verse one, namely, (1) leaving the elementary teaching and (2) pressing on to maturity. The author and his readers will advance together into the more difficult teachings and to full growth in Christ.²⁹⁷ “If God permits” implies the writer’s and the reader’s dependence on and subjection to the will of God.²⁹⁸ NOTE: According to James Thompson, verses 4-6:

“..demonstrates the greatness of the Christian way and the consequences of falling away from it. Verses 4a and 6 form a complete thought which emphasizes the consequences of falling away. Verses 4b and 5 form a parenthesis in which the author lists the blessings of the Christian life.”²⁹⁹

²⁹⁰ W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 200.

²⁹¹ Ibid., I, pp. 96,97.

²⁹² James Thompson, pp. 84,85.

²⁹³ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 374.

²⁹⁴ James Thompson, p. 85.

²⁹⁵ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 374

²⁹⁶ James Thompson, p. 85.

²⁹⁷ F.F. Bruce, p. 118.

²⁹⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1265.

²⁹⁹ James Thompson, p. 86.

4. FOR IN THE CASE OF THOSE WHO HAVE ONCE BEEN ENLIGHTENED AND HAVE TASTED OF THE HEAVENLY GIFT AND HAVE BEEN MADE PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT -

“Once,” HAPAX, “denotes...once for all...not requiring repetition, Heb. 6:4; 9: 28; 10:2; 1 Pet. 3:18; Jude 3...”³⁰⁰ “Enlightened,” PHOTISTHENTAS, is in the aorist accusative tense and is used “metaphorically of spiritual enlightenment.”³⁰¹ Hence, this “enlightenment” of the readers was “once for all” and probably alludes to baptism.³⁰² This “enlightenment” is also referenced in 10: 32. “Tasted,” GEUSAMENOUS, implies “experience...Heb. 2:9.”³⁰³ “The proper idea here is, that they had experienced the heavenly gift, or had learned its nature.”³⁰⁴ Therefore, this makes the author’s readers Christians who “have fallen away.” cf. v.6. The “heavenly gift” refers to “Christian salvation in general.”³⁰⁵ “Having been partakers of the Holy Spirit” again emphasizes the point that the ones spoken about are fallen Christians. How? According to Boatman, (1) those in the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17) and (2) we are made partakers when we are baptized (Acts 2:38).³⁰⁶

5. AND HAVE TASTED THE GOOD WORD OF GOD AND THE POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME -

Again, “have tasted the good word of God” refers to those “who have experienced fulfillment of the precious promises God offers by claiming and receiving them in faith. The expression used here occurs also in the Greek Old Testament at Zech. 1:13; Jos. 21: 45.”³⁰⁷ According to Barnes, “‘the age to come’ was a phrase in common use among the Hebrews, to denote the future dispensation, the times of the Messiah.”³⁰⁸ The point is they had been full recipients of “the good word of God” and “the powers (‘mighty works,’ DUNAMEIS)”³⁰⁹ of the age to come.”

6. AND THEN I HAVE FALLEN AWAY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM AGAIN TO REPENTANCE, SINCE THEY AGAIN CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD, AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME -

³⁰⁰ W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 137.
³⁰¹ Analytical Greek Lexicon, pp. 432, 433.
³⁰² James Thompson, p. 86.
³⁰³ W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 111.
³⁰⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1266.
³⁰⁵ James Thompson, p. 86.
³⁰⁶ Don Earl Boatman, p. 179.
³⁰⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 62.
³⁰⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1266.
³⁰⁹ W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 196.

Barnes takes the word “impossible,” ADUNATON, to mean “an absolute impossibility.”³¹⁰ The use of the words “renew” and “again,” however, indicate those spoken of had repented in the past and need to do it again because they have fallen. The word “impossible” is “absolute” only in sense of attitude as the word “since” brings out. The NASV footnote renders the word “since” as “while,” and that is the thought. It is impossible to bring one to repentance again while he is crucifying the Son of God.³¹¹ Concerning the word “crucify,” ANASTAUROUNTAS, Barnes goes on to note that “the word...is an intensive word and... means that such an act of apostasy would be equivalent to crucifying him in an aggravated manner.”³¹² Just how “aggravated” is seen in the phrase “put Him to an open shame.” Vincent indicates, PARADEIGMATI-ZONTAS, comes from a root word found in Nu. 25:4 meaning “hang them up...to make an example of; thence to expose to public disgrace.”³¹³ This is why it is “impossible” to renew such a one to repentance. Where are you going to turn, when you hate the only One who can help you? By way of note, besides the “impossible” listed here (the “impossibility” of renewing fallen Christians who continue to crucify Jesus), Barnes lists three other “impossibles” in the book of Hebrews:

1. “Impossible” for God to lie (6:18).
 2. “Impossible” for blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (10:4).
 3. “Impossible” to please God without faith (11:6).³¹⁴
- 7,8. FOR GROUND THAT DRINKS THE RAIN WHICH OFTEN FALLS UPON IT BRINGS FORTH VEGETATION USEFUL TO THOSE FOR WHOSE SAKE IT IS ALSO TILLED, RECEIVES A BLESSING FROM GOD; BUT IT YIELDS THORNS AND THISTLES, IT IS WORTHLESS AND CLOSE TO BEING CURSED, AND IT ENDS UP BEING BURNED -

The writer now uses an example from agriculture.³¹⁵ “This natural illustration sets forth the case of those who have received the Son of God by faith, responding to the work of the Holy Spirit and bringing forth spiritual fruit as evidence thereof.”³¹⁶ By contrast, the land that does not produce what has been planted is burned and so are Christians who

³¹⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1265.

³¹¹ Edward Fudge, p. 63.

³¹² Albert Barnes, p. 1267.

³¹³ Marvin R. Vincent, p. 446.

³¹⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1265.

³¹⁵ James Thompson, pp. 88, 89.

³¹⁶ W.E. Vine, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 57.

do not remain Christians, “for such unproductive and evil men will meet their end in the burning of hell.”³¹⁷ According to Vincent, the KJV

“...puts the contrast as between two kinds of soil, the one well-watered and fertile, the other unwatered and sterile. This would illustrate the contrast between those who have and those who have not enjoyed gospel privileges. On the contrary the contrast is between two classes of Christians under equally favorable conditions, out of which they develop opposite results.”³¹⁸

9. BUT, BELOVED, WE ARE CONVINCED OF BETTER THINGS CONCERNING YOU, AND THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION, THOUGH WE ARE SPEAKING IN THIS WAY -

“Beloved”, AGAPETOI, testifies that the writer has nothing but good will and affection towards the reader and reveals the warmth he has for God’s people in his heart.³¹⁹

“Convinced,” PEPEISMETHA, according to Westcott, “implies that the writer had felt misgivings and had overcome them.”³²⁰ The “better things” refers back to v. 1, “the going on to perfection.”³²¹ According to Boatman, some of the things “that accompany salvation” are:

1. Forgiveness - Acts 7:58-60.
2. Rejoicing - Acts 8:39.
3. Benevolent spirit - Acts 9:36,37.³²²

So it is the writer encourages them by calling them “beloved” and he expresses his confidence in them by expecting better things of them, that is, better than apostasy.

10. FOR GOD IS NOT UNJUST SO AS TO FORGET YOUR WORK AND THE LOVE WHICH YOU HAVE SHOWN TOWARD HIS NAME, IN HAVING MINISTERED AND IN STILL MINISTERING TO THE SAINTS -

According to Barnes...

³¹⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 64.

³¹⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 447.

³¹⁹ Arthur W. Pink, Vol. I, p. 324.

³²⁰ B.F. Westcott, p. 154.

³²¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 448.

³²² Don Earl Boatman, p. 190.

“God cannot do wrong. He will not forget or fail to reward the endeavors of His people to promote His glory and to do good. If God should forget it would be unrighteous because (1) there was a propriety that it should be remembered and (2) because it is expressly promised that such acts shall not fail of reward, Mt. x.42”³²³

True love is active, diligent and untiring. They have shown love by their works. Indeed, a living faith is a working faith (1 Jn. 3:17).³²⁴ “Their activity of serving the saints is mentioned in greater detail in 10:32-34. This service was for his sake (literally, ‘in his name’). Acts of service are reckoned as deeds done to God himself (cf. Mt.25:45).³²⁵

11. AND WE DESIRE THAT EACH ONE OF YOU SHOW THE SAME DILIGENCE
SO AS TO REALIZE THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTIL THE END -

According to Vincent, “Desire,” EPITHUMOUMEN, means “strongly, earnestly. The manifestations just mentioned make the writer desire that they may exhibit more of the spirit which animates their beneficent works.”³²⁶ Note the desire for “each” individual to be faithful is expressed.³²⁷ The writer also exhorts “each” one to “show the same diligence.” According to Vine, “diligence,” SPOUDEN, means “earnestness, zeal or sometimes the haste accompanying this. cf. 2 Pet. 1: 5.”³²⁸ As stated before, if one can be “once saved, always saved” why the need to be “diligent?” In regards to “full assurance”, PLEROPHORIAN, Vine has this to say, “a fulness, abundance, also means full assurance, entire confidence; literally, a ‘full-carrying,’ the engrossing effect of the expectations of the fulfillment of God’s promises. cf. Col. 2:2; 1 Thess. 1:5.”³²⁹ “Until the end” means keeping on keeping on, throughout the Christian life, never giving up.³³⁰ So it is, the writer of Hebrews explains that it is his yearning desire for his readers to remain faithful to God with the same earnestness of endeavor as they exhibited in their ministering to the saints. And if they will do this, they will realize the full assurance for that which they hope.

12. THAT YE BE NOT SLUGGISH, BUT IMITATORS OF THOSE WHO THROUGH
FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES -

“Sluggish,” NOPHROI, cf. 5:11. “Those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” will be listed in chapter eleven of Hebrews. “Faith,” PISTEOS and “patience,”

³²³ Albert Barnes, p. 1268.
³²⁴ Arthur W. Pink, p. 329.
³²⁵ James Thompson, p. 90.
³²⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 449.
³²⁷ Don Earl Boatman, p. 191.
³²⁸ W.E. Vine, Vol. I, p. 311.
³²⁹ Ibid., pp. 84, 85.
³³⁰ Edward Fudge, p. 65.

MAKROTHUMIAS “are both used here in the sense of endurance in holding out for God’s promises. The men of faith held on in the past; the author encourages his readers to follow their example.”³³¹ The writer exhorts his readers to keep their faith, and through steadfastness, inherit the promise for which they hope. He goes on to tell them that if they are going to inherit the promises, they are going to have to stop being “sluggish,” and begin to imitate those who already have inherited the promises.

13. FOR WHEN GOD MADE THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM, SINCE HE COULD SWEAR BY NO ONE GREATER, HE SWORE BY HIMSELF -

The writer wants his readers to see that God being more abundantly willing to demonstrate the unchangeableness of His purpose, confirmed His promise by an oath. In other words, God swore an oath to give him the assurance that the promise would be kept.³³² One always swears by that which is greater than himself (v. 16); since there is none greater, God swore by Himself. (cf. Isa. 43:10-12). Wright says this promise “points to a greater - a spiritual - nation that should follow the temporal nation of Israel. This spiritual nation is the body of Christ.”³³³

14. SAYING, “I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU”

The quote here is taken from Gen. 22:16. God made this oath to Abraham after he had attempted to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice.³³⁴ According to Barnes, “the phrase is a Hebrew mode of expression, to denote emphasis or certainty - indicated by the repetition of a word.”³³⁵ Because of his faithfulness, God swore that He would bless Abraham and multiply his seed.

15. AND THUS, HAVING PATIENTLY WAITED, HE OBTAINED THE PROMISE -

Westcott indicates, this refers back to v.12 as an example for the reader to follow. The verb affirms that in some sense, Abraham gained the promise which he received from God. In fact, he obtained the fulfillment of it by the birth of Isaac and his sons. In part, some of the promise remained to be fulfilled; namely, Christ.³³⁶ According to Barnes,

“The object of introducing this example...is to encourage those to whom the apostle was writing to persevere in the Christian life. Reference is made to Abraham in this argument, probably, for two reasons. (1) To show the nature of the evidence which Christians have that they will be

³³¹ James Thompson, p. 90.

³³² Don Earl Boatman, p. 195.

³³³ J.E. Wright, p. 121.

³³⁴ James Thompson, p. 91.

³³⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1269.

³³⁶ B.F. Westcott, p. 159.

saved, or the ground of encouragement - being the same as that made to Abraham, and depending, as in his case, on the promises of God; and (2) because the example of Abraham was just in point. He had persevered. He had relied firmly and solely on the promise of God. He did this when appearances were much against the fulfillment of the promise, and he thus showed the advantage of perseverance and fidelity in the cause of God."³³⁷

Thus, Abraham is a perfect example for the reader. If he could persevere when appearances were such that common sense spoke against it, then Christians should persevere under the more specific promise of the gospel.³³⁸ The writer's point is that because Abraham "patiently waited" in his obedience to God, the promise was fulfilled, just as God had sworn to him.

16. FOR MEN SWEAR BY ONE GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, AND WITH THEM AN OATH GIVEN AS CONFIRMATION IS AN END OF EVERY DISPUTE

This verse implies that there are two purposes of an oath as far as men are concerned. (1) It is a confirmation of assurances that what was spoken will be fulfilled on the part of the giver and (2) all strife over the matter will end.³³⁹ And so it is, Vincent says, "the oath is final for confirmation.' PERAS is the outermost point; the point beyond which one cannot go."³⁴⁰ The idea here is that if men will take an oath from another man, how much more shall he take the oath of God as being sure.³⁴¹ "This insistence of the divine oath in God's promise to Abraham prepares the readers for the significance of the fact that God's promise regarding the Melchizedek priesthood was similarly confirmed by an oath: 'Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent.' (Ps.110:4)."³⁴² cf. 7:20ff.

17. IN THE SAME WAY GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE TO SHOW TO THE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE, INTERPOSED WITH AN OATH -

Vincent says, "in the same way," EN HO, is "referring to the whole previous clause. In accordance with this universal custom."³⁴³ That is, of "oath taking." "Desiring even more," PERISSOTERON, according to Barnes, means "in the most abundant manner, or to make the case as sure as possible. It does not mean more abundantly than the

³³⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1269.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 66.

³⁴⁰ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 451.

³⁴¹ Albert Barnes, p. 1270.

³⁴² F.F. Bruce, p. 130.

³⁴³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 451.

case of Abraham, but that he was willing to give the most ample assurance possible.”³⁴⁴ For “the heirs of the promise” see Gal. 3:29. According to Vine, “unchangeableness,” AMETATHETOS, means “immutable...examples from papyri show that the word was used as a technical term in connection with wills.”³⁴⁵ “Interposed,” EMESITEUSEN, means “mediate, act as surety, guarantee by means of an oath.”³⁴⁶ “The oath of God is therefore his confirmation that his promises will be fulfilled...that Christians have an oath as grounds for faith and therefore have no reason to doubt.”³⁴⁷

18. IN ORDER THAT BY TWO UNCHANGEABLE THINGS, IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE, WE MAY HAVE STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT, WE WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE IN LAYING HOLD OF THE HOPE SET BEFORE US -

According to Bruce, “the ‘immutable things’ from which this encouragement is derived are (a) the promise of God (for ‘it is impossible for God to lie’) and (b) the oath by which His promise is confirmed.”³⁴⁸ Besides Tit. 1:2, the phrase “it is impossible for God to lie” is also stated in Nu. 23:19. “We who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope” is an allusion to the cities of refuge and grasping the horns of the altar of the sanctuary for security.³⁴⁹ cf. Dt. 19; Jos. 20:9; 1 Ki. 1:5; 2:28. The author’s point is, those who fled to the cities of refuge in the Old Testament had to remain in the city until the high priest had died, otherwise, they would be killed. These Hebrew Christians had fled to Jesus as their “refuge” and High Priest. Jesus, however, lives forever (Ro. 6: 9), so in order to be safe, they must remain in Jesus forever. Also, like one grasping the horns of the altar for safety, they must “hang on tight” to Jesus through faith or otherwise face certain death. So it is, we see “the hope set before us” in 4:14.

19. THIS HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, A HOPE BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST AND ONE WHICH ENTERS WITHIN THE VEIL -

“An anchor” seems to have been a familiar symbol of hope in the ancient world.³⁵⁰ Our hope is “sure and steadfast” because of God’s promise and God’s oath.³⁵¹ Vincent goes on to explain the change in figures from “anchor” to “veil” in this manner:

³⁴⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1270.
³⁴⁵ W.E. Vine, Vol. II, pp. 249, 250.
³⁴⁶ William F. Arndt and William F. Gingrich, p. 506.
³⁴⁷ James Thompson, p. 92.
³⁴⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 131.
³⁴⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1270; Don Earl Boatman, p. 198; Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 452; W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 107.
³⁵⁰ B.F. Westcott, p. 163.
³⁵¹ James Thompson, p. 92.

“Two figures are combined: (a) the world a sea; the soul a ship; the hidden bottom of the deep the hidden reality of the heavenly world. (b) The present life the forecourt of the temple; the future blessedness the shrine within the veil. The soul, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor: the soul in the outer court of the temple is fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the shrine.”³⁵²

Fudge further explains that “within the veil” indicates the most holy place of the tabernacle and refers to the fact that Jesus has passed into heaven as the next verse will state.³⁵³ The writer’s point seems clear: If hope is our anchor, and we let go of that anchor, we will “drift away” from that hope. cf 1 Tim. 1:9.

20. WHERE JESUS HAS ENTERED AS A FORERUNNER FOR US, HAVING BECOME A HIGH PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK -

“Entered,” EISELTHEN, is in the aorist tense³⁵⁴ meaning that Christ is the only One to have entered, and He entered one time to stay. According to Vine, “forerunner,” PRODROMOS, signifies “running forward, going in advance, is used...of those who were sent before to take observations, acting as scouts...it is said of Christ...as going in advance of His followers...in the Septuagint, Nu. 13:21, ‘forerunners (of the grape);’ Isa. 28:4 ‘an early (fig).’”³⁵⁵ Hence, from this verse it is clear that the eternal priesthood of Christ “according to the order of Melchizedek” followed His exaltation (5:5-10) to the throne of God where He became our “forerunner” and High Priest.³⁵⁶ Beginning in chapter seven the author will again pick up the thought that was dropped at 5:10.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. FOR THIS MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, WHO MET ABRAHAM AS HE WAS RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS AND BLESSED HIM -

Here the author of Hebrews “expresses in one compact sentence the main characteristics of Melchizedec as a type of Christ.”³⁵⁷ “The account of Melchizedek, which is very

³⁵² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 453.

³⁵³ Edward Fudge, p. 67.

³⁵⁴ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 120.

³⁵⁵ W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 119.

³⁵⁶ B.F. Westcott, p. 164.

³⁵⁷ R. Milligan, p. 195.

brief, occurs in Gen. xiv.; Psalms cx. 4. and in this epistle. Nothing is certainly known of him.”³⁵⁸

“It has indeed been a question by some whether such a person ever actually existed, and consequently whether this be a proper name. But the account in Genesis is as simple an historical record as any other in the Bible. In that account there is no difficulty whatever.”³⁵⁹

He was “...king of Salem...” Again, according to Milligan,

“Some expositors...think that we have in these words, as in Melchizedek, a mere title (Melek-Salem) of this illustrious personage, and that there is really here no reference to any locality. Others, ...suppose that the Salem of our text is the same as the Salem of Jn. iii. 23 near to which John was baptizing. But the common opinion of both Jewish and Christian writers has always been that the Salem of our text is the same as Jerusalem.”³⁶⁰

By calling Melchizedek “priest of the Most High God,” the author is telling us of “a king who acted also as priest. The world had seemed to turn from God, but here was Melchizedek remaining true. Christ came into a world of sin, yet He remained true and faithful and became our sinless High Priest.”³⁶¹ Barnes indicates that when Melchizedek came out to meet Abraham, that he brought with him “bread and wine.” Why he did this, is not mentioned. It was probably as an expression of gratitude to Abraham for having freed the country from oppressive and troublesome invaders, in order to furnish refreshments to the party which Abraham headed, who had become weary and exhausted with the pursuit.”³⁶² “From vv. 6,7, it appears that this act of blessing was regarded as that of one who was superior to Abraham: that is, he blessed him as a priest and a king. As such he was superior in rank to Abraham, who never claimed the title of king, and who is not spoken of as a priest.”³⁶³

2. TO WHOM ABRAHAM APPORTIONED A TENTH PART OF ALL THE SPOILS, WAS FIRST OF ALL, BY THE TRANSLATION OF HIS NAME, KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEN KING OF SALEM, WHICH IS KING OF PEACE

³⁵⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1273.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ R. Milligan, p. 196.

³⁶¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 206.

³⁶² Albert Barnes, p. 1273.

³⁶³ Ibid.

“This act of devotion on the part of Abraham...clearly indicates that the custom of paying tithes to God for the maintenance of his worship and the support of true religion, was of very remote antiquity.”³⁶⁴ According to Lightfoot,

“It is briefly noted that the Hebrew meaning of Melchizedek’s name is righteousness (literally, ‘My King is Righteous’) and also that Melchizedek was king of Salem (which means king of peace). Clearly, Melchizedek as a priest-king of righteousness and peace typifies the qualities that are characteristic of Messiah’s kingdom (cf. Ps. 72: 7; Isa. 9:6,7; Jer. 23:5; Ro.5:1; Eph. 2:14, 15,17). Already the author has noted the words addressed to the Son ‘the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom’ (1:8); and now he also obviously thinks of Messiah as Prince of Peace.”³⁶⁵

3. WITHOUT FATHER, WITHOUT MOTHER, WITHOUT GENEALOGY, HAVING NEITHER BEGINNING OF DAYS NOR END OF LIFE, BUT MADE LIKE THE SON OF GOD, HE ABIDES A PRIEST PERPETUALLY -

Being “without father” or “without mother” does not mean “that Melchizedek was literally without ancestry, but that as far as the biblical record goes there is no mention of his parents, birth, or death,” according to Thompson.³⁶⁶ The Greek word that is translated “without genealogy,” AGENEALOGETOS, is not the usual word for “genealogy.” According to Vine, it means “without recorded pedigree.”³⁶⁷ Thus, the priesthood of Melchizedek has a different basis than the Aaronic priesthood. Barclay says it this way:

“The writer to the Hebrews piles up words to show that Melchizedek has no descent. He did that to contrast the priesthood of Jesus Christ with the old Aaronic priesthood. A Jewish priest could not be a priest unless he could trace an unbroken descent from Aaron; and if a man could trace such a descent nothing could stop him from being a priest ...It is the odd and almost incredible fact that the whole Jewish priesthood was founded on genealogy.”³⁶⁸

The whole idea of the latter part of this verse is that the priesthood of Melchizedek does not depend upon a genealogical connection and thus, neither does the priesthood of Christ.³⁶⁹ So it is that Bruce says,

³⁶⁴ R. Milligan, p. 197.

³⁶⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 138.

³⁶⁶ James Thompson, p. 96.

³⁶⁷ W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 143.

³⁶⁸ William Barclay, p. 78.

³⁶⁹ R. Milligan, p. 198.

“Melchizedek remains a priest continually for the duration of his appearance in the biblical narrative; but in the antitype Christ remains a priest continually without qualification. And it is not the type that determines the antitype, but the antitype that determines the type; Jesus is not portrayed after the pattern of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is ‘made like unto the Son of God.’”³⁷⁰

4. NOW OBSERVE HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS TO WHOM ABRAHAM, THE PATRIARCH, GAVE A TENTH OF THE CHOICEST SPOILS -

To the Jews Abraham was the father of their nation. He was, in their mind, superior to all; therefore if the author could prove Melchizedek greater than this man it would set a foundation for the superiority of Christ over the priest who descended from Abraham.³⁷¹ The Greek word that is translated “how great,” PELIKOS, can also be translated “how large,” but it is used here metaphorically to show the distinguished character of Melchizedek.³⁷² “Patriarch,” PATRIARCHES, means “a family to rule.” The only other time this word is used is in Acts 2:29; 7:8,9.³⁷³

“The author assumes Abraham’s greatness (11: 8ff),..Yet in paying tithe, he was inferior to Melchizedek. Abraham recognized the superiority of Melchizedek to himself. From this it follows that the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood that originated in Abraham, i.e., the Aaronic priesthood.”³⁷⁴

According to Milligan,

“The Greek word rendered “spoils,” AKROTHINION, means literally the top of the heap. It generally occurs in the plural number, and is variously used to denote the first fruits of the harvest, taken as they usually were from the top of heap of corn, and also the best of the spoils of war, which the heathens generally consecrated to the honor and worship of their gods.”³⁷⁵

In other words, Abraham did not give Melchizedek all of the “spoils,” but he gave him the best of the “spoils.”

³⁷⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 138.
³⁷¹ Albert Barnes, p. 1275.
³⁷² W.E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 174.
³⁷³ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 169.
³⁷⁴ James Thompson, p. 97.
³⁷⁵ R. Milligan, p. 199.

5. AND THOSE INDEED OF THE SONS OF LEVI WHO RECEIVED THE PRIEST'S OFFICE HAVE COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW TO COLLECT A TENTH FROM THE PEOPLE, THAT IS, FROM THEIR BRETHREN, ALTHOUGH THESE ARE DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM -

In this verse the author is showing the superiority of the Levites over their brethren who were also descendants of Aaron. This was to stress the fact that they were greater than the other tribes, but inferior to Melchizedek.³⁷⁶ No matter whether the people of God deserved it or not the priest could tithe the people (2 Chron. 31:4,5), but Melchizedek had no such charge. The Levites tithed the people and then gave a tenth of that to the priests as an inheritance (Nu. 18:21,26). Abraham honored Melchizedek by paying tithes to him because he deserved it and not as a command.³⁷⁷ "The argument is: Abraham, who excelled all others, was yet inferior to Melchizedek; then Melchizedek had the highest place of honor and is superior to all the sons of Levi."³⁷⁸

6. BUT THE ONE WHOSE GENEALOGY IS NOT TRACED FROM THEM COLLECTED A TENTH FROM ABRAHAM, AND BLESSED THE ONE WHO HAD THE PROMISES -

In this verse two ideas are expressed: (1) Melchizedek has no lineage³⁷⁹ and (2) he blessed the one who had the promises. According to Lightfoot,

"Melchizedek also showed himself superior by performing another priestly function: he blessed him who had the promises. God had promised Abraham that all the world would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3) yet Abraham, from whom so many blessings were passed down, was himself blessed by Melchizedek. Melchizedek, then was indeed in the honored position..."³⁸⁰

7. BUT WITHOUT ANY DISPUTE THE LESSER IS BLESSED BY THE GREATER-

"The expression, it is beyond dispute, was used frequently in the Greek papyri and is equivalent to 'everyone knows.' As in 6:16; 9:16, the writer introduces what everyone knows from experience. Since the activity of

³⁷⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1275.

³⁷⁷ R. Milligan, p. 199.

³⁷⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 212.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 140.

blessing implied the impartation of a gift, it is apparent that the one who blesses is superior.”³⁸¹

What does it mean to be “blessed?” It is a symbol of authority. Each time it is the greater that blesses. Take for instance, when Isaac blessed Jacob; then Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:20); then the priest blessed the people (Nu. 6:22); and Jesus blessed the Apostles (Lk. 24:50).³⁸²

8. AND IN THIS CASE MORTAL MEN RECEIVE TITHES, BUT IN THAT CASE ONE RECEIVES THEM, OF WHOM IT IS WITNESSED THAT HE LIVES ON -

According to Milligan, the word for “in this case,” HODE, “refers to the Levitical economy.”³⁸³ Death of the high priests (in the Aaronic Priesthood) was a prominent feature. There is one, (Melchizedek) who received a tithe that lives right on, as far as the record tells us.³⁸⁴ Again, according to Milligan, the author

“...is here contemplating Melchisedec as a type of Christ, not with the view of exalting Melchisedec through Christ, but rather with the view of exalting the priesthood of Christ through that of Melchisedec. And hence he speaks of Melchisedec in his official relations, simply as a type of Christ.”³⁸⁵

9. AND, SO TO SPEAK, THROUGH ABRAHAM EVEN LEVI, WHO RECEIVED TITHES, PAID TITHES -

“So to speak,” HOS EPOS EIPEIN, is not to be taken literally.³⁸⁶ The author is giving a general thought when he says, “so to speak through Abraham even Levi... paid tithes...” Levi did not actually pay tithes to Melchizedek, but only representatively through Abraham. Hence, he and his descendants confessed the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek.³⁸⁷

10. FOR HE WAS STILL IN THE LOINS OF HIS FATHER WHEN MELCHIZEDEK MET HIM -

³⁸¹ James Thompson, p. 98.

³⁸² Don Earl Boatman, p. 212.

³⁸³ R. Milligan, p. 201.

³⁸⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 140.

³⁸⁵ R. Milligan, p. 201.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ James Thompson, p. 99.

According to Milligan, a good Biblical parallel case to this verse is Ro. 5: 12.³⁸⁸ The Law authorized tithes to be paid to Levi, and Levi paid tithes to the priests. If Levi through Abraham paid tithes to someone greater, not a brother and not because of the Law, then the Melchizedekian Priesthood must be greater than the Aaronic Priesthood.³⁸⁹

11. NOW IF PERFECTION WAS THROUGH THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (FOR ON THE BASIS OF IT THE PEOPLE RECEIVED THE LAW), WHAT FURTHER NEED WAS THERE FOR ANOTHER PRIEST TO ARISE ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK, AND NOT BE DESIGNATED ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF AARON? -

The word “perfection,” TELEIOSIS, “denotes a fulfillment, completion, perfection, an end accomplished as the effect of a process.”³⁹⁰ It was impossible for a law system to bring man into a proper relationship to God.³⁹¹ Nothing of a physical nature (i.e. the Tabernacle, sacrifices, etc.) could effect justification and satisfy man’s just punishment, only the Son of God.³⁹² The idea here is to refute the Jewish concept that God had planned to fulfill all things pertaining to mankind under the Levitical system. As Paul states in Gal. 3:21, “if law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.” There was no power in the Levitical Priesthood to obtain the end in view, otherwise why would there have been the need of another priest and another order?³⁹³ Note the word for “another,” HETERON, means “another of a different kind.” Thus, the new system would have a priest different from that of the old Levitical system.³⁹⁴

12. FOR WHEN THE PRIESTHOOD IS CHANGED, OF NECESSITY THERE TAKES PLACE A CHANGE OF LAW ALSO -

This is the key to the author’s argument. If the priesthood was changed, (and it was according to the preceding verses) then the law of the old priesthood must give way to a new Law.³⁹⁵ If Christ is Priest (and He is) the Old Testament is done away.³⁹⁶

13. FOR THE ONE CONCERNING WHOM THESE THINGS ARE SPOKEN BELONGS TO ANOTHER TRIBE, FROM WHICH NO ONE HAS OFFICIATED AT THE ALTAR.

³⁸⁸ R. Milligan, p. 202.

³⁸⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1277.

³⁹⁰ W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 175.

³⁹¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 217.

³⁹² James Thompson, p. 100.

³⁹³ R. Milligan, p. 204.

³⁹⁴ F.F. Bruce, pp. 143, 144 (see footnote #45).

³⁹⁵ R. Milligan, pp. 204, 205.

³⁹⁶ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 142.

14. FOR IT IS EVIDENT THAT OUR LORD WAS DESCENDED FROM JUDAH, A TRIBE WITH REFERENCE TO WHICH MOSES SPOKE NOTHING CONCERNING PRIESTS -

The priests of the Jewish dispensation had been of the tribe of Levi, but Christ was to be of the seed of David and the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10; Nu. 24:17; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Mt. 1:3; Lk. 3:33; Ro. 1:3; Rev. 5:5). No doubt Jesus was of “another” tribe.³⁹⁷ This shows that the law was canceled because Jesus suffered no punishment (cf. the case of King Uzziah in 2 Chron. 26:11-23).³⁹⁸

15. AND THIS IS CLEARER STILL, IF ANOTHER PRIEST ARISES ACCORDING TO THE LIKENESS OF MELCHIZEDEK -

That which is “clearer still” is that the priesthood must be changed (cf. v. 11). And that change was to be Christ. The phrase “according to the likeness of MELCHIZEDEK,” indicating a likeness to MELCHIZEDEK, serves to show that MELCHIZEDEK was not Christ, according to Vine.³⁹⁹

16. WHO HAS BECOME SUCH NOT ON THE BASIS OF A LAW OF PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT, BUT ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE -

The word used here for “physical” is SARKINOS as opposed to SARKIKOS. According to Arndt and Gingrich, SARKINOS, as used here, means “fleshy, belonging to the realm of flesh in so far as it is weak, sinful, and transitory, carnal.”⁴⁰⁰ The idea is the requirement to be genealogically connected to Aaron.⁴⁰¹ By contrast, according to Thompson, “since Christ was raised from the dead, he established the credentials laid down by Psa. 110:4. The power of an indestructible life (cf. Phil. 3:21), demonstrated at the resurrection, qualifies him to be the priest for ever (see vs. 24).”⁴⁰² Jesus was exalted after His resurrection, therefore death cannot change His priesthood.

17. FOR IT IS WITNESSED OF HIM, “THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK” -

³⁹⁷ R. Milligan, p. 205.

³⁹⁸ Don Earl Boatman, pp. 218, 219.

³⁹⁹ W.E. Vine, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 71.

⁴⁰⁰ William F. Arndt and William F. Gingrich. p. 743.

⁴⁰¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 461.

⁴⁰² James Thompson, p. 101.

According to Barnes, “for it is witnessed of him” means “that this is the true account of it is proved by the testimony of God Himself.”⁴⁰³ According to Vine, “order,” TAXIN, refers to “the Divinely appointed character or nature of a priesthood, of MELCHIZEDEK, as foreshadowing that of Christ (where also the character of the Aaronic priesthood is set in contrast).”⁴⁰⁴ The author’s point is, the promise of the MELCHIZEDEK Priesthood came after the institution of the Aaronic priesthood, therefore, it would be more significant.

18. FOR, ON THE ONE HAND, THERE IS A SETTING ASIDE OF A FORMER COMMANDMENT BECAUSE OF ITS WEAKNESS AND USELESSNESS -

According to Vincent, the word for “setting aside,” ATHETESIS, is used only two places in the New Testament, here and in 9:26. He goes on to say, “The fundamental idea is the doing away of something established. The noun, in a technical, legal sense, is found in a number of papyri... meaning the making void of a document.”⁴⁰⁵ The “former commandment” here has to do with the entire Levitical priesthood.⁴⁰⁶ Also according to Vincent “because of its weakness and uselessness” means “it could not bring men into close fellowship with God. See Ro. v. 20; viii. 3; Gal. iii. 21.”⁴⁰⁷

19. (FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT), AND ON THE OTHER HAND THERE IS A BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE, THROUGH WHICH WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD -

“Perfect,” ETELEIOSEN, means “to bring to an end by completing or perfecting, is used... of bringing to completeness...of things, Heb. 7:19 (of the ineffectiveness of the Law).”⁴⁰⁸ The law did not offer to the people under it forgiveness of sins except in the sense it showed them what sin was and caused them to look forward to what was coming.⁴⁰⁹ “A bringing in of,” EPEISAGOGE, “is used here of the introduction, not of something in addition, but of something in place of another ...”⁴¹⁰ The word “better,” KREITTONOS, is used 13 times in the book of Hebrews.⁴¹¹ This is the point of the book, Christ and Christianity is better than Judaism! According to Vincent,

“The comparison is not between the hope conveyed by the commandment, and the better hope introduced by the gospel, but between the

403 Albert Barnes, p. 1278.
 404 W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 145.
 405 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 462.
 406 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 72.
 407 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 462.
 408 W.E. Vine, Vol. III, p. 174.
 409 Albert Barnes, p. 1278.
 410 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 72.
 411 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 385.

commandment which was characteristic of the law. (Eph. ii.15) and the hope which characterized the gospel (Rom. v. 2-5; viii. 24).⁴¹²

Since Christ has “made the ideal sacrifice (‘his own blood,’ 9:12), in a single act he has perfected those who draw near (10:14; cf. 10:1).⁴¹³

20. AND INASMUCH AS IT WAS NOT WITHOUT AN OATH -

Here the author sets forth the idea that Christ’s priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood in that Christ’s priesthood was established or inaugurated with an oath.⁴¹⁴ According to Boatman, “God’s oath is to show the certainty and immutability of the thing sworn.”⁴¹⁵

21. (FOR THEY INDEED BECAME PRIESTS WITHOUT AN OATH, BUT HE WITH AN OATH THROUGH THE ONE WHO SAID TO HIM, “THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER.’” -

According to Barnes,

“The Levitical priests were set apart and consecrated without their office being confirmed to them by an oath on the part of God. They received it by regular descent, and when they arrived at a suitable age they entered on it of course.”⁴¹⁶

The oath “Thou art a priest forever” assures us that Jesus is the priest that God swore would be priest forever.⁴¹⁷

22. SO MUCH THE MORE ALSO JESUS HAS BECOME THE GUARANTEE OF A BETTER COVENANT-

“Guarantee,” EGGUOS, assures absolute certainty that we are under a better covenant because of a better priesthood that is based on God’s oath.⁴¹⁸ According to Thompson,

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 463.

⁴¹³ James Thompson, p. 102.

⁴¹⁴ R. Milligan, p. 209.

⁴¹⁵ Don Earl Boatman, p. 225.

⁴¹⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1278.

⁴¹⁷ R. Milligan, p. 210.

⁴¹⁸ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 97.

“The Christian hope for the fulfillment of God’s purpose is not wishful thinking; the future is guaranteed by one who has proved trustworthy in the past.”⁴¹⁹

23. AND THE FORMER PRIESTS, ON THE ONE HAND, EXISTED IN GREATER NUMBERS, BECAUSE THEY WERE PREVENTED BY DEATH FROM CONTINUING -

According to Milligan,

“...Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, who served from AD 26 to AD 35, was the sixty-seventh in the line of Aaron, and Phannias, the last who wore the miter, AD 70 was the eighty-first in order, showing that mortality was a prominent feature in the Levitical priesthood.”⁴²⁰

According to Fudge, “Josephus says that 83 high priests officiated from Aaron to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.”⁴²¹ (cf. Josephus. ANT. 20.10.1; Jewish War 4.156, Lightfoot, p. 146).

24. BUT HE, ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE HE ABIDES FOREVER, HOLDS HIS PRIESTHOOD PERMANENTLY -

Wright says of this verse, “All priests under the law were subject to death, limiting their continuance of office to their life on earth, but since our High Priest abideth forever, His Priesthood is unchangeable.”⁴²² According to Barclay, “permanently,” APARABATON, “is a legal word. It means inviolable, unalterable, non-transferable. It describes something which belongs to one person and cannot ever be transferred to anyone else.”⁴²³ Since Jesus will never die again, His office can never be passed on.

25. HENCE, ALSO, HE IS ABLE TO SAVE FOREVER THOSE WHO DRAW NEAR TO GOD THROUGH HIM, SINCE HE ALWAYS LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM -

According to scholars, “forever,” EIS TO PANTELES, combines the two ideas of time (He saves forever) and degree (He saves completely; the [NASV] marginal rendering ‘completely’ is good).⁴²⁴ As Barclay says,

⁴¹⁹ James Thompson, p. 104.

⁴²⁰ R. Milligan, p. 212.

⁴²¹ Edward Fudge, p. 77.

⁴²² J.E. Wright, p. 135.

⁴²³ William Barclay, p. 87.

⁴²⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 74; Edward Fudge, p. 78.

“...Jesus exists as the one who remains to be of service to mankind. That is why He is the complete Savior. On earth He served men; He gave His life for them; in Heaven He still exists to make intercession for them. He lived and died for them on earth; He lives in Heaven to plead their cause. He is the priest for ever, the one who is for ever opening the door to the friendship of God.”⁴²⁵

26. FOR IT WAS FITTING THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A HIGH PRIEST, HOLY, INNOCENT, UNDEFILED, SEPARATED FROM SINNERS AND EXALTED ABOVE THE HEAVENS -

We have a High Priest that is: (1) “Holy,” HOSIOS, (as opposed to HAGIOS) “signifies one who fulfills all the Divine obligations both in his character and work.”⁴²⁶ (2) “Innocent,” AKAKOS, means “void of evil.”⁴²⁷ (3) “Undefiled,” AMANTOS, means “free from all taint.”⁴²⁸ (4) “Separated from sinners,” KECHORISMENOS APO TON HAMARTOLON, either in the sense of “being without sin or in His resurrection. (What is here described is an action rather than a condition).”⁴²⁹ (5) “Exalted above the heavens,” HUPSELOTEROS TON OURANON GENONENOS, “expresses the degree of His exaltation...All creation is beneath His feet.”⁴³⁰ cf. Eph. 4:10; Heb. 4:14.

27. WHO DOES NOT NEED DAILY, LIKE THOSE HIGH PRIESTS, TO OFFER UP SACRIFICES, FIRST FOR HIS OWN SINS, AND THEN FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE THIS HE DID ONCE FOR ALL WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIMSELF -

According to Vine, “this verse suggests that the sacrifice of Christ was a priestly act...” and “He entered [heaven] on...the same ground that we can enter, namely, on the ground of the shedding of His blood.”⁴³¹ Unger says, “Christ’s sacrifice was a once-for-all offering of Himself. He did not need to offer daily, nor to offer for His own sins. He offered Himself as a final and complete...sacrifice, the Sinless One alone offering for the sinful (cf. Lev. 16: 11).”⁴³²

28. FOR THE LAW APPOINTS MEN AS HIGH PRIESTS WHO ARE WEAK, BUT THE WORD OF THE OATH, WHICH CAME AFTER THE LAW, APPOINTS A SON, MADE PERFECT FOREVER -

⁴²⁵ William Barclay, p. 88.
⁴²⁶ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 75.
⁴²⁷ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 196.
⁴²⁸ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 76.
⁴²⁹ Ibid.
⁴³⁰ Ibid.
⁴³¹ Ibid., pp. 76,77.
⁴³² Merrill F. Unger, p. 762.

By way of summary the writer of Hebrews tells us that:

1. "For the law appoints men as high priests (Nu. 3:3) who are weak (5:2).
2. But the word of the oath (Psa. 110:4) which came after the law (4:8; 7:11) appoints a Son, made perfect forever."

B. F. Westcott commenting on this idea of Son says, "Our High-priest is not only a Son, but a Son who having become man has been raised above all the limitations of humanity."⁴³³ Lightfoot says "made perfect forever" means that,

"...God has qualified the Son to come before Him in priestly action, and He has done this on the basis of the Son's suffering (2:10) and because of the Son's obedience (5:8,9). The Son, therefore, is the Perfect High Priest, His perfection being crowned and sealed by His exaltation to heaven."⁴³⁴

And so, this High Priest does what the Levitical high priests could not do, and that is, make perfect or complete God's salvation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. NOW THE MAIN POINT IN WHAT HAS BEEN SAID IS THIS: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, WHO HAS TAKEN HIS SEAT AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS -

"His [the author's] idea therefore seems to be this: that in what follows we have not only the chief, but also the crowning point of the whole argument."⁴³⁵ What is this "chief" and "crowning" point? That we, as Christians, have Jesus as just "such a high priest." Thus, "having established the superiority of the high priesthood of Christ, our author now proceeds to relate His high priesthood to the themes of the covenant, sanctuary, and sacrifice, with which the Aaronic priesthood was closely bound up."⁴³⁶ Lightfoot observes, "He is High Priest and His sitting suggests His kingly state: He sits royally in contrast to...the old system who stood offering their daily ineffectual sacrifices (10:11)."⁴³⁷

⁴³³ B.F. Westcott, p. 198.

⁴³⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 149.

⁴³⁵ R. Milligan, p. 217.

⁴³⁶ F.F. Bruce, p. 163.

⁴³⁷ Neil R. Lightfoot, pp. 153, 154.

2. A MINISTER IN THE SANCTUARY, AND IN THE TRUE TABERNACLE, WHICH THE LORD PITCHED, NOT MAN -

The word rendered “minister,” LEITOURGOS, means “a public officer of high and honorable rank, whether civil, military, or religious.”⁴³⁸ According to Vincent, “of the sanctuary,” TON HAGION, refers to “the heavenly sanctuary. cf. Heb. ix. 8,12,25; x. 19; xiii. 11; ix. 24.”⁴³⁹ W. E. Vine says, “true,” ALETHINES, “denotes true in the sense of real, ideal, genuine.”⁴⁴⁰ Vine also says the “tabernacle,” SKENE, is “a tent, booth, tabernacle.”⁴⁴¹ Again, Vincent says, the phrase “the true tabernacle” is “explanatory of TON HAGION.”⁴⁴² And so it is, “The sanctuary refers to heaven itself. It is called true because it is “real” and “eternal.” The heavenly tent, where Christ ministers, has nothing to do with temporary, shadowy things. His ministry, then, is a superior ministry because it is done in a superior place.”⁴⁴³ “Unlike the tent of the Levitical priesthood, this tent is pitched by God and is thus ‘not made with hands’ (9:11,24).”⁴⁴⁴

3. FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES; HENCE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS HIGH PRIEST ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER -

Under the Levitical system every high priest had to have something to offer. In the first instance the verb “to offer,” PROSPHEREIN, is in the present tense⁴⁴⁵ and refers to the continual offering of sacrifices under the Aaronic system (Ex. 29:42). In the second instance, the verb (PROSENEGKEI) is in the aorist tense⁴⁴⁶ and points to a single sacrifice.⁴⁴⁷ Vine says this sacrifice refers to Christ Himself⁴⁴⁸ and we know this to be true from v. 27 of the preceding chapter.

4. NOW IF HE WERE ON EARTH, HE WOULD NOT BE A PRIEST AT ALL, SINCE THERE ARE THOSE WHO OFFER THE GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE LAW -

⁴³⁸ R. Milligan, pp. 217, 218.

⁴³⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 468.

⁴⁴⁰ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, pp. 158, 159.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴⁴² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 468.

⁴⁴³ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 154.

⁴⁴⁴ James Thompson, p. 109.

⁴⁴⁵ Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 352.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 348.

⁴⁴⁷ F.F. Bruce, p. 146; Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 155 (see footnote #3).

⁴⁴⁸ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 130.

God never intended for Jesus to be a priest on earth.⁴⁴⁹ It is as Bruce says, "On earth Jesus was a layman, excluded by the law from all priestly functions."⁴⁵⁰ cf. 7:14.

5. WHO SERVE A COPY AND SHADOW OF THE HEAVENLY THINGS, JUST AS MOSES WAS WARNED BY GOD WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO ERECT THE TABERNACLE; FOR, "SEE," HE SAYS, "THAT YOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN" -

According to Barclay, the word for "copy," HUPODEIGMATI, means "a specimen, a sketch-plan, a shadowy outline."⁴⁵¹ According to Vine, HUPODEIGMA comes "from HUPO, under, DEIKNUMI, to show, properly denotes what is shown below or privately; it is translated 'example.'⁴⁵² Barclay also says "shadow," SKIAL, means "a reflection, a phantom, a silhouette."⁴⁵³ This means there must be the real thing which casts the "shadow." Barclay goes on to say, "The earthly priesthood is unreal and cannot lead men into reality."⁴⁵⁴ Lightfoot says the word for "pattern," TUPON, means "'a blow;,' then, 'the effect of a blow,' as with the impression of a seal or a stamp made on a coin...A TUPOS was also a prescribed form to be imitated, an exact replica - children were called the TUPOI of their parents."⁴⁵⁵ Robertson says TUPON is "the very word used in Ex. 25:40 and quoted also by Stephen in Acts 7:44."⁴⁵⁶ According to Thompson, "The author points to the words of Ex.25:40 in order to show that the Levitical system was a mere shadow."⁴⁵⁷ The phrase "shown you on the mountain" indicates that Moses really did see something and that he was to "copy" it carefully. The point of these verses is, Jesus is in the "real" place, serving as God intended.

6. BUT NOW HE HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, BY AS MUCH AS HE IS ALSO THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH HAS BEEN ENACTED ON BETTER PROMISES -

W. E. Vine indicates there is a contrast between this verse and 7: 22. There Jesus is presented as "the Guarantee of a better covenant." Here He is presented as "the Mediator of a better covenant." In chapter seven, Him being "the Guarantee of a better

⁴⁴⁹ R. Milligan, p. 222; Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 155.

⁴⁵⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 164.

⁴⁵¹ William Barclay, p. 95.

⁴⁵² W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 240.

⁴⁵³ William Barclay, p. 95.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 156.

⁴⁵⁶ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 390.

⁴⁵⁷ James Thompson, p. 111.

covenant” is based on God’s oath. Here, His being “the Mediator of a better covenant” is based on better promises.⁴⁵⁸ According to Lightfoot,

“The readers of the Epistle were quite familiar with the term ‘mediator’, (MESITES). It is a word that is used in daily commerce, for often someone had to function as an ‘arbitrator’ of business transactions. He was one who stood in the middle, MESITES being derived from MESOS, meaning ‘in the middle.’ He had to be able to stand on neutral ground and as a go-between bring the two contracting parties together.”⁴⁵⁹

Vine says the term is used another way to mean “one who acts as a guarantee so as to secure something which otherwise would not be obtained.”⁴⁶⁰

Again, according to Lightfoot,

“In the old covenant the person who performed this service was Moses, as is implied in Gal. 3:19. In the new covenant Jesus is Mediator and far transcends Moses (cf. 9:19; 12:21). He serves both as Guarantor (7:22) and Mediator (cf. 9:15; 12:24). He stands in the middle between God and man, the ideal representative for both parties; and by His presence He not only mediates the new covenant but pledges the fulfillment of it.”⁴⁶¹

According to Vincent,

“...the ideas of the sanctuary and the covenant are closely united. God’s covenant was embodied in the sanctuary. The ark was ‘the ark of the covenant;’ the tables of the law were ‘the tables of the covenant.’ The essence of a covenant is the establishment of a relationship. The sanctuary was the meeting place of God and man. The ritual of sacrifice adjusted the sinner’s relation to a holy God. All the furniture and all the ordinances of the tabernacle assumed the covenant between God and his people. Thus the two ideas belong together. The minister of the Levitical sanctuary was the mediator of the old covenant. A new covenant implies a new ministry, a better covenant implies a better ministry. Christ’s priesthood implies a sanctuary. The new sanctuary implies a new covenant. This covenant is a better covenant because it”⁴⁶² [has been enacted on better promises].

⁴⁵⁸ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 157.

⁴⁶⁰ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 55.

⁴⁶¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 157.

⁴⁶² Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 470.

According to Bruce, "What the better promises are on which this better covenant is established will appear in the quotation from Jer.31:31ff, which follows in verses 8-12."⁴⁶³

7. FOR IF THAT FIRST COVENANT HAD BEEN FAULTLESS, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO OCCASION SOUGHT FOR A SECOND -

The first covenant did not have any real faults, but was being replaced because it had no "provision for the pardon of sin" and therefore "could not bring men into permanent fellowship with God."⁴⁶⁴ The fault lies in the fact that man could not keep the old covenant so as to attain salvation because God never designed it to do that. cf. Gal. 3:21.⁴⁶⁵

8. FOR FINDING FAULT WITH THEM, HE SAYS, "BEHOLD DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH -

Opinion is varied among commentators as what to do with the word "them." Milligan believes it refers to the people; Vine thinks it is talking about the commandments; Boatman takes a middle of the road approach and says it is both of them.⁴⁶⁶ Barnes suggests a different idea by saying the author "used language which implied that there was defect somewhere when he promised another and a better covenant."⁴⁶⁷ Whatever the word "them" refers to "the whole meaning is, that there was a deficiency which the giving of a new covenant would remove."⁴⁶⁸ According to Fudge, "The new covenant was promised through Jeremiah 600 years before Christ, but Jesus used the expression in instituting the Lord's Supper (Lk. 22:20) and Paul repeated it in the same connection (1 Cor. 11:25). Paul also used the phrase in a ministry context (2 Cor. 3:6)."⁴⁶⁹ The word for "covenant," DIATHEKEN, is not the same as what we think of as a covenant. It is not an agreement between equal parties.⁴⁷⁰ Milligan says, the "house of Israel and house of Judah denote all the descendants of Israel."⁴⁷¹

9. NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF EGYPT;

⁴⁶³ F.F. Bruce, p. 168.

⁴⁶⁴ Albert Barnes, P. 1282; Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 158.

⁴⁶⁵ Don earl Boatman, p. 228.

⁴⁶⁶ R. Milligan, p. 228; W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 84; Don Earl Boatman, p. 245.

⁴⁶⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1283.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 84.

⁴⁷⁰ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, pp. 250, 251.

⁴⁷¹ R. Milligan, p. 229.

FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD -

Apparently the author is starting a contrast here by stating that the covenant will be of a different kind in the future. Fudge suggests that God showed His nature to the people by delivering them from Egypt in that He loved them.⁴⁷² This finds no contradiction with the phrase, "I did not care for them," for Vine says it is "a mild expression and refers to the punishment He inflicted on them."⁴⁷³

10. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE -

Boatman has a number of things to say regarding this verse:⁴⁷⁴

- a. "After those days" refers to the days when all Israel became unfaithful. cf. v.9.
- b. The old covenant was written on stone. cf. 2 Cor. 3:7.
- c. With the new covenant you cannot be a part of it unless you know in your mind what it is.
- d. With the old covenant it was accomplished by birth and then teaching.
- e. With the new covenant, it is accomplished by teaching and then birth.
- f. The verse does not expressly deny that Old Testament characters did not have the law in their hearts, but a procedure is contrasted.

According to Thompson, the promise "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" occurs a number of times in the Old Testament (cf. Ex. 6:7; Ezk. 11:19, 20.⁴⁷⁵ Lightfoot observes the covenant of God contained three special blessings and improvements over the first covenant. The new covenant is:

- a. "...inward and spiritual." (v.10)
- b. "...individual and universal." (v.11)

⁴⁷² Edward Fudge, pp. 85, 86.

⁴⁷³ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 84.

⁴⁷⁴ Don Earl Boatman, pp. 246, 247.

⁴⁷⁵ James Thompson, pp. 114, 115.

c. “...a covenant that makes gracious provision for sin.” (v.12)⁴⁷⁶

11. AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERY ONE HIS FELLOW-CITIZEN, AND EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM -

Under the Old Covenant you were born into a covenant relationship and had to be taught the law.⁴⁷⁷ Under the New Covenant, however, one must know Him before becoming covenant related.⁴⁷⁸ In other words, no one is physically born a subject of the New Covenant. As Barnes writes, the “point is not that the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole world, but that all who are interested [Emphasis-DR] in the new dispensation will have a much more full and clear knowledge of God than was possessed under the old.”⁴⁷⁹ Consequently, infant baptism is impossible. cf. 11:6.

12. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE -

Only the New Covenant offers absolute forgiveness.⁴⁸⁰ The Old Covenant was never designed to give complete forgiveness.⁴⁸¹ Complete forgiveness came to them on the grounds of the coming Christ.⁴⁸² God did not remember forgiven sins against them back then and He does not remember sins against us anymore, either.⁴⁸³

13. WHEN HE SAID, “A NEW COVENANT,” HE HAS MADE THE FIRST OBSOLETE. BUT WHATEVER IS BECOMING OBSOLETE AND GROWING OLD IS READY TO DISAPPEAR -

The very words “new covenant” indicate that the previous covenant is outdated.⁴⁸⁴ cf. v.8. In this verse the author is still talking about the time of Jeremiah. He is saying that even Jeremiah expected the old law to pass away and now it has been nailed to the

⁴⁷⁶ Neil R. Lightfoot, pp. 159, 160.

⁴⁷⁷ B. W. Johnson, Vol. II, p. 317.

⁴⁷⁸ R. Milligan, p. 235.

⁴⁷⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1285.

⁴⁸⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 175.

⁴⁸¹ R. Milligan, p. 236.

⁴⁸² James Thompson, p. 115.

⁴⁸³ Albert Barnes, p. 1285; F.F. Bruce, p. 175.

⁴⁸⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 160; Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 473, 474.

cross (Col. 2:14).⁴⁸⁵ If the old covenant is abolished, then the Aaronic priesthood must be abolished.⁴⁸⁶ The author will show in the next chapter that it has done so.⁴⁸⁷

CHAPTER NINE

1. NOW EVEN THE FIRST COVENANT HAD REGULATIONS OF DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY -

According to Milligan, "The Apostle returns here to the line of argument from which he was led off in the sixth verse of the eighth chapter by a comparison of the two covenants."⁴⁸⁸ "The word "covenant," DIATHEKE, is not expressed in the original; but is manifestly implied, as may be seen from both what precedes and what follows."⁴⁸⁹ The idea is that even the old covenant had regulations for how things were to be done.⁴⁹⁰

2. FOR THERE WAS A TABERNACLE PREPARED, THE OUTER ONE, IN WHICH WERE THE LAMPSTAND AND THE TABLE AND THE SACRED BREAD; THIS IS CALLED THE HOLY PLACE -

"The outer one" refers to "the holy place."⁴⁹¹ In "the holy place" was a (1) "lampstand" (about four cubits high according to the Rabbis). cf. Ex. 25:31-40,⁴⁹² (2) "table," and (3) "sacred bread" (also known as "shewbread," "bread of presence," and "loaves of presentation."⁴⁹³ - see also NASV footnote).

3. AND BEHIND THE SECOND VEIL, THERE WAS A TABERNACLE WHICH IS CALLED THE HOLY OF HOLIES -

"The second veil" refers to the veil that separated the Holy of Holies.⁴⁹⁴

4. HAVING A GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT COVERED ON ALL SIDES WITH GOLD, IN WHICH WAS A GOLDEN JAR HOLDING THE MANNA, AND AARON'S ROD WHICH BUDDED, AND THE TABLES OF THE COVENANT -

⁴⁸⁵ R. Milligan, p. 237.
⁴⁸⁶ F.F. Bruce, p. 179.
⁴⁸⁷ B. W. Johnson, Vol. II, p. 317.
⁴⁸⁸ R. Milligan, p. 242.
⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.
⁴⁹⁰ B.F. Westcott, p. 249.
⁴⁹¹ Don earl Boatman, p. 260.
⁴⁹² Ibid.
⁴⁹³ Edward Fudge, p. 89.
⁴⁹⁴ Don Earl Boatman, p. 261.

It is to be noted that the phrase “altar of incense,” THUMIATERION, has a marginal reading of “censer” in the New American Standard Version. The reason for this is because “the Greek term can be taken to mean either ‘censer’ or ‘altar of incense,’ the word itself indicating no more than something on which or in which incense is placed.”⁴⁹⁵ There is much discussion among scholars regarding THUMIATERION,⁴⁹⁶ cf. Ex. 30:1,6,7,10; 40:5; 1 Ki. 6:19-22. Suffice it to say, “Let us remember...that the apostle is discussing ‘ordinances,’ and the pieces of furniture are only incidental.”⁴⁹⁷ Concerning the number of items in the ark of the covenant (cf. Ex. 40:20; Du. 10:5; 1 Ki. 8:9). John Haley writes in his book Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible, “We have previously seen that the ‘book of the law’ was not put into, but by the side of the ark. The text from Hebrews, which asserts that the ‘pot of manna’ and ‘Aaron’s rod’ were in the ark, probably refers to the original arrangement. Later the two were removed.”⁴⁹⁸

5. AND ABOVE IT WERE THE CHERUBIM OF GLORY OVERSHADOWING THE MERCY SEAT; BUT OF THESE THINGS WE CANNOT NOW SPEAK IN DETAIL -

“Cherubim,” CHEROUBEIN, means “keeper or guardian. cf. Ezk. 1:5-11, 13,14,24; 10:5.”⁴⁹⁹ They represent the hosts in the presence of God.⁵⁰⁰ “Mercy seat,” HILASTER-ION, means “a covering” and is synonymous with the word “propitiation.”⁵⁰¹ It was the place of propitiation.⁵⁰² This “mercy seat” represented the symbolic presence of God.⁵⁰³ The last phrase suggests that it was not the author’s real purpose to go back into those things with which his audience was familiar.⁵⁰⁴

6. NOW WHEN THESE THINGS HAVE BEEN THUS PREPARED, THE PRIESTS ARE CONTINUALLY ENTERING THE OUTER TABERNACLE, PERFORMING THE DIVINE WORSHIP -

⁴⁹⁵ F.F. Bruce, p. 184; Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 178; W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 177.

⁴⁹⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1289; Don Earl Boatman, p. 261; R. Milligan, pp. 245, 246; James Thompson, p. 117; Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp.475, 476; B.F. Westcott, pp. 246-249; Besides F.F. Bruce and Neil R. Lightfoot already cited.

⁴⁹⁷ J.E. Wright, p. 144.

⁴⁹⁸ John W. Haley, pp. 390, 391 (see footnote #1).

⁴⁹⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 262.

⁵⁰⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 190.

⁵⁰¹ W. E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 63.

⁵⁰² Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 165.

⁵⁰³ Albert Barnes, p. 1260.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

When the tabernacle was set up “the priests” performed the acts of worship.⁵⁰⁵ The idea of “continually” is that they went in over and over performing their duties.⁵⁰⁶

7. BUT INTO THE SECOND ONLY THE HIGH PRIEST ENTERS ONCE A YEAR, NOT WITHOUT TAKING BLOOD, WHICH HE OFFERS FOR HIMSELF AND FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE -

“The occasion referred to,” says Lightfoot, “is the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the one great day when all sin and uncleanness before the Lord was relieved.”⁵⁰⁷ Of that “great day” Barnes writes,

“On that day he probably entered the holy of holies three or four times, first to burn incense, (Lev.16:12); then to sprinkle the blood of the bullock on the mercy-seat, (Lev. 16:14); then he was to kill the goat of the sin offering, and bring that blood within the veil, and sprinkle it also on the mercy-seat; and then perhaps, he entered again to bring out the golden censer.”⁵⁰⁸

“Not without taking blood” means the high priest never went in without blood, except apparently to get the censer. This blood was offered for his sins and for those of the people “committed in ignorance”, not those of the “high hand.” (cf. Nu. 15:30,31; Heb. 10: 28.)⁵⁰⁹

8. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SIGNIFYING THIS, THAT THE WAY INTO THE HOLY PLACE HAS NOT YET BEEN DISCLOSED, WHILE THE OUTER TABERNACLE IS STILL STANDING -

God caused the tabernacle to be built with certain things in it to teach a lesson.⁵¹⁰ “The way into the holy place” means “‘the way into the holy of holies,’ which was barred by the inner veil.”⁵¹¹ The author refers to the heavenly sanctuary here as “the holy place” instead of the Holy of Holies because “there could not be two parts in the Heavenly Tabernacle, for the veil has been rent.”⁵¹² When the veil (the flesh of Christ; cf. 10:20) was torn, those able to enter the Holy Place could see into, and have access to, the Holy of Holies. This could not happen until the old law, the priesthood and the sacrifi-

⁵⁰⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 166.
⁵⁰⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1290.
⁵⁰⁷ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 166.
⁵⁰⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1290
⁵⁰⁹ R. Milligan, p. 249.
⁵¹⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1291.
⁵¹¹ F.F. Bruce, p. 194.
⁵¹² W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 90.

cial system was brought to an end.⁵¹³ The idea of “the outer tabernacle is still standing” is, that the Levitical sacrificial system “was a system of types and shadows, in which there were many burdensome rites and many things to prevent men from coming before. ...Divinity, and was therefore an imperfect system.”⁵¹⁴

9. WHICH IS A SYMBOL FOR THE TIME THEN PRESENT, ACCORDING TO WHICH BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES ARE OFFERED WHICH CANNOT MAKE THE WORSHIPER PERFECT IN CONSCIENCE -

According to Vine, “symbol,” PARABOLE, “literally denotes a placing beside...It signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison (some consider that the thought of comparison is not necessarily contained in the word).”⁵¹⁵ Thus, as Milligan writes, “The idea of the Apostle seems to be this: that the Jewish Tabernacle with all its rites was made a symbol (PARABOLE) of the good things of the kingdom of heaven...”⁵¹⁶

Fudge says, “All this was a figure or parable for the period of time in which the Aaronic priesthood was ministering.”⁵¹⁷ So it is, “are offered,” PROSPHIRONTAI, “seems to denote that the Levitical sacrifices were still offered by the Jews...”⁵¹⁸ You will recall from our comments at 2:10 that “perfect,” TELEIOSAI, means “complete,” not sinlessness. According to Vincent, “The radical defect of the Levitical system was its inability to deal with the conscience and thus bring about the ‘perfection’ which is the ideal of true religion.”⁵¹⁹ Thus, under the Aaronic priesthood believers never had that sense of “completeness” in which there was nothing lacking that was necessary. But by virtue of Christ’s sacrifice, we, and they, have that complete sense of forgiveness which was lacking in the Old Testament. cf. 9:14; 10:22.⁵²⁰

10. SINCE THEY RELATE ONLY TO FOOD AND DRINK AND VARIOUS WASHINGS, REGULATIONS FOR THE BODY IMPOSED UNTIL A TIME OF REFORMATION -

Vine says “reformation,” DIORTHOSEOS, is “properly, a making straight...what is here indicated is a time when the imperfect...would be superseded by a better order of things

⁵¹³ Don Earl Boatman, pp. 264, 265.

⁵¹⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1291.

⁵¹⁵ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 158.

⁵¹⁶ R. Milligan, p. 250.

⁵¹⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 92.

⁵¹⁸ R. Milligan, p. 251.

⁵¹⁹ Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 479.

⁵²⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 265.

...⁵²¹ Thus, all of this had to do with regulations for the body until God reformed it all through a one-time perfect sacrifice of His Son.⁵²² These regulations appease the body, not the conscience.

11. BUT WHEN CHRIST APPEARED AS A HIGH PRIEST OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME, HE ENTERED THROUGH THE GREATER AND MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, THAT IS TO SAY, NOT OF THIS CREATION -

Vincent says “of the good things to come, TON GENOMENON AGATHON, it should be that have come to pass. Blessings not merely prophetic or objects of hope, but actually attained...”⁵²³ He goes on to indicate that “through,” DIA, does not always mean “through,” but that it can mean “with.” cf. Ro. 2:27; 14:20; 2 Cor. 2:4; 3:11.⁵²⁴ In other words, Christ “appeared...with the greater and more perfect tabernacle...” This is significant when one remembers that a new high priest must have a sanctuary and an offering (cf. 8:2-6). In conjunction with this thought Westcott notes, “In this work it must be observed that Christ is said to make use not of ‘a greater tabernacle’ but of ‘the greater tabernacle,’ ‘the true, ideal tabernacle.’”⁵²⁵

12. AND NOT THROUGH THE BLOOD OF GOATS AND CALVES, BUT THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD, HE ENTERED THE HOLY PLACE ONCE FOR ALL, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION -

The blood of Jesus is far more superior than “the blood of goats and calves.” cf. Mt. 20:28; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.⁵²⁶ Thus, “eternal redemption” is different from the temporary redemption “of goats and calves.” As Edward Fudge writes,

“Unlike the temporary elements of the first covenant, all that pertains to the new covenant belongs to the eternal order. This eternal covenant (13:20) brings an eternal redemption (9:12), inheritance (9:15) and salvation (5:9), because it rests on the offering of Christ by His eternal Spirit (9:14).”⁵²⁷

⁵²¹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, pp. 264, 265.

⁵²² Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 480.

⁵²³ Ibid., p. 481.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ B.F. Westcott, p. 256.

⁵²⁶ R. Milligan, p. 254.

⁵²⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 93.

“Redemption,” LUTROSIN, occurs only here and in Lk. 1:68; 2:38.⁵²⁸

13. FOR IF THE BLOOD OF GOATS AND BULLS AND THE ASHES OF A HEIFER SPRINKLING THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DEFILED, SANCTIFY FOR THE CLEANSING OF THE FLESH -

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer” did cleanse the flesh from sin. cf. Nu. 19:1-21.⁵²⁹ However, even when such a sacrifice was made, it did no good unless it was sprinkled on the people. It is the same with the blood of Jesus today. It must be applied!⁵³⁰ The author is contrasting the cleansing of the flesh with the cleansing of the conscience by the blood of Christ through the Spirit (cf. v.14).

14. HOW MUCH MORE WILL THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHO THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OFFERED HIMSELF WITHOUT BLEMISH TO GOD, CLEANSE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD? -

There are two chief views held as to the meaning of “the eternal spirit.” (cf. marginal reading - NASV). “The eternal spirit” may mean:⁵³¹

1. The spirit of Jesus distinct from the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit.

Because of the absence of the article the author’s emphasis seems to be on the “eternal” aspect of the sacrifice. That is, the length of it. “Dead works” can be divided into two categories:

1. Those that result in spiritual death.
2. Those done under the Old Law that are now ineffective.

Given the context of the book, number two seems to be the best.⁵³² See our comments concerning “dead works” in 6:1.

15. AND FOR THIS REASON HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT, IN ORDER THAT SINCE A DEATH HAS TAKEN PLACE FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE TRANSGRESSIONS THAT WERE COMMITTED UNDER THE FIRST

⁵²⁸ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 263.

⁵²⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 94.

⁵³⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 273.

⁵³¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 95.

⁵³² Arthur W. Pink, Vol. I, pp. 279, 493.

COVENANT, THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED MAY RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE ETERNAL INHERITANCE -

“For this reason” (because of the blood of Christ, cf. v.14) “He is the Mediator of a new covenant.” He was made the Mediator of a new covenant so that there could be a death powerful enough to cover the transgression on both sides of the cross. cf. 8:6. “Redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant” was made possible through the blood of Christ. Their sins were forgiven even under the old covenant. cf. Zech. 13:1; 14: 8,9.

16. FOR WHERE A COVENANT IS, THERE MUST OF NECESSITY BE THE DEATH OF THE ONE WHO MADE IT -

17. FOR A COVENANT IS VALID ONLY WHEN MEN ARE DEAD, FOR IT IS NEVER IN FORCE WHILE THE ONE WHO MADE IT LIVES -

W. E. Vine writes, “We may render somewhat literally thus: ‘For where a covenant (is), a death (is) necessary to be brought in of the one covenanting; for a covenant over dead ones (victims) is sure, since never has it force when the one covenanting lives.’”

18. THEREFORE EVEN THE FIRST COVENANT WAS NOT INAUGURATED WITHOUT BLOOD -

The old covenant was sealed with blood.⁵³³

19. FOR WHEN EVERY COMMANDMENT HAD BEEN SPOKEN BY MOSES TO ALL THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE LAW, HE TOOK THE BLOOD OF THE CALVES AND THE GOATS, WITH WATER AND SCARLET WOOL AND HYSSOP, AND SPRINKLED BOTH THE BOOK ITSELF AND ALL THE PEOPLE

If it were not for this verse in Hebrews there are a number of facts we would not have known, such as, “Moses...sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.”⁵³⁴

20. SAYING, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU” -

cf. Ex. 24:4-8.

21. AND IN THE SAME WAY HE SPRINKLED BOTH THE TABERNACLE AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE MINISTRY WITH THE BLOOD -

⁵³³ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 99.

⁵³⁴ Edward Fudge, p. 98.

It is some time later, after the sprinkling of the book, that Moses “sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels” (cf. Ex. 24:1-8 with Ex. 40:9-11).⁵³⁵

22. AND ACCORDING TO THE LAW, ONE MAY ALMOST SAY, ALL THINGS ARE
CLEANSED WITH BLOOD, AND WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD
THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS -

By way of exception,⁵³⁶ some things were:

1. Cleansed by water - Lev. xvi. 26,28; Nu. xxxi. 24.
2. Cleansed by fire and water - Nu. xxxi. 22,23.
3. Cleansed by flour mixed with the animal blood - Lev. v:11-13.
4. Cleansed by fire (incense) - Nu. 16:46-48.⁵³⁷
5. Cleansed by gold - Nu. 31:50.⁵³⁸

Thus, “one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood...” Though exceptions existed, “it was universally true that no sins were pardoned except by the shedding of blood.”⁵³⁹

23. THEREFORE IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE COPIES OF THE THINGS IN
THE HEAVENS TO BE CLEANSED WITH THESE, BUT THE HEAVENLY
THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THESE -

“Therefore” (since the old covenant required the shedding of blood - cf. vv. 13, 22), then it became necessary to sanctify these things. “Cleansed with these” is referring to the repeated sacrifices that had to be offered under the old covenant.⁵⁴⁰ Yet, the antitypes in heaven had to be cleansed with better sacrifices than these, the One sacrifice, that of Jesus Christ Himself. Lightfoot says, “The thought is practically equivalent to what is said in the next verse, that Christ entered heaven itself to appear before God on man’s behalf.”⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁵ Don Earl Boatman, p. 282.
⁵³⁶ R. Milligan, pp. 261, 262.
⁵³⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 99.
⁵³⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 217.
⁵³⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1298.
⁵⁴⁰ James Thompson, p. 127.
⁵⁴¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, pp. 175, 176.

24. FOR CHRIST DID NOT ENTER A HOLY PLACE MADE WITH HANDS, A MERE COPY OF THE TRUE ONE, BUT INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, NOW TO APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US -

As Lightfoot points out, “the sanctuary is identified for the first time as being heaven itself.”⁵⁴² According to Vine, “the ‘now’ signifies ‘from the point of time when Christ entered Heaven as our High Priest,’ and from thence onward indefinitely. EMPHAN-IZO, to appear is here used in the Middle Voice, signifying to present Himself, and indicating His interest in doing so.”⁵⁴³

25. NOR WAS IT THAT HE SHOULD OFFER HIMSELF OFTEN, AS THE HIGH PRIEST ENTERS THE HOLY PLACE YEAR BY YEAR WITH BLOOD NOT HIS OWN -

According to Lightfoot, “the remaining verses of this chapter magnify [the] theme ...Christ offered Himself once and once only (cf. 7:27).”⁵⁴⁴ Vine adds another contrast, and that is, “Christ is not said to have entered in ‘with,’ but ‘by means of,’ [through] His own blood (9:12).”⁵⁴⁵

26. OTHERWISE, HE WOULD HAVE NEEDED TO SUFFER OFTEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD; BUT NOW ONCE AT THE CONSUMMATION HE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF -

As Vincent indicates, if this sacrifice (the blood of Jesus) is to be the basis for the forgiveness of all sins, and if it was not good when it was offered, then Jesus would have had to suffer over and over again since the world began.⁵⁴⁶ Incidentally, the phrase “since the foundation of the world” connects salvation with all the saints (cf. Rev. 13:8).⁵⁴⁷ Fudge says, the particular construction for the expression “at the consummation,” ‘EPI SUNTELEIA TON AIONON, is found only here in the New Testament and the thrust of its meaning is that there is no other age coming.⁵⁴⁸ The significance of the phrase “He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” can be seen in 2:14.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴² Ibid., p. 176.

⁵⁴³ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 101.

⁵⁴⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 176.

⁵⁴⁵ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 101.

⁵⁴⁶ Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 492.

⁵⁴⁷ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 101.

⁵⁴⁸ Edward Fudge, pp. 101, 102.

⁵⁴⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 288.

27. AND INASMUCH AS IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN TO DIE ONCE, AND AFTER THIS COMES JUDGMENT -

The author of Hebrews is using a known fact to illustrate the power of Christ. Do we expect Jesus to die again? "The very idea is absurd; for men die once, says Vincent, "and judgment follows. Christ was man, and Christ died. He will not come to earth to live and die again. Christ died, but judgment did not follow in his case. On the contrary, he became judge of all."⁵⁵⁰ The point is: Just as everyone dies once, so does Christ only have to die once, not many times.⁵⁵¹

28. SO CHRIST ALSO, HAVING BEEN OFFERED ONCE TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY, SHALL APPEAR A SECOND TIME, NOT TO BEAR SIN, TO THOSE WHO EAGERLY AWAIT HIM, FOR SALVATION -

The blood of Christ is what takes away sin.⁵⁵² In other words, He became sin for us (I Cor. 5:21). "Shall appear a second time, not to bear sin" means, as Barnes suggests, that Jesus will not deal with what he dealt with the first time (sacrifice for sin), but will come for the purpose of getting "those who eagerly await Him."⁵⁵³ According to Vine, "shall appear," OPHTHESETAI, "is a form of the verb HORAO, which here suggests that when He comes He will be actually seen, as He was before at His first Advent, when He came to deal with the question of sin."⁵⁵⁴ Thus, the chapter closes with the warning that Christ, Who has gone into heaven to appear before the face of God, will appear again to those who wait for Him for salvation.

CHAPTER TEN

"The tenth chapter continues the presentation of the contrast between the imperfections relating to the law...and the perfections of Christ and His offering ..."⁵⁵⁵

1. FOR THE LAW, SINCE IT HAS ONLY A SHADOW OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME AND NOT THE VERY FORM OF THINGS, CAN NEVER BY THE SAME SACRIFICES YEAR BY YEAR, WHICH THEY OFFER CONTINUALLY, MAKE PERFECT THOSE WHO DRAW NEAR -

⁵⁵⁰ Martin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 492, 493.

⁵⁵¹ James Thompson, p. 128.

⁵⁵² F.F. Bruce, p. 223.

⁵⁵³ Albert Barnes, p. 1300.

⁵⁵⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 103.

⁵⁵⁵ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 104.

The idea that “the law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form...” is first hinted at in 8;5.⁵⁵⁶ “The law” refers to “the entire Old Testament economy...”⁵⁵⁷

“Shadow,” SKIAN and “form,” EIKON, (“image”-marg. reading), “express the comparative worth of Leviticalism and Christianity. The SKIA is a dark outline, faint and indistinct, like an artist’s first sketch of a picture; the EIKON is the image itself, an exact representation, as an artist’s finished portrait with all the colors in it.”⁵⁵⁸ According to Wuest, “Believers under the First Testament sacrifices never had that sense of completeness in which there was nothing lacking that was necessary. Believers today have that complete sense of forgiveness which was lacking in the Old Testament (v.14).”⁵⁵⁹ Boatman says, verse 22 tells how to draw near and vv. 38,39 shows the danger in not drawing near.⁵⁶⁰

2. OTHERWISE, WOULD THEY NOT HAVE CEASED TO BE OFFERED, BECAUSE THE WORSHIPERS, HAVING ONCE BEEN CLEANED, WOULD NO LONGER HAVE HAD CONSCIOUSNESS OF SINS? -

“Once,” HAPAX, “in effect, means ‘once for all’..., since the Greek perfect tense is used and expresses results still existing.”⁵⁶¹ “Consciousness,” SUNEIDSIN, “is the same word that is rendered ‘conscience’ at 9:9,14. The Levitical system had ‘regulations for the body’ (9:9), but only Christ could purify the conscience (9:14).”⁵⁶²

3. BUT IN THOSE SACRIFICES THERE IS A REMINDER OF SINS YEAR BY YEAR -

“Remembrance,” ANAMNESIS, “here is the same word found in 1 Cor. 11:24,25 and may be translated ‘memorial.’”⁵⁶³ “The new covenant is superior because in it there is no reminder of sins (8:12).”⁵⁶⁴

4. FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS TO TAKE AWAY SIN -

⁵⁵⁶ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 183.
⁵⁵⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 103.
⁵⁵⁸ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 183.
⁵⁵⁹ Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 120.
⁵⁶⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 296.
⁵⁶¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 184.
⁵⁶² James Thompson, p. 130.
⁵⁶³ Edward Fudge, p. 104.
⁵⁶⁴ James Thompson, p. 131.

“All that has been said in the first three verses leads to one conclusion: the blood of animals can not take away the memory of or bad conscience resulting from sins.”⁵⁶⁵ The people’s conscience was not made “perfect” (i.e. complete) as God intended. “...the only real efficacy of the bloody sacrifices of the altar was the moral effect upon the people and the fact that they pointed forward to the Lamb of God.”⁵⁶⁶ Incidentally, the idea of “pointing forward to Christ” eliminates alleged difficulties between this verse and v.11 with such verses as Lev. 4:26; 17:11; Nu.29:5.⁵⁶⁷ The people’s sins were not “rolled forward,” they were “passed over” (cf. Ro. 3:25,26). Very simply, the Old Law taught one that he was a sinner. Since the law was only a copy of good things in the future and not the real thing, those in the world today who attempt to observe Old Testament practices in religion should seriously consider the danger in not drawing near to God as He has prescribed.

5. THEREFORE, WHEN HE COMES INTO THE WORLD, HE SAYS, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME -

By saying, “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins,” the author has attacked something that is “near and dear” to the heart of every Jew, namely, the Levitical sacrificial system. To counteract any prejudice he might incur the author now appeals to Old Testament Scripture to prove his point.⁵⁶⁸ The quote is from Psa. 40:6-8. The author follows the Septuagint, “A body thou hast prepared for Me,” instead of the Hebrew, “Mine ears thou hast opened.” This has caused some to be concerned. As Haley points out, however, in essence the meaning is the same in both phrases. That is, “We thus see that in both cases the fundamental idea, the obedience of the Messiah, is preserved.”⁵⁶⁹ Also, as Thompson points out, “One notices from verse 10 that the word body was essential to the author’s argument. Yet regardless of whether one reads here body or ‘ear,’ the idea is that God prefers obedience to sacrifice.”⁵⁷⁰

6. IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAS TAKEN NO PLEASURE -

⁵⁶⁵ Edward Fudge, p. 104.

⁵⁶⁶ B. W. Johnson, Vol. II, p. 322.

⁵⁶⁷ John W. Haley, pp. 236, 237.

⁵⁶⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1302.

⁵⁶⁹ John W. Haley, p. 152.

⁵⁷⁰ James Thompson, p. 132.

God was not pleased with “sacrifices for sin” because “they did not fully meet His will.”⁵⁷¹ “God has never desired sacrifices above human obedience. This has always been true (cf. Jer. 7:21-23; Isa. 1:11-17; Amos 5:22-24; Micah 6:6-8).”⁵⁷²

7 THEN I SAID, BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD -

The author of Hebrews presents these words “as Christ’s words to God when he came into the world.”⁵⁷³ He came to do God’s will and He had to have a body in order to do it.⁵⁷⁴ “In the roll of the book” refers to anywhere it is written in God’s law (cf. Lk. 24:44).⁵⁷⁵ Thus, “the words, ‘Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,’ are understood as a summary of Jesus’ ministry in his obedience to God’s will (cf. 5:8).”⁵⁷⁶

8. AFTER SAYING ABOVE, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, NOR HAST THOU TAKEN PLEASURE IN THEM” (WHICH ARE OFFERED ACCORDING TO LAW) -

The phrase “offered according to law” means the sacrifices were offered according to the way God wanted them to be offered, “nevertheless, God rejected them as the means of making real expiation of sin...”⁵⁷⁷ “Burnt offerings” and “sin offerings” were connected with atonement (Lev. 14:19). According to Thompson, “The author’s point in listing these sacrifices is to show that the entire sacrificial system is superseded by Christ.”⁵⁷⁸ Why? “Because He perfectly did God’s will ...”⁵⁷⁹

9. THEN HE SAID, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL.” HE TAKES AWAY THE FIRST IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE SECOND -

While “Behold, I have come to do thy will” is found here, “it is really a conclusion to v.8.”⁵⁸⁰ Barnes says, the “first” refers to sacrifices and offerings and the “second” to

⁵⁷¹ B. W. Johnson, p. 322.

⁵⁷² Edward Fudge, p. 105.

⁵⁷³ James Thompson, p. 131.

⁵⁷⁴ Edward Fudge, p. 106.

⁵⁷⁵ Don Earl Johnson, p. 301.

⁵⁷⁶ James Thompson, p. 132.

⁵⁷⁷ Arthur W. Pink, Vol. II, p. 62.

⁵⁷⁸ James Thompson, p. 132.

⁵⁷⁹ William Barclay, p. 129.

⁵⁸⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 302.

doing the will of God.”⁵⁸¹ Therefore, it was God’s will that Jesus take away the first and establish the second.⁵⁸²

10. BY THIS WILL WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL -

“By this will” is in reference to “the will of God as fulfilled in Christ.”⁵⁸³ There is more involved in being “sanctified” than just being set apart (cf. v. 14). The “body” is mentioned here because it has been prominently before us throughout this text (cf. v.5).⁵⁸⁴ “The offering of the body of Jesus Christ” was necessary to “take away the first in order to establish the second” (v.9).

11. AND EVERY PRIEST STANDS DAILY MINISTERING AND OFFERING TIME AFTER TIME THE SAME SACRIFICES, WHICH CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY SINS;

12. BUT HE, HAVING OFFERED ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS FOR ALL TIME, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD -

Note the difference between “stands” and “sat.” “Stands” implies a work that is incomplete, whereas, “sat” implies a completed work. Observe: “A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and an accepted sacrifice.”⁵⁸⁵ Also note the contrast between “offering time after time” and “offered one...for all time.” As Thompson says, “The point is that repetition of the sacrifices indicates the ineffectiveness of the act.”⁵⁸⁶

13. WAITING FROM THAT TIME ONWARD UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET -

“Until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet” is language which “arose from the custom of conquerors in putting their feet on the necks of their enemies as a symbol of subjection (cf. Jos. 10:24).”⁵⁸⁷ As Boatman indicates the last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:25,26).⁵⁸⁸

14. FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HAS PERFECTED FOR ALL TIME THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED -

⁵⁸¹ Albert Barnes, p. 1305.
⁵⁸² R. Milligan, p. 271.
⁵⁸³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 497.
⁵⁸⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 109.
⁵⁸⁵ F.F. Bruce, p. 239
⁵⁸⁶ James Thompson, p. 134.
⁵⁸⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1305.
⁵⁸⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 308.

This verse is an elaboration on v.10.⁵⁸⁹ Also, “note the continued emphasis upon the TELEIOSIS “perfection.” (cf. vii. 11,19; ix. 9; x. 1; xii.2). No more sacrifices are needed.”⁵⁹⁰ Consequently, the author of Hebrews says, “For by one offering he has perfected for all time...”

15. AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ALSO BEARS WITNESS TO US: FOR AFTER SAY-
ING -

How does the Holy Spirit “bear witness to us?” He “bears witness to us” by quoting Jeremiah.⁵⁹¹

16. “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE
DAYS, SAYS THE LORD; I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND
UPON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,”

17. HE THEN SAYS, “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL RE-
MEMBER NO MORE” -

“This passage has already been cited in greater detail in 8:8-12.”⁵⁹² “The phrase
‘remember no more’ is in contrast to the statement of the law which is ‘remembrance
year by year’ (v.3). Where there is absolute forgiveness of sins, another atonement
would be wholly superfluous. Thus, the apostle presents the thought.”⁵⁹³

18. NOW WHERE THERE IS FORGIVENESS OF THESE THINGS, THERE IS NO
LONGER ANY OFFERING FOR SIN -

“Forgiveness of sin is the characteristic of the new covenant. In Jeremiah complete
pardon of sins is promised. If pardon is complete, there is left no place for the Levitical
sacrifices under the new covenant.”⁵⁹⁴ That being true, we do not have to bring a sacri-
fice to God anymore.⁵⁹⁵

19. SINCE THEREFORE, BRETHREN, WE HAVE CONFIDENCE TO ENTER THE
HOLY PLACE BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS -

⁵⁸⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 111.

⁵⁹⁰ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 498.

⁵⁹¹ J.E. Wright, p. 159.

⁵⁹² James Thompson, pp. 134, 135.

⁵⁹³ J.E. Wright, p. 160.

⁵⁹⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 499.

⁵⁹⁵ James Thompson, p. 135.

“Confidence,” PARRESIAN, in this instance, means “cheerful courage, boldness (cf. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19,35).”⁵⁹⁶ “Boldness” is a dominant note all through the Epistle. Thus, literally, the phrase is “boldness to enter the holy place...” Levitical priests were separated by a veil and even when they went into the Most Holy Place once a year they had to take animal blood, whereas, our confidence comes from the blood of Jesus.⁵⁹⁷

20. BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY WHICH HE INAUGURATED FOR US THROUGH THE VEIL, THAT IS, HIS FLESH -

The word for “new,” PROSPHATON, originally meant “freshly slain... It is used in Heb.10: 20 of the ‘living way’ which Christ ‘dedicated for us...through the veil ...His flesh’ (which stands for His expiatory death by the offering of His body, ver.10).”⁵⁹⁸ “It is as though He were just now slain for us.”⁵⁹⁹ It is called a “living way” because Jesus is a living Savior as contrasted to the dead sacrifices of the Levitical system.⁶⁰⁰ According to Arndt and Gingrich, “inaugurated,” ENEKAINISEN, in this case, means to “open a way.” In other instances, it carries the idea of “dedicate with solemn rites.”⁶⁰¹ “Note that the contrast is not between a new and an old way, but between a new way and no way. So long as the old division of the tabernacle existed, the way into the holiest was not opened, ch. ix. 8.”⁶⁰² As the flesh of Jesus was torn on the cross, the veil separating man from the presence of God was torn as well and a “way” was made for man into His presence (cf. 2:9-18; 5:7-9; 10:5).⁶⁰³

21. AND SINCE WE HAVE A GREAT PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD -

“That Christ is here called “a great priest”...recalls the fact that He is both King and Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.”⁶⁰⁴ The author also reminds his audience that Jesus is not just the sacrifice; He is also the One who offers it.⁶⁰⁵

22. LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A SINCERE HEART IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, HAVING OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED CLEAN FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE AND OUR BODIES WASHED WITH PURE WATER -

⁵⁹⁶ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 138.

⁵⁹⁷ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 114.

⁵⁹⁸ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 110.

⁵⁹⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 315.

⁶⁰⁰ R. Milligan, p. 279.

⁶⁰¹ William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 215.

⁶⁰² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 500.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 115.

⁶⁰⁵ F.F. Bruce, p. 249.

“Draw near” to what? “Evidently to God and to the throne of his grace (cf. 4: 16).”⁶⁰⁶ A “sincere heart,” ALETHINES KARDIAS, says Milligan, is “a heart free from all guile, deceit, and hypocrisy.”⁶⁰⁷ “Full assurance of faith, PLEROPHORIA PISTEOS, is “full conviction engendered by faith.”⁶⁰⁸ According to Fudge, “hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience” represents the spiritual cleansing of the conscience by the Holy Spirit, through the merit of the life of Jesus as represented spiritually by His blood.”⁶⁰⁹ According to Thompson,

“The reference to “bodies washed with pure water” is ...an allusion to the custom in the old covenant in which the priest bathed himself in water (Lev. 16:4; cf. Nu. 19:7) before doing his priestly service. The reference is [also] undoubtedly to the readers’ experience of Christian baptism. Baptism is described elsewhere in the New Testament as a washing (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3 5).”⁶¹⁰

“Taken together,” as Lightfoot writes, “the sprinkling of the heart and the washing of the body stand for the process of conversion, containing allusions to repentance and baptism.”⁶¹¹

23. LET US HOLD FAST THE CONFESSION OF OUR HOPE WITHOUT WAVERING FOR HE WHO PROMISED IS FAITHFUL -

“Let us hold fast,” KATECHOMEN, carries the thought of clinging to the faith professed without wavering.⁶¹² “Wavering,” AKLINE, literally means, “not bending.”⁶¹³ Why should we “cling” to the confession of our hope without “bending?” Because “He who promised is faithful.” This is added to encourage them to be faithful to God since He is so faithful Himself.⁶¹⁴

24. AND LET US CONSIDER HOW TO STIMULATE ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE AND GOOD DEEDS -

According to Vine, “stimulate,” PAROXUSMON, “denotes a stimulation. ...It suggests that a mutual spirit of concern for one another is to be cherished, so as to stimulate to

⁶⁰⁶ R. Milligan, p. 280.
⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 281.
⁶⁰⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p.501.
⁶⁰⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 111.
⁶¹⁰ James Thompson, p. 138.
⁶¹¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 190.
⁶¹² B. W. Johnson, p. 324.
⁶¹³ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 116.
⁶¹⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1308.

love and to good works.”⁶¹⁵ B. W. Johnson says this can be done “by word and example.”⁶¹⁶ Think about how we may cause one another to love and to do good things.

25. NOT FORSAKING OUR OWN ASSEMBLING TOGETHER, AS IS THE HABIT OF SOME, BUT ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER; AND ALL THE MORE, AS YOU SEE THE DAY DRAWING NEAR -

“Not forsaking,” EGKATALEIPONTES, in this instance, means “to forsake, abandon, leave in straits, or helpless...”⁶¹⁷ “Habit,” ETHOS, means “a custom, manner.”⁶¹⁸ The author is speaking of those who were apostatizing.⁶¹⁹ There are three basic interpretations regarding “the day” as summarized by Lightfoot:⁶²⁰

1. The day of Christian worship.
2. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
3. The day of final judgment when Christ comes again.

According to Lightfoot, “The interpretation (the day of final judgment when Christ comes again) is generally held in most recent commentaries and translations...”⁶²¹ Milligan says it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and cites Mt.24:41; Lk. 21:20-22 to substantiate his position.⁶²²

26. FOR IF WE GO ON SINNING WILLFULLY AFTER RECEIVING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE NO LONGER REMAINS A SACRIFICE FOR SINS -

According to Vine, “willfully,” HEKOUSIOS, “denotes voluntarily, willingly, Heb. 10:26, (of sinning) ‘wilfully;’ in 1 Pet. 5:2, ‘willingly’ (of exercising oversight over the flock of God).”⁶²³ By “sinning willfully” the author is referring to something like sinning “with a high hand” (Nu. 15:30), which was not pardoned under the Old Law. Note the use of the present participle (“if we go on sinning,” not “if we have willfully sinned”). The message does not concern itself with the number of sins, but with the state of sin. It

⁶¹⁵ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 116.

⁶¹⁶ B. W. Johnson, p. 324.

⁶¹⁷ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 126.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 263.

⁶¹⁹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 191.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., p. 192, 193.

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁶²² R. Milligan, p. 285

⁶²³ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 216.

refers to the apostasy previously discussed in 6:4-6.⁶²⁴ (cf. Isa. 1:10-15; 59:1,2; Jer. 6:19,20; 7:9-16).⁶²⁵ “Knowledge,” EPIGNOSIN, indicates a fuller knowledge as opposed to GINOSKO. The point is the author is speaking to knowledgeable Christians.⁶²⁶ To receive “the knowledge of the truth” and then reject it is like giving up one’s only hope of salvation. The idea is, if they were to deliberately go back to Judaism and offer many animals, there would be “no...sacrifice for sins” remaining because the Levitical sacrifices were abolished in Christ. This is a strong argument against the concept of “once saved, always saved.”

27. BUT A CERTAIN TERRIFYING EXPECTATION OF JUDGMENT, AND THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES -

“Fury of fire,” PUROS ZELOS, according to Lightfoot, “if literally translated, would be ‘jealousy [zeal] of fire,’ suggesting that the divine anger in fiery judgment is like the flaming heart of a jealous lover.”⁶²⁷ Boatman says, “Nahum expressed that God’s judgment grows out of the fact that He is a jealous God (cf. Nahum 1:2,6,7).”⁶²⁸ Milligan indicates there seems to be an allusion here to the fire of God (Nu. 16) and perhaps that of Lev.10. God is represented as a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) before whom all wicked will finally perish (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).⁶²⁹ “Adversaries,” HUPENANTIOUS, says Vine, means “contrary, opposed, is a strengthened form of ENANTIOS, (EN, in, and ANTIOS, set against). The intensive force is due to the preposition HUPO...in Heb. 10:27, ‘adversaries;’...a more violent form of opposition is suggested than in the case of ENANTIOS.”⁶³⁰ Fudge comments, “One places himself in that category when he forsakes Christ and rejects His sacrifice.”⁶³¹

28. ANYONE WHO HAS SET ASIDE THE LAW OF MOSES DIES WITHOUT MERCY ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES -

According to Boatman, “set aside,” ATHETESAS, shows the strictness of an absolute God (cf. Dt. 17:3-6; Nu. 15:32-36).⁶³²

29. HOW MUCH SEVERER PUNISHMENT DO YOU THINK HE WILL DESERVE WHO HAS TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND HAS RE-

⁶²⁴ R. Milligan, p. 285.
⁶²⁵ Don Earl Boatman, p. 321.
⁶²⁶ R. Milligan, p. 285.
⁶²⁷ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 194.
⁶²⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 323.
⁶²⁹ R. Milligan, pp. 285, 286.
⁶³⁰ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 35.
⁶³¹ Edward Fudge, pp. 114, 115.
⁶³² Don Earl Boatman, p. 323.

GARDED AS UNCLEAN THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT BY WHICH HE
WAS SANCTIFIED, AND HAS INSULTED THE SPIRIT OF GRACE?

The one who forsakes Christ deserves a “severer,” CHEIRONOS, penalty. “Deserving the worst for deserting the best,” says Boatman, “is suggested (cf. Lk. 12:47, 48).”⁶³³ That is interesting, if a man is annihilated at death,⁶³⁴ how can there be a “severer” punishment after death? Lightfoot says the phrase “trampled under foot,” KATAPATESAS, means “to ‘hold him up to contempt’ (6:6)...It is used in the New Testament of salt paths that are trodden underfoot (Mt. 5:13).”⁶³⁵ “Unclean,” KOINON, means “common.”⁶³⁶ “More too than this, it meant that the apostate thereby necessarily regarded the blood of Christ as that of a criminal, executed for His own crime.”⁶³⁷ “Insulted,” ENUBRISAS, according to Fudge, “was used by the ancient Greeks for the most presumptuous arrogance and haughtiness, and was regarded as the worst possible sin (cf. Lk. 18:32; Mt. 22:6; Acts 14:5; 2 Cor. 12: 10; 1 Thess. 2:2).”⁶³⁸ By rejecting Christ, Johnson says, they “rejected all the work, the words, the preaching, the pleading of the Holy Spirit.”⁶³⁹

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 TERRIFYING THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING
GOD

“Know,” OIDAMEN, could be translated “We know full well.”⁶⁴⁰ As Boatman says, “The Hebrews knew the faithful God Who in times past punished men for sin.”⁶⁴¹ According to Lightfoot,

“The two quotations are from the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy, the first from 32:25 and the second from 32:36 (cf. Ps. 135:14). Each, in its original context, refers to God’s readiness to vindicate His people against their enemies. Here, however, the words are applied more generally,

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 324.
⁶³⁴ Duward Lee, p. 173.
⁶³⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 195 (see footnote #11).
⁶³⁶ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 171.
⁶³⁷ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 120.
⁶³⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 115.
⁶³⁹ B. W. Johnson, p. 325.
⁶⁴⁰ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 120.
⁶⁴¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 325.

making certain that God's retributive judgment will fall on His unfaithful people as well."⁶⁴²

"Terrifying," PHOBERON, signifies "causing fear, terrible."⁶⁴³ Lightfoot suggests, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...brings to mind a statement of David...(2 Sam. 24 :14)."⁶⁴⁴ The fearful aspect of judgment is also found in the words of Jesus in Mt. 10:28 (cf. Lk. 12: 5).⁶⁴⁵ As Barnes puts it, "The idea here is, that to fall into the hands of the Lord, after having despised his mercy and rejected his salvation, would be terrible; and the fear of this should deter from the commission of the dreadful crime."⁶⁴⁶

32. BUT REMEMBER THE FORMER DAYS, WHEN, AFTER BEING ENLIGHTENED, YOU ENDURED A GREAT CONFLICT OF SUFFERINGS -

As Lightfoot writes, "Reference to "the former days" implies, as indicated also in 5:12ff, that the people addressed have been Christians for some time."⁶⁴⁷ As Bruce points out, "The identification, however, is made a little easier of we link with the present passage the words of Ch. 12:4...It is a reasonable inference from these words that, while the people addressed had undergone persecution, none of them had thus far suffered martyrdom."⁶⁴⁸ They were possibly second generation Christians.

"Enlightened," PHOTISTHEIES, "used transitively, to enlighten, illumine."⁶⁴⁹ In later manuscripts this word became a synonym for "baptism." A Syriac manuscript reads "...having received baptism..."⁶⁵⁰ "Conflict," ATHLESIN, "is a word for an athletic contest; one may notice that the author uses the language of the Greek games at 12:1,2."⁶⁵¹ As early Christians were "granted...not only to believe in [Christ], but also to suffer for His sake..." (Phil. 1:29), so we, too, are granted the same privilege.

33. PARTLY, BY BEING MADE A PUBLIC SPECTACLE THROUGH REPROACHES AND TRIBULATIONS, AND PARTLY BY BECOMING SHARERS WITH THOSE WHO WERE SO TREATED -

⁶⁴² Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 195.
⁶⁴³ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 85.
⁶⁴⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 195.
⁶⁴⁵ James Thompson, p. 143.
⁶⁴⁶ Albert Barnes, p. 1310.
⁶⁴⁷ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 196.
⁶⁴⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 266.
⁶⁴⁹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 31.
⁶⁵⁰ B.F. Westcott, p. 333.
⁶⁵¹ James Thompson, p. 143.

“Public spectacle,” THEATRIZOMENOI, “is used in the noun form at 1 Cor. 4:9..The emphasis is on the public manner of the persecution; the readers were put to public shame.”⁶⁵² “Reproaches,” ONEIDISMOIS, means contemptuous defamation.”⁶⁵³ “Tribulations,” THLIPSESIN, “primarily means a pressing, pressure (has reference to sufferings due to the pressure of circumstances, or the antagonism of persons) anything which burdens the spirit.”⁶⁵⁴ Thus, because they were “sharers with those who were” reproached, it is understandable why the author would use this term. These people had been made a spectacle of and had shared the affliction of those who had suffered affliction for their faith. Now, they were thinking of leaving that faith.

34. FOR YOU SHOWED SYMPATHY TO THE PRISONERS, AND ACCEPTED JOYFULLY THE SEIZURE OF YOUR PROPERTY, KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELVES A BETTER POSSESSION AND AN ABIDING ONE -

The phrase, “For you showed sympathy to the prisoners...” clearly shows that the Hebrew Christians “had actively ministered to the needs of their afflicted brothers. Christians imprisoned in ancient times had to be visited and fed. This was a never-to-be-forgotten obligation (13:3; Mt. 25:36,39,43,44)...”⁶⁵⁵ “Accepted,” PROSEDEX-ASTHE, “means to accept willingly. For Israelites to treat the plundering of their property with joy was so contrary to natural inclinations that it was no small evidence of genuine faith...”⁶⁵⁶ The readers “joyfully” endured the plundering of their property because they looked forward to what they would gain in heaven (cf. Mt. 6:19,20).⁶⁵⁷

35. THEREFORE, DO NOT THROW AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE, WHICH HAS A GREAT REWARD -

“Do not throw away,” AOPBALETE, “here seems rather to be ‘let not go.’ See the opposite idea, ‘hold fast,’ in regard to boldness [confidence], in 3:6.”⁶⁵⁸ According to Milligan this is an allusion “to the conduct of weak and cowardly soldiers, who in the day of battle were wont to throw aside their shields and turn their backs on the enemy.”⁶⁵⁹ The writer of Hebrews is exhorting his Hebrew brethren not to act as cowardly soldiers,

652 Ibid.
 653 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 122.
 654 W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, pp. 38, 39.
 655 Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 196.
 656 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 123.
 657 James Thompson, p. 144.
 658 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 124.
 659 R. Milligan, p. 291.

casting away their shield of faith, but to be strong in the Lord.⁶⁶⁰ “The purpose of their ‘recalling the former days’ (vss. 32ff.) is now made clear.”⁶⁶¹

36. FOR YOU HAVE NEED OF ENDURANCE, SO THAT WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THE WILL OF GOD, YOU MAY RECEIVE WHAT WAS PROMISED -

Fudge hints this might be the key verse of the book of Hebrews.⁶⁶² “Endurance,” HUPOMONES, is “literally, an abiding under...is almost invariably rendered ‘patience.’ ‘Patience,’ which grows only in trial, Jas. 1:3, may be passive, i.e., = endurance...or active, i.e. = persistence, perseverance...”⁶⁶³ According to Boatman, “Patience in spite of discouragement leads on to do the will of God. When God’s will is done, then God’s promise is assured and received (cf. Lk. 21: 19).”⁶⁶⁴ Notice the reward is not inherent, “you may receive what was promised.”

37. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY -

This quotation, which is concluded in the following verse, is an appeal based upon the assurance that Christ will return. Lightfoot writes,

“The quotation...is taken largely from Hab. 2:3,4; the first line of the quotation (the ‘little while’) is apparently from Isa. 26:20. (The form of the quotation is close to that of the LXX.) In effect, the author [is saying] ‘Be patient. The time is not long. Isaiah says it will be ‘a very little while;’ and Habakkuk says that the Coming One ‘will not delay.’”⁶⁶⁵

The writer of Hebrews wants his readers to see they can make it if they will just endure, persevere and be persistent.

38. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM -

To “live by faith” is, according to Thompson, “equivalent to ‘endurance’ at verse 36; it implies waiting patiently for Christ’s return. To shrink back is to follow Israel’s example of unbelief (3:19).”⁶⁶⁶ Johnson says, “He who draws back through fear, or because of

⁶⁶⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 328.

⁶⁶¹ James Thompson, p. 144.

⁶⁶² Edward Fudge, p. 118.

⁶⁶³ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, pp. 167, 168.

⁶⁶⁴ Don Earl Boatman, pp. 328, 329.

⁶⁶⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 197.

⁶⁶⁶ James Thompson, p. 145.

trial, in him God hath not pleasure (cf. Ps 5: 4).⁶⁶⁷ In other words, he stands condemned.

39. BUT WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK TO DESTRUCTION, BUT OF THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH TO THE PRESERVING OF THE SOUL -

According to Lightfoot, “shrink back,” HUPOSTOLES, is,

“a word which comes out of a rich background. It first means ‘to draw in’ or ‘contract,’ as someone might furl a sail or a dog tuck his tail. It then means ‘to draw back,’ ‘abstain from,’ ‘avoid,’ ‘cover,’ etc...The Epistle’s readers were not to be quitters but were to persevere in faith.”⁶⁶⁸

Thus, “the exhortation closes with a word of optimism,” says Fudge.⁶⁶⁹ It is also, however, a positive statement that some had fallen away. Incidentally, speaking of “falling away,” in regards to the consideration that this verse and Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29 directly oppose Paul’s teaching in Ro. 8:29,30,38,39 concerning the impossibility of falling from grace, allow the comment by Albert Barnes to explain the situation. Commenting on Heb. 6:6, Barnes says, “It is not an affirmation that any had actually fallen away, or that, in fact, they would do it; but the statement is, that on the supposition that they had fallen away, it would be impossible to renew them again.”⁶⁷⁰ Thus, when viewed from this perspective the alleged discrepancy disappears. Thompson say, “Verses 37-39 are a fitting summary of verses 26-36. Verses 26-31 warn that those who shrink back are destroyed. Verses 32-36 describe those who have faith and keep their souls. The author’s purpose in this long discussion has been to urge his readers to endure in faith.”⁶⁷¹

CHAPTER ELEVEN

According to Barnes,

“In the close of the previous chapter the apostle had incidentally made mention of faith, (vers. 38,39) and said that the just should live by faith. The object of the whole argument in this epistle was to keep those to whom it was addressed from apostatizing from the Christian religion, and especially from relapsing again into Judaism. They were in the midst of trials, and were evidently suffering some form of persecution, the ten-

⁶⁶⁷ B. W. Johnson, p. 325.

⁶⁶⁸ Neil R. Lightfoot, pp. 198, 199 (see footnote #18).

⁶⁶⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 118.

⁶⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1266.

⁶⁷¹ James Thompson, p. 146.

dency of which was to expose them to the danger of relapsing. The indispensable means of securing them from apostasy was faith; and with a view to show its efficacy in this respect, the apostle goes into an extended account of its nature and effects, occupying this entire chapter. As the persons whom he addressed had been Hebrews, and as the Old Testament contained an account of numerous instances of persons in substantially the same circumstances in which they were, the reference is made to the illustrious examples of the efficacy of faith in the Jewish history. The object is to show that faith, or confidence in the Divine promises, has been in all ages the means of perseverance in the true religion, and consequently of salvation.⁶⁷²

The writer of Hebrews wants his readers to have faith and to act upon that faith.

1. NOW FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN -

“Assurance,” HUPOSTASIS, (“substance,” marg. reading) is defined by Arndt and Gingrich as, “substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality...”⁶⁷³ W. E. Vine adds,

“For the word HUPOSTASIS, here rendered ‘assurance,’ see 1:3, ‘substance,’ and 3:14, ‘confidence.’ Here the R. V. margin gives an excellent rendering, ‘the giving substance to;’ that is what faith does to things hoped for, it makes them facts instead of matters of mere expectation...it is not merely a conviction of the fact that things unseen exist, it brings them into the experience of the believer’s life.”⁶⁷⁴

Thus, as Johnson says, “Without faith we would be limited to the very narrow world comprehended by the senses.”⁶⁷⁵ “Conviction,” ELEGCHOS, (“evidence,” marg. reading), according to Milligan, “may denote (1) the proof or demonstration by means of which any proposition is shown to be true or false; and (2) the conviction or full persuasion wrought in the mind by means of this demonstration.”⁶⁷⁶ Faith is the evidence and provides the proof of what is not seen at this time. The phrase “of things not seen,” PRAGMATON OU BLEPOMENON, embraces, according to Vincent, “not only future realities, but all that does not fall under the cognisance of the senses, whether past,

⁶⁷² Albert Barnes, pp. 1313, 1314.

⁶⁷³ William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 847.

⁶⁷⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 127.

⁶⁷⁵ B. W. Johnson, Vol. II, p. 326.

⁶⁷⁶ R. Milligan, p. 300.

present, or future.”⁶⁷⁷ “That faith rests on invisible things is also affirmed in verse 27,” according to Thompson.⁶⁷⁸

2. FOR BY IT THE MEN OF OLD GAINED APPROVAL -

Fudge says, “This verse may give a capsule illustration of the first part of faith’s description in verse one. These...were men who maintained a confidence and courage and assurance toward God in the face of whatever circumstances they encountered.”⁶⁷⁹ The latter phrase, “gained approval,” EMARTURETHESAN, can literally be translated “were witnessed of,” which means, according to Barnes, “an honorable testimony was borne to them in consequence of their faith. The idea is, that their acting under the influence of faith, in the circumstances in which they were, was the ground of the honorable testimony which was borne to them in the Old Testament.”⁶⁸⁰

3. BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLDS WERE PREPARED BY THE WORD OF GOD, SO THAT WHAT IS SEEN WAS NOT MADE OUT OF THINGS WHICH ARE VISIBLE -

A. T. Robertson makes the following comment regarding the phrase “by faith,” PISTEI. “Instrumental case of PISTIS which he now illustrates in a marvelous way. Each example as far as verse 31 is formally and with rhetorical skill introduced by PISTEI. After that only a summary is given.”⁶⁸¹ According to Bruce and Westcott, “word of God,” RHEMATI THEOU, means “a single expression of the Divine will or utterance of God (cf. 6 5).”⁶⁸² Since it is by the instrumentality of faith that we accept the account given by Moses that the world was created out of nothing, and since the word of God did indeed create the world out of nothing, the author’s point is that worlds are merely “effects,” what is real is the word of God.⁶⁸³

4. BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED TO GOD A BETTER SACRIFICE THAN CAIN, THROUGH WHICH HE OBTAINED THE TESTIMONY THAT HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, GOD TESTIFYING ABOUT HIS GIFTS, AND THROUGH FAITH THOUGH HE IS DEAD, HE STILL SPEAKS -

⁶⁷⁷ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 510, 511.

⁶⁷⁸ James Thompson, p. 147.

⁶⁷⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 120.

⁶⁸⁰ Albert Barnes, p. 1314.

⁶⁸¹ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 419.

⁶⁸² F.F. Bruce, p. 280; B.F. Westcott, p. 353.

⁶⁸³ F.F. Bruce, p. 281; Arthur W. Pink, Vol. II, p. 160.

The first example of faith is that of Abel. To examine this account more closely, see Gen. 4:3-7.⁶⁸⁴ “Better,” PLEIONA, means “more, greater, the comparative degree of POLUS, much...PLEION is used sometimes of that which is superior by reason of inward worth, cp.3:3.⁶⁸⁵ There has been much speculation concerning the phrase “better sacrifice than Cain...” According to Fudge, there are basically three views held why Abel had a “better sacrifice than Cain.” (1) Abel’s sacrifice was meat, but Cain’s was fruit, (2) the attitude in which the sacrifice was offered and (3) they had been commanded a specific sacrifice and Cain refused to offer what had been requested.⁶⁸⁶ All that God’s word says on the matter is, “By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain...” We know Abel to be righteous because Jesus Himself confirmed it to be so in Mt. 23:25, as well as the apostle John in 1 Jn. 3:12.⁶⁸⁷ Thus, God testified or “bore witness by his acceptance of the gifts.”⁶⁸⁸ As a result, “though he is dead, he still speaks” to us by his faith and example as witnessed in the Old Testament record.⁶⁸⁹ cf. Gen. 4:10. Also Heb. 12:24.

5. BY FAITH ENOCH WAS TAKEN UP SO THAT HE SHOULD NOT SEE DEATH, AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; FOR HE OBTAINED THE WITNESS THAT BEFORE HIS BEING TAKEN UP HE WAS PLEASING TO GOD -

Boatman gives the following background information regarding Enoch: “Little is known of him. Gen. 5:24 says, ‘And Enoch walked with God and he was not because God took him.’ Jude 14 says that he was a prophet and warned the people. Gen. 5:18 tells us that he was the son of Jared.”⁶⁹⁰ “Taken up,” METETETHE, according to Vine, means “to transfer to another place...”⁶⁹¹ By faith Enoch achieved a “close personal relation” with God that pleased Him.⁶⁹² Thus, “his faithfulness was rewarded by a translation to heaven without first becoming a victim of death.”⁶⁹³ “So unusual was Enoch’s transference,” writes Lightfoot, “that no one else in the Old Testament, except Elijah (2 Kg. 2:11), had this experience.”⁶⁹⁴ Incidentally, for those who would contrast this verse with 1 Cor. 15:60 where it talks about flesh and blood being excluded from heaven, “it need only be said that,” to use the words of John Haley, “Enoch and Elijah, before entering the heavenly world, passed through a change equivalent to death.

⁶⁸⁴ Edward Fudge, pp. 121, 122.
⁶⁸⁵ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 56.
⁶⁸⁶ Edward Fudge, p. 122.
⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 123.
⁶⁸⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 514.
⁶⁸⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 129.
⁶⁹⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 352.
⁶⁹¹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 150.
⁶⁹² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 515.
⁶⁹³ B. W. Johnson, p. 326.
⁶⁹⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 208.

Their corruptible put on incorruption, and their mortal put on immortality.”⁶⁹⁵ Another thing, as Thompson points out, “The Septuagint translation has ‘Enoch was well pleasing to God’ for the Hebrew ‘Enoch walked with God;’ and ‘he was not found, because God translated him’ for the Hebrew ‘He was not, for God took him.’ The author follows the Septuagint here.”⁶⁹⁶ The important thing to remember, however, “is that Enoch pleased God through his faith.”⁶⁹⁷

6. AND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM-

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him” is the whole point of this chapter. The word “who comes,” PROSERKOMENON, is better translated “approaches.” The same Greek word is used in 7:25; 4:16; 10:1,22, says Fudge.⁶⁹⁸ “A rewarder,” MISTHAPO- DOTES GINETAI, is used in several other places in Hebrews (2:2; 10:35; 11:26) and is usually translated “recompense of reward”⁶⁹⁹ or “one who pays wages.”⁷⁰⁰ As Thompson concludes, “The twofold perspective of faith in verse 1 is alluded to here. To believe that God exists is to have a ‘conviction of things not seen;’ to believe that God rewards those who seek him is to have ‘the assurance of things hoped for.’ As in verse 1, faith is a confident reliance upon the future.”⁷⁰¹ And, as was mentioned earlier, that is the point of chapter 11.

7. BY FAITH NOAH...

Another example of faith is Noah. The story of Noah is recorded in Gen. 6:8-9: 28.⁷⁰²

8-10. BY FAITH ABRAHAM...

The story of Abraham’s journey is recorded in Gen. 12:1ff.⁷⁰³

8. “...AND HE WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHERE HE WAS GOING -

To the alleged discrepancy between this statement and “...they set out for the land of Canaan...” (Gen. 12:5) Haley responds:

⁶⁹⁵ John W. Haley, p. 217.
⁶⁹⁶ James Thompson, pp. 148, 149.
⁶⁹⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 124.
⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.
⁶⁹⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 515.
⁷⁰⁰ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 295.
⁷⁰¹ James Thompson, p. 149.
⁷⁰² Ibid.
⁷⁰³ Ibid., p. 150.

“At first, the name of the country was not revealed to him. It is designated simply as a ‘land that I will show thee’ (Gen. xii.1). Even if the name ‘Canaan’ had been mentioned to Abraham at the outset, it might still be true that he went forth ‘not knowing whither he went.’ For, in those days of slow transit, imperfect intercommunication and meager geographical knowledge, the mere name of a country several hundred miles distant would convey almost no idea of the country itself. In our own time, even, of how many an emigrant on his way to America it might well be said, ‘He knows not whither he is going.’”⁷⁰⁴

10. FOR HE WAS LOOKING FOR THE CITY WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS,
WHOSE ARCHITECT AND BUILDER IS GOD -

According to Vincent, “By ‘the city,’ TEN...POLIN, he means the heavenly Jerusalem, and his statement is that Abraham’s faith looked forward to that. The idea of the new or heavenly Jerusalem was familiar to the Jews. See ch. xii. 22, xiii. 14; Gal. iv. 26.”⁷⁰⁵ Hence, Abraham looked beyond the first fulfillment of the promise which was only a step in the accomplishment of the purpose of God.⁷⁰⁶ Thus, apparently the patriarchs had a much more thorough knowledge of heaven than it appears from just the Old Testament.⁷⁰⁷ So, Abraham did not lose his faith because he was looking for a heavenly Jerusalem (cf. 4:8).⁷⁰⁸ By way of concluding this verse we glean these thoughts from the pen of Albert Barnes:

“From the past verses dealing with Abraham, we can see that his faith was eminently strong because: (1) The journey which he took was long and dangerous. (2) He was going among strangers. (3) He was leaving a country, home and friends, that he would see no more. (4) He had no right to the country to which he was going. More than likely his journey was treated by his friends as wild and uncertain. They probably thought he was crazy. The whole] transaction, therefore, was in the highest degree an act of simple confidence in God. It is therefore, understandable why Abraham is so commended in this chapter.”⁷⁰⁹

11. BY FAITH EVEN SARAH HERSELF RECEIVED ABILITY TO CONCEIVE... -

⁷⁰⁴ John W. Haley, p. 364.

⁷⁰⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 519, 520.

⁷⁰⁶ B.F. Westcott, p. 360.

⁷⁰⁷ R. Milligan, p. 308.

⁷⁰⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 297.

⁷⁰⁹ Albert Barnes, p. 1320.

For the historical account see Gen. 18:12-25.⁷¹⁰ According to Thompson,

“A major difficulty is present in this verse. The expression, ‘received the power to conceive,’ KATABOLEN SPERMATOS, refers to the father’s part in procreation, not the mother’s. [Thompson goes on to explain that] it is more probable that ‘Sarah herself’ is in the dative case in Greek and that Abraham is the subject of the sentence. Understood this way, verse 11 reads, ‘By faith he (Abraham), with Sarah herself, received power to procreate.’ That Abraham, and not Sarah, is the subject of the sentence can be observed in the fact that verse 12 continues the subject of Abraham’s faith.”⁷¹¹

12. “...AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE -

This promise of God in Gen. 15:5 and 22:17 has been fulfilled.⁷¹²

13-16.

“Before listing more heroes, the author provides a reflection (vss. 13-16) on the nature of the faith of those he has mentioned.”⁷¹³

13. ALL THESE DIED IN FAITH, WITHOUT RECEIVING THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AND HAVING WELCOMED THEM FROM A DISTANCE, AND HAVING CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND EXILES ON THE EARTH -

“All these” refers to those who are mentioned in verses 8-12: Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. These were the ones who were promised great things (cf. Gal. 3:16).⁷¹⁴ Yet they died without receiving the land or seed promise.⁷¹⁵ cf. 11:39. Yet, Robertson writes, “...the author mentions Abraham (6:15) as having obtained the promise. He received the promise of the Messiah, but did not live to see the Messiah come as we have done. Abraham rejoiced to see Christ’s day in the dim distance (Jn. 8:56).”⁷¹⁶ But they did see them in the future by faith.⁷¹⁷ According to Fudge,

⁷¹⁰ Edward Fudge, p. 127.

⁷¹¹ James Thompson, pp. 151, 152.

⁷¹² Ibid., p. 152.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ R. Milligan, p. 311.

⁷¹⁵ B. W. Johnson, p. 327.

⁷¹⁶ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V. p, 432.

⁷¹⁷ B. W. Johnson, p. 327.

“Abraham confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim (Gen. 23:4), as did Jacob (Gen. 47:9). David, a later man of faith, made the same confession in his day (Psa.39:12; 119:19; 1 Chr. 29:15). Peter urges Christians to have the same attitude (1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11), as does our writer in making the present point.”⁷¹⁸

17-19.

The story of Abraham’s offering of Isaac is recorded in Gen. 22:1-14.⁷¹⁹

17. BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS TESTED, OFFERED UP ISAAC; AND HE WHO HAD RECEIVED THE PROMISES WAS OFFERING UP HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON -

According to Thompson, “Because Isaac was Abraham’s only son and the descendants would be named through Isaac (Gen. 21:12), Abraham’s readiness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice was an exceptional act of faith.”⁷²⁰ According to Wright, Abraham was “tested” in two ways: “Abraham must choose between human reasoning and the command of God.”⁷²¹ And yet, as Lightfoot points out, Abraham did not believe that God would go back on His promise.⁷²²

18. IT WAS HE TO WHOM IT WAS SAID, “IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED” -

“In Isaac” stands first in the Greek for emphasis and shows that it was to be “in Isaac” and no other.⁷²³

19. HE CONSIDERED THAT GOD IS ABLE TO RAISE MEN EVEN FROM THE DEAD; FROM WHICH HE ALSO RECEIVED HIM BACK AS A TYPE-

“Considered,” LOGISAMENOS, says Vine, “means to account, and the aorist tense here expresses a decisive mental act; he made up his mind after thinking the matter over, that God could actually raise the dead; that was a general principle in his mind.”⁷²⁴ This is amazing when one considers, as Wright points out, “up to this time no one had

⁷¹⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 128.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., p. 129.

⁷²⁰ James Thompson, p. 153.

⁷²¹ J.E. Wright, p. 186.

⁷²² Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 213.

⁷²³ B.F. Westcott, p. 366.

⁷²⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 135.

ever heard of a resurrection from the dead..."⁷²⁵ According to Fudge, "because Isaac was already dead in Abraham's faithful mind (see verse 17), our author says that is what did happen; not literally, but in a figure. Abraham's faith was approved. He received his son alive as a reward."⁷²⁶

20. BY FAITH ISAAC... -

The historical account is found in Gen. 27.⁷²⁷

21. BY FAITH JACOB...LEANING ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF -

The historical account is in Gen.48.⁷²⁸ As Fudge observes, "It may be noticed that Genesis has 'bed' where our author has 'staff.' The same consonants in Hebrew may be either; our author is using a Greek translation which had 'staff.' The faith of Jacob remains the same in either case, and that is the point."⁷²⁹

22. BY FAITH JOSEPH...GAVE ORDERS CONCERNING HIS BONES -

This incident is recorded in Gen. 50.⁷³⁰ According to Vine, "that he gave commandment concerning his bones was no mere sentiment, it expressed his belief in, and assurance of, resurrection, and alike with his fathers, of the possession of the land of promise."⁷³¹

23. BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE WAS BORN... -

The reference here is Ex. 2:2.⁷³²

24-26. BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE HAD GROWN UP... -

This incident in the life of Moses is recorded in Ex. 2:10ff.⁷³³

26. CONSIDERING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST... -

What is meant by "the reproach of Christ?" Boatman believes "it is a reproach like Christ's. As He, though rich, became poor to redeem mankind, so Moses despised the

⁷²⁵ J.E. Wright, p. 187.

⁷²⁶ Edward Fudge, p. 130.

⁷²⁷ James Thompson, p. 154.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 132.

⁷³⁰ James Thompson, p. 155.

⁷³¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 136.

⁷³² James Thompson, p. 155.

⁷³³ Ibid.

treasures of Egypt to deliver Israel.⁷³⁴ According to Thompson, “This phrase comes from the Septuagint of Psalm 89:51b, which speaks of the ‘abuse of the anointed’...” Thus verse 26 intensifies the typology between Moses and Christ: both suffered abuse.⁷³⁵

27. BY FAITH HE LEFT EGYPT... -

“The reference...is to Moses’ flight (Ex. 2:15) from Egypt after he had murdered the Egyptian.”⁷³⁶

28. BY FAITH HE KEPT THE PASSOVER... -

This episode is written in Ex. 12.⁷³⁷

29. BY FAITH THEY PASSED THROUGH THE RED SEA... -

For the account of this event see Ex. 14:21ff.⁷³⁸

30. BY FAITH THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELL DOWN... -

You can read about this occurrence in Joshua 6⁷³⁹

31. BY FAITH RAHAB -

“The story of the activity of Rahab the harlot in shielding the spies is recorded in Joshua 2:1-14.”⁷⁴⁰

32-40.

“Having spoken of the faith of such heroes as Abraham and Moses in some detail, the author in verses 32ff. spans the periods of the judges and the monarchy by the bare mention of the names of the heroes. These heroes all have in common the characteristic that they acted ‘through faith’ (verses 33,39).”⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁴ Don Earl Boatman, p. 367.

⁷³⁵ James Thompson, p. 156.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., p. 157.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibid., p. 158.

⁷³⁹ Edward Fudge, p. 137.

⁷⁴⁰ James Thompson, p. 158.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

Barak (Judges 4,5).
 Samson (Judges 13-16).
 Jephthah (Judges 11,12).
 David (1 Samuel 16-31).
 Samuel (1 Samuel 19:20).⁷⁴²

39. AND ALL THESE, HAVING GAINED APPROVAL THROUGH THEIR FAITH,
 DID NOT RECEIVE WHAT WAS PROMISED -

Robertson says, "All these," HOUTO PANTES, is "the whole list in verses 5-38. cf. v.13."⁷⁴³ Barnes and Milligan agree that their faith was the thing that bore them witness.⁷⁴⁴ So it is, our faith (that which we do by faith, according to the preceding examples of faith) shall witness that we are faithful. Milligan views "what was promised" as being "the personal coming and reign of the Messiah."⁷⁴⁵ Johnson and Lightfoot concur with that viewpoint.⁷⁴⁶

40. BECAUSE GOD HAD PROVIDED SOMETHING BETTER FOR US, SO THAT
 APART FROM US THEY SHOULD NOT BE MADE PERFECT -

Fudge and Milligan agree that the "something better," KREITTON TI, is the new covenant (cf. 8:6).⁷⁴⁷ The word for "made perfect," TELEIOTHOSIN, means "completed," according to Thompson.⁷⁴⁸ Boatman says, "this perfecting looks forward to that salvation consummated at the coming of Christ (cf. 9:28)."⁷⁴⁹ Johnson observes, "All these ancient heroes, who died not having received the promise, need the realization of the promise in Christ to make them perfect; by that promise we also are saved."⁷⁵⁰

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. THEREFORE, SINCE WE HAVE SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES
 SURROUNDING US, LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY ENCUMBRANCE,
 AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENTANGLES US, AND LET US RUN WITH
 ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US -

⁷⁴² Edward Fudge, pp. 138, 139.
⁷⁴³ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V. p. 450.
⁷⁴⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1314; R. Milligan, p. 332.
⁷⁴⁵ R. Milligan, p. 332.
⁷⁴⁶ B. W. Johnson, p. 330; Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 221.
⁷⁴⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 145; R. Milligan, p. 332.
⁷⁴⁸ James Thompson, p. 162.
⁷⁴⁹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 383.
⁷⁵⁰ B. W. Johnson, p. 330.

Robertson says “therefore,” TOIGAROUN, is a very emphatic word and is used only one other time in the New Testament at 1 Thess. 4:8.”⁷⁵¹ This is not the regular word for “therefore.” cf. 2:1. The “great cloud of witnesses” are those who have just been named in chapter eleven. The idea is they are not so much spectators as they are proof that Christians can run the race successfully. We look to them instead of them watching us.⁷⁵² Vincent describes the scene like this:

“The writer’s picture is that of an arena in which Christians whom he addresses are contending in a race, while the vast host of the heroes of faith who, after having borne witness to the truth, have entered into their heavenly rest, watches the contest from the encircling tiers of the arena, compassing and overhanging it like a cloud, filled with lively interest and sympathy and lending heavenly aid.”⁷⁵³

“Laying aside every encumbrance” refers to athletes who would remove any clothing or other articles that might impede their running.⁷⁵⁴ “The sin which so easily entangles us,” says Robertson, is “in this case apostasy from Christ...”⁷⁵⁵ Vincent says it “easily encircles and entangles the Christian runner, like a long loose robe clinging to his limbs.”⁷⁵⁶ “Let us run with endurance, HUPOMONES, because, as Lightfoot writes, “the Christian race, as the context shows, is a marathon race, not a short sprint.”⁷⁵⁷ Notice that it is “the race that is set before us.” Vincent says this of TON AGONA. “Instead of a specific word for race (DROMOS), the general term contest is used.”⁷⁵⁸

2. FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF FAITH, WHO FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND HAS SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD -

“Fixing our eyes on,” APHORONTES EIS, is literally, “to look away,” look away from everything but Jesus. He is the supreme witness of faith. This phrase occurs only here and Phil. 2:23.⁷⁵⁹ “Perfecter,” TELEIOTEN, means “finisher”. It is used only here in the New Testament. The word “perfect” occurs in one form or another in 2:10; 5:9; 6:1;

⁷⁵¹ A.T. Robertson, Vol. p. 432.
⁷⁵² F.F. Bruce, p. 346.
⁷⁵³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 536.
⁷⁵⁴ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 432.
⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.
⁷⁵⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 537.
⁷⁵⁷ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 227.
⁷⁵⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 537.
⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 537, 538.

7:11,19,28; 9:9; 10:1,14; 11:40; and here.⁷⁶⁰ According to Johnson, “for the joy set before him” refers to “the joy of saving men and of sitting at God’s right hand.”⁷⁶¹ Fudge adds to the thought by saying it “may refer to His delight in doing the will of God...”⁷⁶² Vincent would have us “notice the tenses: “endured,” aorist, completed: “has sat down, perfect, he remains seated and reigning.”⁷⁶³ Thus, Fudge says, “the verb tense here indicates not only that He had taken this seat but that He still occupies it!”⁷⁶⁴

3. FOR CONSIDER HIM WHO HAS ENDURED SUCH HOSTILITY BY SINNERS AGAINST HIMSELF, SO THAT YOU MAY NOT GROW WEARY AND LOSE HEART -

Vincent tells us that “for consider,” ANALOGISASTHE GAR, “introduces the reason for the exhortation to look unto Jesus. Look unto him, for a comparison with him will show you how much more he had to endure than you have.”⁷⁶⁵ Concerning the phrase, “him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself,” Vine says, “...most ancient texts are divided between the plural ‘themselves’ and the singular ‘Himself.’”⁷⁶⁶ Regarding this point, Vincent offers the following explanation, “According to this text we should render ‘against themselves.’ The explanation will then be that Christ endured the gainsaying [hostility] of sinners, who, in opposing him, were enemies of their own souls.”⁷⁶⁷ Vincent goes on to state that he prefers the reading of “himself.” Whatever the rendering should be, as Lightfoot writes,

“There is a definite stress on ‘endure’ all through the passage. Jesus endured (w .2,3); and the author says that his readers must likewise endure (v.7), that they must persevere or endure in the race (v.1). The exhortation in these lines may be put thus: ‘Consider Jesus. Compare His experiences with your own. He, too, lived in the flesh and was a companion in tribulation. He was violently opposed, His sayings were twisted, and His claims were ridiculed. Consider His sufferings and the manner in which He met them.’ The implication is strong that, if the readers of the Epistle make an accurate reckoning, they will not collapse on the track before the race is finished.”⁷⁶⁸

Note the marginal rendering of “fainting in your souls” and cf. Gal.6:9.

760 Ibid.
 761 B. W. Johnson, Vol. II, p. 331.
 762 Edward Fudge, p. 148.
 763 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 539.
 764 Edward Fudge, p. 149.
 765 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 539.
 766 W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 146.
 767 Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 539, 540.
 768 Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 230.

4. YOU HAVE NOT YET RESISTED TO THE POINT OF SHEDDING BLOOD IN YOUR STRIVING AGAINST SIN -

Regarding this verse Vine says,

“That the subject is that of striving against sin shows that the resisting unto blood is not here a matter of enduring martyrdom at the hands of persecution. The metaphor is a striking expression as to the utmost degree of striving against sin, the negative statement putting their failure in contrast to what Christ endured.”⁷⁶⁹

Bruce suggests, “The recipients of this epistle had in earlier days endured severe persecution for their faith, but they had not yet been called upon to seal their testimony with their blood.”⁷⁷⁰ To the notion that suffering is a sign of divine disapproval, Lightfoot responds: “To the contrary...suffering is essential and even valuable, for through it God reveals His care and establishes a meaningful relationship of father and son.”⁷⁷¹

5. AND YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXHORTATION WHICH IS ADDRESSED TO YOU AS SONS, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM -

Vine says, “exhortation,” PARAKLESEOS, “denotes (a) an appeal...(b) encouragement, exhortation...(c) consolation and comfort...”⁷⁷² The quote is from Psa. 3: 11 (note marg. ref.). “Discipline,” PAIDEIAS, again, according to Vine, “denotes the training of a child, including instruction cf. Eph. 6:4...suggesting the Christian discipline that regulates character...”⁷⁷³ Thus, as Wright comments: “One of our greatest blessings which we often cannot see is God’s chastisement. The persecutions we are sometimes called upon to endure are often chastisements of love from God Himself.”⁷⁷⁴ According to Arndt and Gingrich, “not faint,” MEDE EKLIOU, means to “become weary or slack, give out...do not lose heart.”⁷⁷⁵

6. FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES” -

⁷⁶⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 146.

⁷⁷⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 357.

⁷⁷¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 231.

⁷⁷² W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 60.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 183.

⁷⁷⁴ J.E. Wright, p. 199.

⁷⁷⁵ William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 243.

“For those whom the Lord loves he disciplines,” but Milligan says He does not do this “arbitrarily or unnecessarily (cf. Lam. iii. 33; Hos. xi. 8).”⁷⁷⁶ “Scourges,” MASTIGOI, says Vine, “is used... metaphorically...of the chastening by the Lord administered in love to His spiritual sons.”⁷⁷⁷ He goes on to note, “The Jewish method of scourging, as described in the Mishna, was by the use of three thongs of leather, the offender receiving thirteen stripes on the bare breast and thirteen on each shoulder, the ‘forty stripes save one,’ as administered to Paul five times (2 Cor. 11:24).”⁷⁷⁸ Milligan closes his comments on this verse by observing: “No child of God need...expect to enter heaven without...passing through the furnace of afflictions (cf. Acts xiv. 22).”⁷⁷⁹

7. IT IS FOR DISCIPLINE THAT YOU ENDURE; GOD DEALS WITH YOU AS WITH SONS; FOR WHAT SON IS THERE WHOM HIS FATHER DOES NOT DISCIPLINE? -

According to Vincent, “discipline,” PAIDEIAN, “is here the end or result of discipline.”⁷⁸⁰ According to Boatman, Alford says, “It is not for punishment, not for any evil purpose; you are under the attention and affection of the Father.”⁷⁸¹ “Deals,” PROSPHERETAI, also according to Vincent, means “to bring to: often to bring an offering to the altar. The afflictive dealing of God with you is an evidence that you are sons.”⁷⁸² Thus, Lightfoot says, “If God is truly their Father, then he must treat them accordingly (Pro. 13:24; cf. Dt. 8:5).”⁷⁸³

. BUT IF YOU ARE WITHOUT DISCIPLINE, OF WHICH ALL HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS, THEN YOU ARE ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN AND NOT SONS -

Robertson says “if you are without discipline” is a “condition of first class, determined as fulfilled.”⁷⁸⁴ That being true, then those who are without discipline are not sons.⁷⁸⁵ Vincent says the “all,” PANTES, refers to “all sons of God.”⁷⁸⁶ According to Thompson, “The author wishes to make his readers appreciate the fact that suffering, far from being a curse on them, demonstrates that they are legitimate sons.”⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁷⁶ R. Milligan, p. 847.
⁷⁷⁷ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 328.
⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.
⁷⁷⁹ R. Milligan, p. 847.
⁷⁸⁰ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 541.
⁷⁸¹ Don Earl Boatman, p. 400.
⁷⁸² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 541.
⁷⁸³ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 232.
⁷⁸⁴ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 435.
⁷⁸⁵ Edward Fudge, p. 151.
⁷⁸⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 541.
⁷⁸⁷ James Thompson, p. 166.

9. FURTHERMORE, WE HAD EARTHLY FATHERS TO DISCIPLINE US, AND WE RESPECTED THEM; SHALL WE NOT MUCH RATHER BE SUBJECT TO THE FATHER OF SPIRITS, AND LIVE? -

Vincent says, “furthermore, ‘EITA,’ introduces a new phase of the subject under discussion.”⁷⁸⁸ Vincent goes on to say that “Father of spirits,” is to be “contrasted with fathers of flesh. Their relation to us is limited; his is universal. They are related to us on the fleshly side; he is creator of our essential life. Our relation to him is on the side of our eternal being.”⁷⁸⁹ As Lightfoot says, “The reasoning is forceful.”⁷⁹⁰ All of us had human fathers. They disciplined us and we respected them for doing it. So, we should put ourselves under the Father of spirits even more, then we will live.

10. FOR THEY DISCIPLINED US FOR A SHORT TIME AS SEEMED BEST TO THEM, BUT HE DISCIPLINES US FOR OUR GOOD, THAT WE MY SHARE HIS HOLINESS -

“They disciplined us for a short time” is directly related to “be subject to the Father of spirits, and live,” and makes a contrast, according to Vincent.⁷⁹¹ Vincent goes on to explain,

“Subjection to his fatherly discipline means, not only the everlasting life of the future, but present life, eternal in quality, developed even while the discipline is in progress. [note marg. ref.] On the other hand, the discipline of the human father is brief in duration, and its significance is confined to the present life.”⁷⁹²

Vincent continues by saying “as seemed best to them” was “not always best for us. No such possibility of error attaches to the Father of spirits.”⁷⁹³ According to Vine, “share,” METALABEIN, “is in the aorist tense, marking the definiteness and decisiveness of the experience.”⁷⁹⁴ As Lightfoot expresses it, “Earthly discipline confines itself to the sphere of earthly life; but heavenly discipline, which is never arbitrary, seeks to purge God’s own from sin and secure for them a permanent participation in the divine life whose essential requirement is holiness (cf. v.14).”⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁸⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 542.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 232.

⁷⁹¹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 543.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ Ibid., p. 544.

⁷⁹⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 148.

⁷⁹⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 233.

11. ALL DISCIPLINE FOR THE MOMENT SEEMS NOT TO BE JOYFUL, BUT SORROWFUL; YET TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT, AFTERWARDS IT YIELDS THE PEACEFUL FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS -

According to Thompson, the word for “trained,” GEGUMNASMENOIS, “is the word for the conditioning of the athlete before the contest. The peaceful fruit of righteousness (Phil. 1:11) is the product of the training and discipline of persecution.”⁷⁹⁶ Milligan says, though the discipline “is at first bitter to the taste, it nevertheless afterward becomes a tree of life which yields constantly ‘the peaceable fruit of righteousness.’ That is, it produces righteousness as its fruit; and this fruit gives peace and consolation to the once grieved and troubled soul.”⁷⁹⁷

12. THEREFORE, STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT ARE WEAK AND THE KNEES THAT ARE FEEBLE -

Fudge observes, “...our author...changes imagery to that of a group of wayfarers on a journey and builds on this figure through verse 17.”⁷⁹⁸ According to Vine, “strengthen,” ANORTHOSATE, means “to set upright.. Here it has the general sense of setting right.”⁷⁹⁹ Milligan says this phrase is from Isa. 35:3 and may denote any form of weariness. Isaiah applied this phrase to the Jews returning to Jerusalem from Babylon.⁸⁰⁰ Thompson points out that “the exhortation in verses 12,13 is derived from the readers’ general weariness in persevering (cf. 4:8-11; 5:11-6:8).”⁸⁰¹

13. AND MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET, SO THAT THE LIMB WHICH IS LAME MAY NOT BE PUT OUT OF JOINT, BUT RATHER BE HEALED -

Fudge explains that the Greek word for “lame” is CHOLON which is a figurative description of the wavering between two different opinions. The Jews were known for their wavering between two opinions (cf. I Ki. 18:21).⁸⁰² Lightfoot tells us,

“These words are a quotation from Pro. 4:26a (LXX)...”put out of joint” is the translation for EKTRAPE, a word that might mean ‘turn away’ or ‘avoid,’ but here with ‘lame’ must be understood as a technical term for ‘be dislocated.’ The admonition is that the strong are to move onward in a

⁷⁹⁶ James Thompson, p. 167.

⁷⁹⁷ R. Milligan, p. 351.

⁷⁹⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 152.

⁷⁹⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 149.

⁸⁰⁰ R. Milligan, p. 352.

⁸⁰¹ James Thompson, p. 168.

⁸⁰² Edward Fudge, p. 153.

straight course and bear along with them their weak brothers who otherwise might be tempted to turn aside and abandon the Christian race.”⁸⁰³

14. PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND THE SANCTIFICATION WITHOUT WHICH NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD -

According to Vine, “pursue peace,” EIRENEN DIOKETE, means “to pursue earnestly, not merely moving in a certain direction, but earnestly pursuing the object mentioned.”⁸⁰⁴ Robertson vividly expresses it like this: “Give peace a chase as if in a hunt.”⁸⁰⁵ In “chasing” after peace, Boatman suggests “four kinds of troubles should be looked for:

- a. Those who fall short.
- b. Bitterness springing up.
- c. Fornication.
- d. Profane person.”⁸⁰⁶

The writer of Hebrews expresses the four areas in the following manner:

15. SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE COMES SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD; THAT NO ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSES TROUBLE, AND BY IT MANY BE DEFILED -

According to Vincent, “comes short of,” HUSTERON APO, literally means “‘fall back from,’ implying a previous attainment. The present participle marks something in progress: ‘lest any one be falling back.’”⁸⁰⁷ In addition to Gal. 5:4 (marg. ref.) Boatman also suggests comparing I Tim. 4:1 and Rev. 2:5.⁸⁰⁸ Vincent says, “root of bitterness,” RIZA PIKRIAS, refers to “a bad man in the church (cf. LXX, DT. xxix. 18).”⁸⁰⁹ He also says the participle for “springing up,” ANO PHUOUSA, “pictures the springing up in

⁸⁰³ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 234.
⁸⁰⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 149.
⁸⁰⁵ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 437.
⁸⁰⁶ Don Earl Boatman, p. 408.
⁸⁰⁷ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 548.
⁸⁰⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 409.
⁸⁰⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 548.

progress.⁸¹⁰ Thus, “the apostasy of one has effects on others,” according to Thompson,⁸¹¹ “and by it many be defiled.”

16. THAT THERE BE NO IMMORAL OR GODLESS PERSON LIKE ESAU WHO SOLD HIS OWN BIRTHRIGHT FOR A SINGLE MEAL -

Vincent says, “immoral,” PORNOS, (“fornicator”-ASV) “is always used in the New Testament in the literal sense.”⁸¹² Consequently, Milligan says Esau was “both a fornicator and a profane [“godless”] person.”⁸¹³ Lightfoot, on the other hand, says, “It appears... that “immoral” is not to be connected with Esau.”⁸¹⁴ What is the answer to be? Perhaps the answer lies in Wright’s comment regarding this point:

“Esau was not a fornicator by being untrue to his marriage vow, for we cannot be sure that he was even married at the time he sold his birthright. He was a fornicator because he sought things of lesser value instead of higher value. We Christians are also fornicators when we seek after worldly things instead of spiritual.”⁸¹⁵

“Godless,” BEBELOS, Vine says, is “primarily, permitted to be trodden, accessible ... hence, unhallowed, profane...is used of (a) persons, 1 Tim. 1:9; (b) things, 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16.”⁸¹⁶ The historical reference for this account is Gen. 25:33ff (marg. ref.).

17. FOR YOU KNOW THAT EVEN AFTERWARDS, WHEN HE DESIRED TO INHERIT THE BLESSING, HE WAS REJECTED, FOR HE FOUND NO PLACE FOR REPENTANCE, THOUGH HE SOUGHT FOR IT WITH TEARS -

“Was Esau ‘rejected’ by Isaac, by God or by both? Did Esau find ‘no place for repentance’ in himself or in his father or in both? Did he seek ‘with tears’ the blessing or a place for repentance?”⁸¹⁷ Conclusively, I do not know, but “the application is plain: it is a reinforcement of the warning given at an earlier stage in the argument [4:1], that after

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., p. 549.

⁸¹¹ James Thompson, p. 169.

⁸¹² Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 549.

⁸¹³ R. Milligan, p. 355.

⁸¹⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 236.

⁸¹⁵ J.E. Wright, p. 203.

⁸¹⁶ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 217.

⁸¹⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 157.

apostasy no second repentance is possible.”⁸¹⁸ Thus, “the author presses the case of Esau as a warning to the Christians who were tempted to give up Christ.”⁸¹⁹

18-24. According to Thompson, the main idea of these verses is the idea of coming before God.⁸²⁰

18. FOR YOU HAVE NOT COME TO A MOUNTAIN THAT MAY BE TOUCHED
AND TO A BLAZING FIRE, AND TO DARKNESS AND GLOOM AND WHIRL-
WIND -

“Again the imagery changes, this time to terms based on the giving of the Law at Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:16,18; Dt. 4:11; 5:23; 9:15).”⁸²¹ “Awesome as were the circumstances of the giving of the law in Moses’ day, more awesome by far are the privileges associated with the gospel, if they are despised or refused.”⁸²²

19. AND TO THE BLAST OF A TRUMPET AND THE SOUND OF WORDS WHICH
SOUND WAS SUCH THAT THOSE WHO HEARD BEGGED THAT NO FUR-
THER WORD SHOULD BE SPOKEN TO THEM -

Thompson says, “The description is drawn from the account of God’s revelation at Sinai in Ex. 19:16-19; 20:18-21; Dt. 4:11,12; 5:22,23.”⁸²³ As Bruce observes, “The mountain was so changed with the holiness of the God who manifested Himself there that for man or beast to touch it meant certain death.”⁸²⁴

20. FOR THEY COULD NOT BEAR THE COMMAND, “IF EVEN A BEAST
TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED” -

Barnes comments, “The meaning is not that the commands themselves were intolerable, but that the manner in which they were communicated inspired a terror which they could not bear.”⁸²⁵ Milligan says, “Our author now assigns parenthetically the reason why the ancient Hebrews felt so much terror and alarm, as they stood at the foot of Sinai...”⁸²⁶ The quote comes from Ex. 19:12,13 (marg. ref.).

⁸¹⁸ F.F. Bruce, p. 368.
⁸¹⁹ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 438.
⁸²⁰ James Thompson, p. 170.
⁸²¹ Edward Fudge, p. 157.
⁸²² F.F. Bruce, p. 371.
⁸²³ James Thompson, p. 171.
⁸²⁴ F.F. Bruce, p. 371.
⁸²⁵ Albert Barnes, p. 1337.
⁸²⁶ R. Milligan, p. 358.

21. AND SO TERRIBLE WAS THE SIGHT, THAT MOSES SAID, "I AM FULL OF FEAR AND TREMBLING" -

Scholarship is uncertain as to where this statement by Moses may have originated. Some suggest it may refer to Dt. 9:19 or perhaps Acts 7:32; 16:29.⁸²⁷ Others say it refers to Ex. 19:19.⁸²⁸ Bruce suggests "Our author may have been acquainted with a Haggadic account of the Sinai theophany which made explicit mention of Moses' fear and trembling on this occasion too."⁸²⁹ Wherever the phrase may have come from, the point is, the situation at Sinai was awe inspiring and fearful.⁸³⁰

22-24.

These verses, according to Thompson, compare the Old and New Covenants in order to show the superiority of the New Covenant. Because of their Jewish background, the Hebrews probably had been greatly impressed with the events of God's revelation at Sinai.⁸³¹

22. BUT YOU HAVE COME TO MOUNT ZION AND TO THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, AND TO MYRIADS OF ANGELS -

The word "but," ALLA, distinguishes a sharp contrast between Mount Sinai (w. 18-21) and Mount Zion (vv. 22-24), according to Robertson.⁸³² Vine says Jerusalem and Mount Zion cannot be separated because of their central position in government, worship and service.⁸³³ Milligan comments that the comparison to Christians and the heavenly Jerusalem is that when one comes into the kingdom of God, he symbolically comes to the center of that city which typifies the kingdom.⁸³⁴ Vincent explains that "myriads," MURIAS, "is strictly the number ten thousand. In the plural, an innumerable multitude."⁸³⁵

23. TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN HEAVEN, AND TO GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL, AND TO THE SPIRITS OF RIGHTEOUS MEN MADE PERFECT -

⁸²⁷ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 552; A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 440.

⁸²⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 158; R. Milligan, p. 359.

⁸²⁹ F.F. Bruce, p. 372.

⁸³⁰ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 238.

⁸³¹ James Thompson, pp. 171, 172.

⁸³² A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 440.

⁸³³ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 152.

⁸³⁴ R. Milligan, p. 360.

⁸³⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 553.

There is some dispute as to whether “general assembly” is connected with “angels” in v.22 or “church” which follows. Vincent indicates that “general assembly,” PANEGUREI, “denotes, in Classical Greek, a whole nation gathering for a festival.”⁸³⁶ The NASV keeps the conjunction “and,” KAI, but does not have “and to the church,” which separates the other elements in the list (cf. marg. ref.). According to Fudge, “church of the first-born,” EKKLESIAI PROTOTOKON, “should be interpreted in its literal sense here of an assembly [because] it is composed of the first-born ones (plural in the original)...”⁸³⁷ Milligan proposes that “the spirits of righteous men made perfect” refers to all the righteous beginning with Abel and especially brings to mind those mentioned in chapter eleven.⁸³⁸ Vincent wants us to “notice again the idea of TELEIOSIS [completeness], not attained under the old covenant, but only through the work of Christ...”⁸³⁹

24. AND TO JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT, AND TO THE SPRINKLED BLOOD, WHICH SPEAKS BETTER THAN THE BLOOD OF ABEL

Regarding “the sprinkled blood,” Bruce comments, “The removal of an evil conscience does away with the barrier between them and God, the sacrifice of Christ thus ‘has better things to tell than the blood of Abel’ (NEB).”⁸⁴⁰ How does the blood of Jesus “speak better than the blood of Abel?” According to Lightfoot, “The blood of Abel cried for vengeance against Abel’s murderer, but the blood of Christ calls for forgiveness, cleanses the guilty conscience, and opens the way to heaven.”⁸⁴¹ By way of summation of vv. 22-24, Wright lists nine things Christians have to “come to.” They are:

1. We are come unto Mount Zion.
2. Unto the city of the Living God.
3. To the heavenly Jerusalem.
4. To an innumerable host of angels.
5. To the general assembly and church of the First Born.
6. To God, the Judge of all.
7. To the spirits of just men made perfect.

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Edward Fudge, p. 160.

⁸³⁸ R. Milligan, p. 362.

⁸³⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 555.

⁸⁴⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 379.

⁸⁴¹ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 240.

8. To Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant.
9. To the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.⁸⁴²
25. SEE TO IT THAT YOU DO NOT REFUSE HIM WHO IS SPEAKING. FOR IF THOSE DID NOT ESCAPE WHEN THEY REFUSED HIM WHO WARNED THEM ON EARTH, MUCH LESS SHALL WE ESCAPE WHO TURN AWAY FROM HIM WHO WARNS FROM HEAVEN -

Bruce says, "The 'how much more' argument of cbs. 2:2f. and 10:29 is pressed home again: to disobey the gospel incurs judgment more certain and terrible even than that incurred by disobedience to the law."⁸⁴³ Who is "him who warned them on earth?" According to Lightfoot,

"...characteristically in the Epistle it is God who does the speaking. In any case the main point of contrast is not the contrast between speakers, between Moses who spoke from earth and Christ who speaks from heaven. It is rather a contrast between the two revelations themselves, the one given on earth - earthy - and the other coming from above. It is a contrast of kinds - between prophetic oracle and a Living Voice who continues to speak from heaven."⁸⁴⁴

According to Vincent, "turn away," APOSTREPHOMENOI, literally is turning away."⁸⁴⁵ In other words, some at that time were already turning back to Judaism.

26. AND HIS VOICE SHOOK THE EARTH THEN, BUT NOW HE HAS PROMISED, SAYING, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN -

The quote comes from Hag. 2:6 (cf. marg. ref.). According to Thompson,"The prophet Haggai says that the sign of the messianic age will be when God shakes not only the earth but also the heavens (Mt. 24:29)."⁸⁴⁶ Barnes maintains this took place when the gospel was introduced into the world.⁸⁴⁷ Fudge says, for his purpose, the writer of the book of Hebrews applies Haggai's words "to the final Day of the Lord (cf. 10:25)."⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴² J.E. Wright, pp. 209, 210.
⁸⁴³ F.F. Bruce, p. 382.
⁸⁴⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 240.
⁸⁴⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 556.
⁸⁴⁶ James Thompson, p. 174.
⁸⁴⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1339.
⁸⁴⁸ Edward Fudge, p. 163.

27. AND THIS EXPRESSION, "YET ONCE MORE," DENOTES THE REMOVING OF THOSE THINGS WHICH CAN BE SHAKEN, AS OF CREATED THINGS, IN ORDER THAT THOSE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN MAY REMAIN -

Vincent says, "Attention is called to this phrase as specially significant, because it indicates that the shaking prophesied by Haggai is to be final."⁸⁴⁹ Fudge elaborates on the thought by saying,

"The words yet once more, our author explains, denote the removing of those things that are shaken. For if God will shake the earth once more, and apparently only once more, that shaking must come at the final shaking of the earth which will also be its removing. This is to be expected, he adds, for these are things that are made, and they are by nature temporary (see 1:10-12). Further, it is necessary that those things be shaken and removed, so that those things of the invisible and eternal order which cannot be shaken may remain."⁸⁵⁰

28. THEREFORE, SINCE WE RECEIVE A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN, LET US SHOW GRATITUDE, BY WHICH WE MAY OFFER TO GOD AN ACCEPTABLE SERVICE WITH REVERENCE AND AWE -

"We receive a kingdom," BASILEIAN PARALAMBANONTES, according to Vine, "is in the present continuous tense, indicating a process already begun."⁸⁵¹ Thus, we are in the process of receiving a kingdom (church, cf. Dan. 2:44-marg. ref.) "which cannot be shaken." Therefore, we ought "to have grace," ECHOMEN CHARIN (cf. marg. ref.). Vine says, "CHARIS, grace, when used of that which is exercised on the part of the receiver, signifies a sense of the favor bestowed, a feeling of gratitude, as in Ro. 6:17 ('thanks'), 1 Tim. 1:12, and here."⁸⁵² "Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe..." "Reverence," EULABEIAS, according to Fudge, is "pious respect."⁸⁵³ Vincent says of the word "awe," DEOUS,

"its fundamental idea is timid apprehension of danger; while PHOBOS is the terror which seizes one when the danger appears. [illustration] In a primitive forest an undefined sense of possible danger possesses one, and makes his heart beat quickly at every rustle of a leaf. This is DEOS."

⁸⁴⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, pp. 557, 558.

⁸⁵⁰ Edward Fudge, pp. 163, 164.

⁸⁵¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 155.

⁸⁵² Ibid.

⁸⁵³ Edward Fudge, p. 164.

When the voice and tread of wild beast are distinctly heard close at hand, the DEOS becomes PHOBOS.⁸⁵⁴

Vincent goes on to explain, “the phrase ‘with pious care and fear’ is not explanatory of acceptably. These are to accompany (META) acceptable service.”⁸⁵⁵ Such reverence and respectful fear is necessary...

29. FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE -

“It is an aspect of the character of God as revealed in the Bible that plays little part in much present day thinking about Him; but if we are to be completely ‘honest to God,’ we dare not ignore it. Reverence and awe before His holiness are not incompatible with grateful trust and love in response to His mercy.”⁸⁵⁶

According to Thompson, “The exhortation which began at 12:18 concludes with [this] quotation of Dt. 4:24...the point is that the God of the new covenant, like the God of the old covenant, is not to be trifled with.”⁸⁵⁷

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Thompson notes that:

“A change in chapter 13 is unmistakable. Up to this point, the argument has been closely knit and carefully developed. Now the author’s tone changes and he gives a variety of instructions comprising fifteen different topics to his readers. The exhortation in chapter 13 resembles the usual assortment of ethical, practical, and personal information which is found at the end of most New Testament letters.”⁸⁵⁸

1. LET LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE. -

Milligan says,

“This cardinal Christian virtue is one of the first fruits of that ‘faith which worketh by love:’ and accordingly from the beginning it served to distinguish Christians from all others as the peculiar people of God. For we are

⁸⁵⁴ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 559.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁶ F.F. Bruce, p. 385.

⁸⁵⁷ James Thompson, p. 175.

⁸⁵⁸ James Thompson, p. 175

told that immediately after the setting up of the Kingdom, 'all that believed were together and had all things common' (Acts ii.44-47)...And hence our author simply says to them, 'Let brotherly love continue.'⁸⁵⁹

Lightfoot notes:

"He does not say to his readers: 'Have brotherly love,' or 'let it exist among you,' but rather 'let it continue.' They had shown this love in the past by serving the saints and by having compassion on their brothers in affliction (6:10; 10:33,34). Now the exhortation is that they continue in love, lest their feelings for one another grow cold."⁸⁶⁰

2. DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS, FOR BY THIS SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING IT -

According to Milligan,

"This verse seems to denote an exercise of that love which we owe to all men (2 Pet.i.7). For this virtue, as well as for brotherly love, the primitive Christians were very remarkable. Even Julian, the apostate, in his forty-ninth epistle, assigns 'kindness to strangers' as one of the means by which their religion was so rapidly propagated."⁸⁶¹

Barclay says of this verse:

"The writer to the Hebrews says that those who have given hospitality to strangers, all unaware, entertained the angels of God. He could be thinking of the time when the angel came to Abraham and Sarah to tell them of the coming of a son (Gen. 18:1ff) and of the day when the angel came to Manoah to tell him that he would have a son (Ju. 13:3ff)."⁸⁶²

3. REMEMBER THE PRISONERS, AS THOUGH IN PRISON WITH THEM, AND THOSE WHO ARE ILL-TREATED, SINCE YOU YOURSELVES ALSO ARE IN THE BODY -

Fudge says,

"The point of the exhortation is...Christians are to be so captivated by brotherly love that when one is bound the others sympathize as being

⁸⁵⁹ R. Milligan, p. 371.
⁸⁶⁰ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 246.
⁸⁶¹ R. Milligan, p. 371.
⁸⁶² William Barclay, p. 219.

themselves bound. When some are in bad circumstances the rest are concerned to help, being subject also to the ailments of mortality.”⁸⁶³

Regarding this verse Thompson observes:

“To be ‘in the body’ here is an equivalent to being in a state of danger imposed by bodily limitations (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6). The parallel words, ‘as though in prison with them,’ define the responsibility imposed by brotherly love. Just as Christ shared completely in the human situation in becoming ‘like his brethren in every respect’ (2:17), Christians demonstrate love by sharing the situation of those who are in danger. The words of verse 3 are reminiscent of 1 Cor. 12:26.”⁸⁶⁴

4. LET MARRIAGE BE HELD IN HONOR AMONG ALL, AND LET THE MARRIAGE BED BE UNDEFILED; FOR FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS GOD WILL JUDGE -

According to Milligan,

“It is still a question with expositors, whether the phrase ‘in all’ EN PASI, means in all persons or in all things. The former view is supported by [most scholars]... (1) because it is more general, and in fact comprehends the former: for if marriage is honorable in all respects, then most assuredly it is also honorable among all classes of men. (2) The latter is most in harmony with Greek usage. Greek writers generally use the preposition EN...in reference to things (1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5; Tit. ii. 9,10; Heb. xiii. 18) and PARA...in reference to persons (Mt. xix. 26; Acts xxvi. 8; Ro. ii. 13; 2 Thess. I. 6; Jas. I. 27).”⁸⁶⁵

Wright observes:

“If our lives become so filled with worldly interests that we are drawn away from the interest of the church, Paul says, we are but little above the whoremonger and God will judge us as such. There are many adulterers in the church today who have never broken faith with husband or wife, but they have become weak in their fidelity to God.”⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ Edward Fudge, p. 167.

⁸⁶⁴ James Thompson, pp. 176, 177.

⁸⁶⁵ R. Milligan, p. 373.

⁸⁶⁶ J.E. Wright, pp. 216, 217.

5. LET YOUR WAY OF LIFE BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY, BEING CONTENT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE; FOR HE HIMSELF HAS SAID, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU" -

According to Thompson,

"The 'love of money,' (APHILARGUROS) and covetousness are mentioned frequently in lists of sins in the early church (1 Tim. 3:3; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10; Col. 3:5). Jesus had warned that one 'cannot serve God and Mammon' (Mt. 6:24) and that 'a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions' (Lk. 12:15). The reason for the warning is that the 'love of money' inevitably leads to anxiety."⁸⁶⁷

The phrase "nor will I ever forsake you," according to Boatman, "was conditional, however, for those who would not forsake God. We have no right to expect God to reward us for unfaithfulness. Jesus promised to be with us even unto the end of the world if we preach the Gospel" (Mt. 28:18-20).⁸⁶⁸ The above quote is from Dt. 31:6 (cf. marg. ref.).

6. SO WE CONFIDENTLY SAY, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?" -

Vine says, "confidently," THARROUNTAS, "conveys the thought of a constant habit."⁸⁶⁹ Boatman says,

"This verse does not suggest that man will never do man bodily harm. David knew differently. Paul knew differently; so did these brethren, for they had been afflicted. The idea is, 'What can man do that God cannot undo?' Man can bring pain, but God will give us a body that knows no pain. Man can kill, but God can make alive."⁸⁷⁰

The above quote is from Psa. 118:6 (cf. marg. ref.).

7. REMEMBER THOSE WHO LED YOU, WHO SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD TO YOU; AND CONSIDERING THE OUTCOME OF THEIR WAY OF LIFE, IMITATE THEIR FAITH -

Vine says of the phrase, "those who led you," TON HEGOUMENON, "the verb in the original means 'guides'... What is signified here is not rule but leadership (by ministry of

⁸⁶⁷ James Thompson, p. 177.

⁸⁶⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 433.

⁸⁶⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 159.

⁸⁷⁰ Don Earl Boatman, p. 434.

life and word), as in 2 Cor. 1:24. The same word is used in verse 17.”⁸⁷¹ Bruce refers to “those who led you” in his commentary when he says: “By precept and example they showed the right path to tread; being dead they yet speak, and the record of their faith is still alive...”⁸⁷² The author could be referring to men like Stephen and James who died martyrs.⁸⁷³ Robertson says the word “considering,” ANATHEOROUNTES, is used only here and in Acts 17:23. It literally means “to look up a subject, to investigate, to observe accurately.”⁸⁷⁴ The author of Hebrews is encouraging his readers “to investigate” and follow the example of “those who had led them before.”

8. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY, YES AND FOREVER

Vincent says, “The emphatic point of the statement is Christ. They lived and died in the faith that Jesus is THE CHRIST - the Messiah. The readers were tempted to surrender this faith and to return to Judaism which denied Jesus’s messiahship (comp. ch. x. 29).”⁸⁷⁵ Robertson says the ESTIN, “is,” “comes more naturally after Christ “as the Revised Version has it.”⁸⁷⁶ Vine says the author is giving emphasis to the eternity of Christ’s future by saying He “is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.”⁸⁷⁷

9. DO NOT BE CARRIED AWAY BY VARIED AND STRANGE TEACHINGS; FOR IT IS GOOD FOR THE HEART TO BE STRENGTHENED BY GRACE, NOT BY FOODS, THROUGH WHICH THOSE WHO WERE THUS OCCUPIED WERE NOT BENEFITED -

Barnes says “the principal reference here is to Judaizing teachers, and to their various doctrines about their ceremonial observances and traditions.”⁸⁷⁸ Concerning the “grace” mentioned here, Vine notes, it “is the means of establishing the heart, that is to say, making it firm and steadfast. Strange teachings may appeal to the intellect; God’s grace ever appeals to the heart.”⁸⁷⁹ Fudge notes that:

“At least five explanations have been offered of these teachings about meats [foods]. (1) Some think of a dispute over kosher food, over clean and unclean meats, as apparently is the case in 9:10. (2) Others think of meats offered to pagan gentile idols, as in 1 Cor. 8. (3) Some suppose he

⁸⁷¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 159.

⁸⁷² F.F. Bruce, p. 395.

⁸⁷³ J.E. Wright, p. 218.

⁸⁷⁴ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 446.

⁸⁷⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 565.

⁸⁷⁶ A.T. Robertson, p. 447.

⁸⁷⁷ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 160.

⁸⁷⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1342.

⁸⁷⁹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 160.

refers to ascetic regulations of a Gentile philosophy, as in Colossians. (4) Still others think of sacrificial meats of the Old Testament system, of which some were eaten by the priests and/or the people. (5) And some have suggested a kind of Jewish fellowship meal, as described, for instance, by Josephus.”⁸⁸⁰

Of these choices, Fudge decides it refers to sacrificial meats. He also notes: “If such sacrificial meats are intended, the point is that the Christian’s sacrifice results in the distribution of grace which strengthens his heart, not in meat which strengthens his body.”⁸⁸¹ Barnes says, “The meaning is, that it is better to have the heart established with grace, or the principles of pure religion, than with the most accurate knowledge of the rules of distinguishing the clean from the unclean among the various articles of food.”⁸⁸²

10. WE HAVE AN ALTAR, FROM WHICH THOSE WHO SERVE THE TABERNACLE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT -

Barnes says, “The ‘altar’ to which he here refers is evidently the cross on which the great sacrifice was made.”⁸⁸³ Vine says, “The altar is not the Cross. No animal was slain on an altar in connection with the tabernacle offerings.”⁸⁸⁴ Wright says,

“The altar of the Christian is not the altar of sacrifice which stood before the temple in Jerusalem. This was a literal altar upon which temporal sacrifices were made. The Christian’s altar is a spiritual one upon which was offered the spiritual Lamb of God, and those who cling to the old tabernacle service under Judaism could not partake of the sacrifice on the spiritual altar.”⁸⁸⁵

11. FOR THE BODIES OF THOSE ANIMALS WHOSE BLOOD IS BROUGHT INTO THE HOLY PLACE BY THE HIGH PRIEST AS AN OFFERING FOR SIN, ARE BURNED OUTSIDE THE CAMP -

According to Robertson, “this is the only example in the LXX or N.T. where ZOON (animal) is used of a sacrificial victim.”⁸⁸⁶ Thompson says,

⁸⁸⁰ Edward Fudge, p. 170.
⁸⁸¹ Ibid.
⁸⁸² Albert Barnes, p. 1342.
⁸⁸³ Ibid.
⁸⁸⁴ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 161.
⁸⁸⁵ J.E. Wright, p. 220.
⁸⁸⁶ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 448.

“According to Lev. 16:27, the bull for the sin offering was carried outside the camp. The author sees in this reference a parallel to the fact that Jesus was crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem (see Jn. 19:20). Jesus’ sacrifice is the fulfillment of all the annual sacrifices of the old covenant.”⁸⁸⁷

12. THEREFORE JESUS ALSO, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD, SUFFERED OUTSIDE THE GATE -

Barnes comments, “It is implied here that it was voluntary on the part of Jesus that he suffered out of the city...”⁸⁸⁸ According to Thompson,

“In sanctifying his people Jesus did what the Levitical sacrifice could not do (cf. 2:11; 9:13; 10:10,14,29). Only the sacrifice of Christ could make men pure (9:13,14). There is here a paradox in the fact that Jesus suffered outside the gate and sanctified his people. In the Old Testament the guilty were brought outside the camp to be killed (Lev. 24:14; Nu. 15:35). Only through accepting the stigma of guilt could Jesus remove the guilt of others.”⁸⁸⁹

Thus, Milligan comments, “All...who would partake of the benefits of his sacrifice, must do so without the gate. They must forsake the camp of Israel, leaving Judaism behind them, and take upon them the reproach of Jesus, if they would be made partakers of the benefits of his death.”⁸⁹⁰ Vine makes the following interesting correlation between the name of Jesus and the word sanctify:

“The eighth verse of this chapter, stating the immutability of Christ, recalls the teaching of the first chapter. These eleventh and twelfth verses recall the teaching of the second chapter. Both chapters speak of His suffering of death (see 2:9,14); both use the single Name Jesus (2:9); both speak of Him as the Sanctifier (2: 11).”⁸⁹¹

13. HENCE, LET US GO OUT TO HIM OUTSIDE THE CAMP, BEARING HIS REPROACH -

According to Barnes, “the meaning here is, that we should be willing to regard ourselves as identified with the Lord Jesus, and to bear the same shame and reproaches which

⁸⁸⁷ James Thompson, p. 180.

⁸⁸⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1342.

⁸⁸⁹ James Thompson, p. 180.

⁸⁹⁰ R. Milligan, p. 378.

⁸⁹¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 162.

he did.”⁸⁹² “Camp,” PAREMBOLES, literally means, according to Vine, “a casting among, an insertion, in the Macedonian dialect, it was a military term. In the New Testament it denotes the distribution of troops in army formation...hence, in Heb. 13:11,13 of Jerusalem, since the city was to the Jews what the camp in the wilderness had been to the Israelites.”⁸⁹³ “To the Hebrews,” says Wright, “this teaching meant go outside the camp of the ritualistic law and accept the disgraceful sacrifice which was made on Golgotha, the place of the skull.”⁸⁹⁴ According to Vincent, “bearing His reproach,” is “the reproach of exclusion from the Jewish commonwealth.”⁸⁹⁵ Lightfoot explains that “the exhortation is for the readers to break all ties with Judaism. Since in the Old Testament the camp represented the religious community of Israel, to go outside the camp means to make a clean break with unbelieving Israel.”⁸⁹⁶

14. FOR HERE WE DO NOT HAVE A LASTING CITY, BUT WE ARE SEEKING THE CITY WHICH IS TO COME -

As Milligan expresses it, “It is vain to seek refuge in Jerusalem which, according to prophecy, will soon become a heap of ruins (Mt. xxiv.24).”⁸⁹⁷ According to Barnes,

“The object of the writer seems to be to comfort the Hebrew Christians on the supposition that they would be driven by persecution from the city of Jerusalem, and doomed to wander as exiles. He tells them that their Lord was led from that city to be put to death, and they should be willing to go forth also; that their permanent home was not Jerusalem, but heaven; and that they should be willing, in view of that blessed abode, to be exiled from the city where they dwelt, and made wanderers in the earth.”⁸⁹⁸

15. THROUGH HIM THEN, LET US CONTINUALLY OFFER UP A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD, THAT IS, THE FRUIT OF LIPS THAT GIVE THANKS TO HIS NAME -

According to Vincent, “through him then,” is “through Jesus, and not the Jewish ritual.”⁸⁹⁹ Milligan says, “The sacrifice of praise in our text has reference particularly to

⁸⁹² Albert Barnes, p. 1343.
⁸⁹³ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 76.
⁸⁹⁴ J.E. Wright, p. 220.
⁸⁹⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 570.
⁸⁹⁶ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 252.
⁸⁹⁷ R. Milligan, p. 379.
⁸⁹⁸ Albert Barnes, p. 1343.
⁸⁹⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 571.

the voluntary peace and thank offerings of the Law (Lev. vii. 11-25).⁹⁰⁰ "Give thanks," HOMOLOGOUNTON, says Vine, "involves a whole-hearted acknowledgment."⁹⁰¹

16. AND DO NOT NEGLECT DOING GOOD AND SHARING; FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS PLEASED -

As Lightfoot points out, "The two kinds of sacrifices mentioned here, the sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of personal service, are closely connected. Genuine gratitude to God begets awareness of the needs of others."⁹⁰² And as Milligan points out,

"Such sacrifices are pleasing to God (1) because they are in harmony with his own nature and administration. (2) Because they indicate in us a state of mind and heart, that is well pleasing to his sight; provided they proceed from proper motives. And (3) because they are of benefit to others."⁹⁰³

17. OBEY YOUR LEADERS, AND SUBMIT TO THEM, FOR THEY KEEP WATCH OVER YOUR SOULS, AS THOSE WHO WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT. LET THEM DO THIS WITH JOY AND NOT WITH GRIEF, FOR THIS WOULD BE UNPROFITABLE FOR YOU -

Barnes says, "The reference here is to their religious teachers, and not to civil rulers... The obligation to obedience does not, of course, extend to anything which is wrong in itself, or which would be a violation of conscience."⁹⁰⁴ According to Vine, "submit," HUPEIKETE, means "to retire, withdraw...hence to yield, submit is used metaphorically in Heb. 13:17, of submitting to spiritual guides in the churches."⁹⁰⁵ Milligan shows that,

"If it is the duty of the Elders to teach, it is also manifestly the duty of the other members of the Church to receive their lawful instructions; and if it is the duty of the former to rule, it is equally the duty of the latter to submit to all their acts of discipline which are not in violation of the law of Christ."⁹⁰⁶

Since these leaders must give an account to God, as Barnes writes, "there is, therefore, the best security that, under the influence of this solemn truth, they will pursue only that course which will be for your good."⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁰ R. Milligan, p. 379.
⁹⁰¹ W.E. Vine, Epistle, p. 163.
⁹⁰² Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 253.
⁹⁰³ R. Milligan, p. 380.
⁹⁰⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1344.
⁹⁰⁵ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 87.
⁹⁰⁶ R. Milligan, pp. 380, 381.
⁹⁰⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1344.

18. PRAY FOR US, FOR WE ARE SURE THAT WE HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE, DESIRING TO CONDUCT OURSELVES HONORABLY IN ALL THINGS -

Barnes states,

“It is only when we aim to do right, and maintain a good conscience, that we can with propriety ask the prayers of others, or claim their sympathy. And if we are ‘willing in all things to live honestly,’ we may expect the sympathy, the prayers, and the affections of all good men (cf. Eph. 6:18, 19).”⁹⁰⁸

According to Vine, “conscience,” SUNEIDESIN, literally means “a knowing with ...i.e., a co-knowledge (with oneself), the witness borne to one’s conduct by conscience, that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives.”⁹⁰⁹ Bruce suggests, “The good conscience of which he speaks is probably the fruit of a sense of duty done, a responsibility well discharged.”⁹¹⁰

19. AND I URGE YOU ALL THE MORE TO DO THIS, THAT I MAY BE RESTORED TO YOU SOONER -

There are a number of explanations given as to what is meant by the phrase “that I may be restored to you sooner.” Most of the opinions are formed on the basis of who the commentator believes wrote the book of Hebrews. According to Barnes, “The probability is, judging from verse 23, that he was then a prisoner, and that his detention was on that account.”⁹¹¹ Bruce, however, uses the same verse 23 to say that the author was not in prison.⁹¹² Vincent says this phrase is “not implying imprisonment, but enforced absence through sickness or other cause.”⁹¹³

20. NOW THE GOD OF PEACE, WHO BROUGHT UP FROM THE DEAD THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE ETERNAL COVENANT, EVEN JESUS OUR LORD -

According to Thompson, “God is frequently described as the God of peace at the conclusion of Pauline letters (1 Thess. 5:23; Ro. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor.13:11).”⁹¹⁴

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁹ W.E. Vine, Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 228.

⁹¹⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 409.

⁹¹¹ Albert Barnes, p. 1344.

⁹¹² F.F. Bruce, p. 409.

⁹¹³ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 573.

⁹¹⁴ James Thompson, p. 183.

Robertson says this is the only direct allusion to the resurrection of Christ.⁹¹⁵ Boatman says “Jesus is called the great shepherd for two reasons; (a) Ezekiel 34:23 prophecies him as such; and (b) Jesus claimed this title in Jn. 10:11.”⁹¹⁶

21. EQUIP YOU IN EVERY GOOD THING TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN US THAT WHICH IS PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN -

According to Barnes, “equip,” KATARTIZO, means “to make fully ready; to put in full order; to make complete.” The meaning here is, that Paul prayed that God would fully endow them with whatever grace was necessary to do his will and to keep his commandments.”⁹¹⁷ Boatman says “through Jesus Christ” can mean either (a) “working through Jesus Christ; or (b) well-pleasing through Jesus Christ. Nothing is acceptable to God except that it be through Christ.”⁹¹⁸

22. BUT I URGE YOU, BRETHREN, BEAR WITH THIS WORD OF EXHORTATION, FOR I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU BRIEFLY -

Vincent says, “This refers to the entire epistle which he regards as hortatory rather than didactic or consolatory.”⁹¹⁹ Bruce says, “It might be a long letter, not a long homily.”⁹²⁰ As Milligan says, it is short “considering the importance and magnitude of the subjects discussed.”⁹²¹

23. TAKE NOTICE THAT OUR BROTHER TIMOTHY HAS BEEN RELEASED, WITH WHOM, IF HE COMES SOON, I SHALL SEE YOU -

According to Thompson, “Timothy is almost certainly Paul’s companion of that name.”⁹²² Fudge says the phrase “been released” might “refer either to release from prison or to the completion of a mission.”⁹²³

24. GREET ALL OF YOUR LEADERS AND ALL THE SAINTS. THOSE FROM ITALY GREET YOU -

⁹¹⁵ A.T. Robertson, Vol. V, p. 450.

⁹¹⁶ Don Earl Boatman, p. 450.

⁹¹⁷ Albert Barnes, p. 1344.

⁹¹⁸ Don Earl Boatman, p. 451.

⁹¹⁹ Marvin R. Vincent, Vol. IV, p. 575.

⁹²⁰ F.F. Bruce, p. 413.

⁹²¹ R. Milligan, p. 384.

⁹²² James Thompson, p. 184.

⁹²³ Edward Fudge, p. 175.

Barnes says, "The leaders were mentioned at 13:7,17 as teachers who were to be obeyed."⁹²⁴ The phrase "those from Italy" could be those living in Italy sending letters abroad or those living abroad sending letters back to their homeland.⁹²⁵

25. GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL -

Lightfoot says, "This is the typical Christian conclusion, used frequently to bestow divine grace on those who read the apostolic messages."⁹²⁶ "This conclusion is like Paul's, if not his," writes Boatman.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁴ Albert Barnes, p. 1345.
⁹²⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, p. 256.
⁹²⁶ Ibid.
⁹²⁷ Don Earl Boatman, p. 454.

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