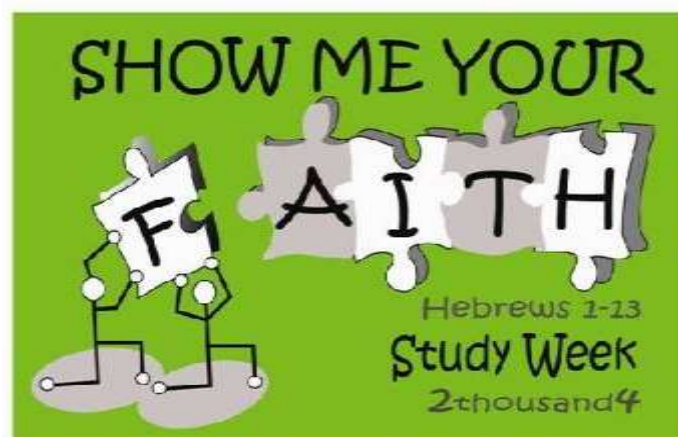


Hebrews



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FOREWORD

“Hebrews” as the title suggests is an epistle written by a Jew for Jews. The Ecclesia to whom it was written was composed of people whose whole life prior to their baptism, revolved around the Law and Judaism. Now they had left that behind, realising that those things were but “a shadow of good things to come;” they had walked out of the “shadow” into the blazing light of the “New Covenant”.

Forty years had passed since their baptism into the Christ, and like their forefathers who had been “baptised into Moses,” they too were growing weary of the way. Many of them contemplated “forsaking the assembly of themselves together,” and of going back to the synagogue. The epistle throbs with urgency in its appeal to them to consider the awful implications of such an action. Would they dare to “crucify to themselves THE SON OF GOD afresh”? There was a strong possibility that they would, if doubts that had assailed them were allowed to grow.

These are the circumstances that called forth this epistle. Time was against the writer; he knew the signs that were in evidence spoke so clearly of the dissolution of the Hebrew Commonwealth, to which they now wanted to return. So his epistle is more than just an interesting treatise upon the typical teaching of the Law, it is a matter of life and death.

We too, live in times of great urgency. If the Hebrews lived at the epoch of the fulfilment of Haggai’s words, “I will shake the heavens and the earth” (12v26), then just as surely we live at a time when the second part of that prophecy will also have its dramatic fulfilment, “I will shake all nations.” But we do not live under the shadow institution of the Law, nor does God require of us obedience to its ceremonial institutions, yet in principle the problem of Judaism is as real today as it ever was in the days of these Hebrews.

More than ever, “as we see the day approaching”, do we need to hold fast to “the grace of God”. These are the days that require a virile and living faith, and any other motive force will not be sufficient to get us into the Kingdom. The notes now offered are designed to “provoke unto love and to good works”. May the “God of peace” be pleased to add His blessing to the efforts bestowed, and “make you perfect in every good work to His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (13v21)

Bro John Martin

From Study Notes published
by *Scripture Study Service*

“The Just shall live by faith”

(Hab 2:14; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38)

These Hebrews notes are written by Brethren John Martin (Background and Overview), John Knowles (chapters 1-2, 4:1-6:6, 12-13), James McCann (chapter 3) and Mal Bonner (chapters 10:32–11:40). Overview notes on Hebrews 6-10 are written by Brethren John Carter (chapter 6), Ian Dangerfield (chapters 7-9) and Mal Bonner (chapter 10). Study tips, questions for discussion and First Principles notes (with the lampstand symbol) are written by Bro Andrew Dangerfield (unless otherwise stated). Various quotations, summaries and pictures have also been added throughout (mainly in ‘box form’) to enhance our understanding of the subject.

STUDY TIPS

- Before commencing, make time for prayer to God, placing our efforts into His care.
- Have reverence and make **TIME**. The Bible is written for those willing to put time and effort into reading it - remember that this is our Heavenly Father speaking to us!
- Remove distractions. This can be one of the most difficult but most important things to do. Careful meditation is so important. We need to sit down and THINK!
- Speak to friends about the study as much as possible - we all need *help, encouragement* and *motivation* to continue (Malachi 3:16).
- We must learn to *develop a need* for our Heavenly Father's Words. If we really love our Father, we will want to listen to what He has to say. Approach the Bible like a humble child seeking to listen to his Father. Develop a love for God's Word
- One of the greatest *motivations* to do study is being able to *help others*. No matter what our abilities (or age) may be, all of us can have a positive influence (especially in our own homes!). Jesus gave his whole life to help others rather than serve himself.
- Aim to develop a greater *personal relationship* with God and the Lord Jesus Christ - this should be a major *motivating* factor in our study.
- Learn to be *thankful* for the opportunities we have. Many brethren and sisters in the dark ages were killed because they loved reading their Bibles.
- Read carefully - don't rush! - We cannot speed read the Bible (good Bible reading is good Bible study). Read and re-read the section of Scripture - become well acquainted with the record
- Use different Bible versions to help you understand what it is saying
- Look for repeating words or phrases & highlight them. Also highlight key verses that particularly stand out. Colouring pencils really add life to your Bible.
- Always ask questions and write them down for future reference. Ask others for answers (parents, friends, older brothers & sisters)
- Use study tools when your 'reading' is exhausted. Always use more than one study tool. Don't just copy out notes but think carefully about it! Put it into your own words.
- If using a Concordance, look at how the Scriptures use a certain word or phrase within the context rather than just looking up the meaning of it.
- *Think* about your study *continually* - whenever you have an opportunity! Keep asking yourself questions. Turn it over and over in your mind.
- Always *summarise* what we have learnt from a section of Scripture. Always ask "How does this practically apply to me?"
- On a practical note, make sure you keep all your notes on the one subject together in a clearly marked, easily accessible folder for future reference.
- Mark the cross references *in your Bible* as much as possible. Make summary notes next to other quotes, linking them to the section you are studying. Having notes in your Bible will be an important help in the future.
- Always pray to God *thanking Him* for the opportunities we have to read His Word - Be *thankful* and *rejoice* for what God has done for us!



This symbol has been used in the notes to indicate various questions for discussion

Hebrews at a glance

Summary by Bro Norman Owen

A letter written to Jewish believers in Jerusalem, probably written by Paul, which stresses the superiority of Christ over the law of Moses and Judaism.

The supremacy of Christ

This letter to the Hebrew believers demonstrates that Jesus Christ is God's final and perfect representative, better and greater in his manifestation of God's nature and purpose than all the patriarchs, priests and prophets who preceded him. He is even greater than the angels!

Christ is greater than the angels (1:4-14), Abraham (7:4), Moses (3:3-6), Aaron - the High Priest (4:14-15; 8:1-4), Joshua (4:8), the prophets (1:1-2).

Christ – a Better Priest

The writer shows that Christ is of a higher order than the Jewish priests, who were of the tribe of Levi. Jesus was of the royal tribe of Judah, "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (7:14). But there was a precedent for this, a 'type' of Christ long before the law of Moses: Melchizedek, the king-priest of Salem (later Jerusalem) (Genesis 14:18-20). Chapters 5-7 show how Christ is a "priest after the order of Melchizedek", greater than the priests who were descended from Aaron (5:6; 6:20; 7:1-21). This was foretold in the Psalms of David (Psalm 110:4).

Christ – Better than the Law

The Letter shows how the Law of Moses pointed forward to Christ. Ch 9 tells how he was prefigured in the Tabernacle and its contents; and in the calendar of feasts and sacrifices which Israel had to follow. And what was true for the Tabernacle, the temporary shrine in the wilderness, was also true for the Temple in Jerusalem and its rituals – which the Hebrews were reluctant to turn their backs on.

Animal sacrifices (chs 9:10) pointed forward to a better sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice did away with the need for those sacrifices, and did away also with the need for the Temple and the priesthood.

The Way of Faith

Ch 11 shows that salvation is by faith in God's promises, centred in Jesus Christ. Jesus, though he was God's Son, was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (2:17,18; 4:15). He is a mediator (8:6; 9:15; 12:24) for those who come in faith to ask God's forgiveness. In Jesus there is "a new and living way" (10:20); through him we may "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (10:22).

from "*The 66 Books of the Bible*" – published by *The Christadelphian*



Jerusalem in the first century AD – How the city probably looked, based on a model with the Mount of Olives seen in the background (Bible Magazine p.5 Nov 1996)

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

AUTHORSHIP

There has been much dispute over the matter of authorship of this Epistle. Various arguments have been set forward to attribute authorship to Paul, Peter and even James, all of which are interesting and informative. It is our view that Paul was the author of the "Hebrews" for reasons set out below;

1. We first note that the author was well known to his readers even though he does not greet them by name (compare 13v9).
2. He writes with the authority of an apostle although he could not have been one who immediately conversed with the Lord (see 2v3-4, compare 1Peter 1v11-12).
3. Internal evidence in the epistle points to the Apostle Paul, especially the reference to incidental circumstances as outlined in 13v18-23, in which section consider the following:
 - a. Timothy had been "set at liberty"; the Greek word suggesting "sent away" or dismissed", evidently from the writer's presence, and not necessarily meaning that Timothy had been actually imprisoned.
 - b. If Timothy hurries back, the writer could come to them sooner. Compare this with the other writings of Paul in reference to similar circumstances involving Timothy (Phil. 2v19-24, Philemon v22)
 - c. He sends greetings from the saints in "Italy"; highly probable from those in Rome where Paul was in prison (compare 1 Cor. 16v8, 19)
4. Note characteristic expression, "compassion in my bonds" (10v34, compare with the other writings, Eph. 6v20; Phil. 1v7,13,16; Col. 4v18; Philemon v10)
5. Note Peter's testimony concerning Paul to the Jewish Christians (II Peter 3v15-16).
 - a. Paul wrote a letter.
 - b. "Unto you," ie. Hebrew Christians (I Peter 1v1).
 - c. In which there are "things hard to be understood" (compare Heb. 5v11).
 - d. "As in all his epistles," so classified as an Epistle.
 - e. Peter compares this writing to "other Scripture." If this is not the Epistle to the Hebrews, then where is this Scripture written to Hebrew Christians?
6. The Pauline authorship had strong acceptance in the eastern section of the apostate church which was purported to be based on the earliest traditions but was rejected by the western church.
7. Opponents of the Pauline authorship have pointed to difference of style with his other epistles, but this could be accounted for by the unique theme and the unmixed Hebrew congregation to whom he wrote. It is however, to be noted that the authorship is relatively unimportant in our consideration of the Hebrews as it does not affect the meaning of the Epistle, and doubtless if it did, Inspiration would have caused the name to have been recorded.

TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN?

1. The Epistle is obviously Jewish, and although no ecclesia is designated, it is equally obvious **it was meant for a definite community** (5v11-12, 6v9-10, 10v32-34, 13v19, 23). This same community had a very distinguished and faithful leadership with whom the writer was in full agreement both in regard to doctrine and practice (13v7, 17, 24). (Compare the leadership of the Jerusalem ecclesia in Acts 9v26-30; Gal. 1v18-20, 2v9-12; Acts 15v13-21, 21v17-19).

2. **The Hebrew Christians.** Note the language of chapter 13v9-15; the sweeping application of the Law could only be made to those who were familiar with its detail. Note also the Jewish expressions such as “The Fathers” (1v1), “your Fathers” (3v9), use of the term “people”, presupposing his readers’ knowledge of the particular “seed of Abraham”, used to express human nature (2v16).
3. **The Jerusalem ecclesia in particular.** Some have felt that the epistle seem to indicate a community of Hebrews with an intense nationalistic spirit having a focal centre. The references in the epistle seem to indicate a community of Hebrews with an intense nationalistic spirit having a focal centre. The reference to Joshua’s rest (chapter 4) was a strong indication that he was writing to those resident in the land, and who saw in this occupation a fulfilment of the Divine promise. Like Abraham, they must sojourn in the Holy Land “as in a strange country” (11v9). Note the emphasis on “a city”. Abraham looked (whilst in the land) for a city “whose builder was God” (11v10); for those that seek it, “God hath prepared for them a city” (11v16). This was to be the “heavenly Jerusalem” (12v22), and in view of which they had here “no continuing city” (13v14). He points out that Jesus suffered without the gate (13v12), but does not mention which one, for to them it would be obvious! Note the parallels in his expressions in Chapter 13 (camp – gate v11-12 camp – city v13-14).

TIME OF WRITING – SUGGESTED AD61-63

1. Probably written during Paul’s first imprisonment. Nearly a full generation had passed since the Lord’s ministry (2v3-4).
2. They had lapsed from their early zeal (10v32), but had been given sufficient time to reach maturity (5v12-14).
3. The first covenant was still in operation (8v4), but was “ready to vanish away” (8v13).
4. A great day of decision faced them (10v25), in respect of which he warns of the imminent destruction of AD70 (12v26-27). If therefore, the letter came from Paul in prison in Rome, (AD61-63), there were less than 7 years to the siege of Jerusalem.
5. Note well his warning concerning the faithlessness of the generation under Moses (3v17) who wandered for a total of 40 years. If therefore, the above points are considered together, it would appear that this epistle was written to a generation of believers nearly 40 years from the Lord’s ministry. Like Israel of old, these Christian Hebrews were also heading for disaster. This being the case, how applicable are the words of the Master: **“For these be the days of vengeance that these things that are written may be fulfilled,” (Luke 21v22).**

CONDITIONS AMONG THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS

1. They had accepted Christ with enthusiasm, and originally had stood fast to the faith in the face of violent persecution (10v32).
2. There were a large community of Jews exclusively, most of whom were “zealous of the Law” (Acts 21v20); this stated to Paul during his last visit to Jerusalem after his third journey, AD56-60.
3. With the spread of Christianity, many priests had become obedient to the faith (Acts 6v7). Later certain of “the Pharisees which had believed,” taught the heresy that circumcision was necessary for salvation (Acts 15v1-5).
4. Because of these heresies, they were in great peril of falling away again to Judaism (3v12, 4v14, 10v23-28, v38-39), and were being subjected to pressure brought to bear by their kinsfolk and their adversaries (6v8, 12v15, 13v9-10).

METHOD IN QUOTATION OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE

The vital importance in the use of Old Testament Scripture had added emphasis in this particular epistle, for those to whom he was writing were grounded in its teaching and accepted it without reservation as the inspired record from God Himself. This fact they never questioned, hence we have expressions in this epistle as in no other, indicating both their familiarity with and complete acceptance of the writings of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets. Such expressions as, "one in a certain place" (literally, "somewhere" 2v6, 3v4), when the Apostle is quoting, indicates complete familiarity. Other expressions as "the Holy Spirit says" (3v7), "saying in David" (4v7), "the Holy Spirit this signifying" (9v8), "when he cometh into the world he saith" (10v5), equally emphasises their complete acceptance of the record as being the work of inspiration.

To those with whom such wholehearted acceptance and familiarity existed we find some startling applications of Scripture which at first glance tend to puzzle and exasperate, and it is not until the full import of the above facts are appreciated that the true beauty of his applications are seen.

In the interpretation and understanding of these passages we need to appreciate the following principles which Paul uses as the basis of his Old Testament quotations:

1. The Son is the essential reality of all that God truly is, therefore as the complete manifestation of his Father, he is "upholding (bearing along) all things by the Word of his (Father's) power" (1v3), so that things affirmed of God in the Old Testament writings, find their practical expression through the manifestation of the Son.
2. That certain things declared by God as His future intentions involved Him in dealings with sinful mortals, in respect of which the absolute righteousness of God necessitated the work of a Mediator, who was at once son of man yet son of God. Hence certain Scriptures had to be interpreted with this principle in mind.
3. That certain quotations brought to the Hebrews attention had already been interpreted Christologically, and were accepted as Messianic references. These quotations in the epistle can only be appreciated by reference to the context from whence they are taken. An obvious example of this is found in 2v13, quoting from Isa 8v18.

KEY WORDS IN THE EPISTLE

Interspersed throughout the Epistle there are key words used by the Apostle to emphasise the principles he is setting forth.

1. Constant use of the term "better" to show superiority of Christ over Law. Greek "kreitton" – "stronger", "nobler", from the root "kratos" – "vigour", "great", "dominion", "power".

"BETTER than the angels"	1v4
"BETTER priesthood"	7v7
"BETTER hope"	7v19
"BETTER covenant"	7v22, 8v6
"BETTER promises"	8v6
"BETTER sacrifice"	9v23
"BETTER reward"	10v34
"BETTER country"	11v16
"BETTER resurrection"	11v35
"BETTER thing"	11v40
"BETTER blood sprinkling"	12v24
"BETTER response by believers"	6v9

2. Use of the term “once” in the epistle; used to show the finality of God’s work in His Son. Two Greek words are employed: “hapax” – “a single time”, and “ep-hapax” – “upon one occasion”.

“ONCE enlightened”	6v4
“This he did ONCE”	7v27
“ONCE every year”	9v7
“ONCE into the Holy Place”	9v12
“ONCE in the end of the world”	9v26
“ONCE offered”	9v28
“ONCE purged”	10v2
“ONCE for all”	10v10
“ONCE more”	12v26, v27

3. Watchwords of resolution: “let us”.

“LET US fear”	4v1
“LET US labour to enter”	4v11
“LET US hold fast our confession”	4v14
“LET US come boldly unto the throne of grace”	4v16
“LET US go on unto perfection”	6v1
“LET US draw near with a true heart”	10v22
“LET US consider one another”	10v24
“LET US lay aside every weight”	12v1
“LET US run the race”	12v1
“LET US have grace”	12v28
“LET US go forth”	13v13
“LET US offer the sacrifice of praise”	12v15

4. The completeness of things in Christ. Use of Greek, “teleios”, and related words rendered “perfect”, “finisher”, “full age”, “consecrated”.

“Captain of our salvation PERFECT through sufferings”	2v10
“Being made PERFECT he became the author of eternal salvation”	5v9
“Go on unto PERFECTION”	6v1
“If therefore PERFECTION were by the Levitical priesthood”	7v11
“Law made nothing PERFECT”	7v19
“The son CONSECRATED forever more”	7v28
“Could not....PERFECT as pertaining to the conscience”	9v9
“more PERFECT tabernacle”	9v11
“Never...make the comers thereunto PERFECT”	10v1
“PERFECTED forever”	10v14
“Without us, should not be made PERFECT”	11v40
“Author and FINISHER of faith”	12v2
“Spirits of just men made PERFECT”	12v23

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Illustrating the series of contrasts with Old Testament revelation and the Law of Moses.

These divisions are not to be confused with the actual divisions of thought in the epistle, but are here given that the reader may follow the series of contrasts which exist in the epistle.

Two Major Divisions

1. The doctrinal section: Christ as compared with the elements of the Law (1v1-10v18).
2. The practical section: faith, hope and love as compared to Law (10v19–13v25).

Chapter Analysis

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Christ's superiority to the PROPHETS | 1v1-3 |
| 2. Christ's superiority to the ANGELS | 1v4-14, 2v15-18 |
| i) First series of admonitions | 2v1-4 |
| 3. Christ's superiority to MOSES | 3v1-6 |
| ii) Second series of admonitions | 3v7-4v7 |
| 4. Christ's superiority to JOSHUA | 4v8-11 |
| iii) Third series of admonitions | 4v12-16 |
| 5. Christ's superiority to AARON | 5v1-10v18 |
| 5a) The superiority of his PRIESTHOOD | 5v1-10, 7v1-28 |
| iv) Fourth series of admonitions | 5v11-6v20 |
| 5b) The superiority of his SANCTUARY | 8v1-5 – 9v1-11 |
| 5c) The superiority of his COVENANT | 8v6-13, 9v15-20, 10v16-18 |
| 5d) The superiority of his SACRIFICE | 9v12-14, 9v12-28, 10v1-15 |
| v) Fifth series of admonitions | 10v19–12v2 |
| 6. Christ's superiority in FAITH | 12v2 |
| vi) Sixth series of admonitions | 12v3-13v19 |
| 7. Christ's superiority as a SHEPHERD | 12v20-21 |
| vii) Seventh series of admonitions | 13v22-25 |

Note: An admonition is an exhortation with warning.



Above: After nearly 2000 years in dispersion, Jews gather to offer prayers of thanksgiving in 1948 at The Arch of Titus in Rome which had been built in honour of the Caesar that destroyed Jerusalem in AD70. **Left:** The Arch of Titus depicts the Sacking of the Temple at Jerusalem in AD70. (both pictures: Bible Magazine)

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Hebrews completes the argument commenced by Paul in Galatians and Romans. Each letter develops its theme around the quotation, “**The just shall live by faith**” (**Habakkuk 2:4**). Although the basic theme is the same in each epistle, the emphasis given to the words differs as indicated in the following summary.

Galatians lays emphasis upon the process of *justification*. In that epistle, Paul emphasises that God has only ever provided one mode of *justification* and that is through faith in the Abrahamic Covenant, of which Christ is the promised seed. The Mosaic system was but a ‘pedagogue’ and could not provide a means of justification leading to eternal life. “But that no man is *justified* by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, ‘The **JUST** shall live by faith” (**Galatians 3:11**).

Romans is a more profound elaboration of the same theme. It has been said that, ‘Galatians is to Romans like the acorn is to the oak tree’. Romans shows that all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile, have failed to manifest a way of righteousness adequate to obtain salvation. Furthermore, if God ‘gives them up’ to their own devices, there is no limit to the depths to which human nature may sink in departing from the Truth. What God really requires is “the obedience of *faith*” (Romans 1:5), because “the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*... for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from *faith* to *faith* as it is written, ‘The just shall live by **FAITH**” (**Romans 1:16,17**).

Hebrews is very strongly and directly exhortational as the writer appeals to his readers to consider how much better it is ‘in Christ’ than it was ‘under the Law’, and how this should affect the way they *live*. Faith must be the motivating force in life for all believers and this is the great example left by the worthies of old who *lived by faith* and whose lives are ‘catalogued’ in Hebrews 11. Paul’s appeal reaches a climax in this letter when he concludes, “Now the Just shall *live* by Faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him” (10:38). Thus Paul’s prayer is that the God of peace, may “make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ...” (13:20,21). This perfection (or spiritual maturity) can only come through the Word of God, believed and lived. Faith must be the motivating force in life, so that to be acceptable in God’s sight, “The just shall **LIVE** by faith” (**Hebrews 10:32**).

The over-riding principle of the Epistle is that God has only ever offered one way of salvation to man. That basis is the obedience of **FAITH** (cp Romans 1:5) not obedience to **LAW** (Romans 3:20). The Epistle to the Romans made this very clear in chapter 10:5,6 where Paul contrasted the Righteousness of Faith with the Righteousness which is of the Law. God never intended that there should be two modes of righteousness leading to eternal life.

While the Jewish believers doubtless acknowledged the importance of the Abrahamic Covenant as the “everlasting covenant”, many of them failed to see that it was infinitely superior to the Mosaic Covenant in that the latter was never intended to offer eternal life to those who were sanctified by it. The Mosaic was a national covenant, not a personal and individual one. It was a schoolmaster leading to Christ but could not offer eternal inheritance of the Land of Promise to any individual (Galatians 3:24,25; 4:3-5). This can only come through faith in the Abrahamic or everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7; Hebrews 13:20). The appeal in the Letter to the Hebrews is to consider how much “*better*” everything is in Christ and Paul enforces his message with many powerful and instructive arguments drawn from the types and shadows of the Law.

Bro John Knowles

NOTES

NOTES

FIRST PRINCIPLES SUBJECTS



When you see this 7-branched lampstand symbol throughout the notes, you will read about basic Bible doctrine and its practical implications. The first principles of the oracles of God (Heb 5:12) are a dynamic power that can transform our lives. The Gospel of the Kingdom is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes” (Rom 1:16). The stronger someone’s faith, the more radical their practical response. To have FAITH in what God has said in the Bible is far more than just knowing certain facts. It involves being convinced of what God has said and convicted to the extent that it has an impact on our lives. This is a LIVING FAITH - one that is seen in ACTIONS. Faithful men of old (many of whom are recorded in Hebrews 11), were compelled to act in ways contrary to their natural feelings – because they BELIEVED. So with FAITH as our strong foundation, let us thankful for our *hope* and be thus impelled to *love* and *good works*.

Study Group 1

“THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON OF GOD”

Hebrews 1:1 – 2:8

VERSES 1-4: The greatest revelation of God's Glory now seen in a Son

The letter commences abruptly, without preface or greeting, and immediately announces the premise of the message, this being the superiority of Christ. In previous manifestations God had employed the agency of angels and prophets. Now in this greatest of all manifestations, God has spoken to us through His only begotten Son, who is the perfect reflection of His glory.

Hebrews 1

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

Paul identifies three particular features of all past revelations which made them inferior to the new manifestation in Christ.


1. They were given piecemeal, at various times and in different places.
2. They were given in different forms and delivered by different methods.
3. They were given by prophets who truly represented man but were only shadowy, imperfect manifestations of God.

Now, in Christ, we see the Word of God made flesh and “behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“At sundry times” - i.e. in many portions, at many times and in many ways; variously as to time and agency.

“In divers manners” - Greek implies “in many manners; variously as to method or form”.

“Unto the fathers” - i.e. the fathers of Israel

 **What makes the introduction of this epistle different to others in the New Testament? What is striking by even the first word? What are the implications?**

Hebrews 1

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

The days of this new, more complete manifestation, coincide with the epoch in which the Law, together with its types and shadows, have passed away. Consequently Paul styles the days in which he was writing, the ‘end of the Mosaic Age’ (9:26), or ‘these last days’.

“These last days” – This means ‘extreme or last in time’. The phrase only occurs here and in Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; James 5:3 and 2 Peter 3:3. It always refers to the “last days of the Jewish commonwealth” and is similar in meaning to the phrase the “end of the world (age)” which occurs in Hebrews 9:26. This topic is dealt with at length in the article by Bro John Thomas “The Last Days of Judah’s Commonwealth”.

“Spoken” – The same word in the original as ‘spake’ in verse 1, thus drawing attention to the contrast between these two verses. This verse is set in contrast to verse 1 and can be illustrated when the words are arranged as follows:-

“In many parts and in many ways” -

GOD

v1

having spoken
of old
unto the fathers
in the prophets

v2.

spake
in these last days
unto us
in a son.

“Whom he hath appointed” – This is the first of three statements the apostle makes to describe the place and the work of the Son, each one commencing with the word ‘whom’ or ‘who’.

1. Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.
2. Through whom also he made the worlds.
3. Who .. when he had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

“Heir of all things” - ‘Heir’ in the Greek means ‘one who receives his allotted possession by right of sonship’. Israel were constituted Yahweh’s national firstborn son. They were guaranteed length of days in the Land of Promise if they manifested the characteristics of Yahweh’s national son. On the other hand, the individual Son came as the seed identified with the Abrahamic or everlasting covenant and as the seed of Abraham became heir of the world. He was also the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) who had the dominion over the flesh (Genesis 1:26) - styled in Psalm 8:6 “the all things” - hence he has been “appointed heir of all things”. Cp also 1 Cor 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:22.

“Through whom also he made the worlds” - This is the second statement concerning the Son. ‘He made’ means to make, constitute, appoint or ordain anything. **‘Worlds’** (Gr. ‘aion’) means “an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity, period of time, age, a human lifetime.”

The Diaglott translates verses 1 & 2 as follows:- *“God having anciently spoken, in many portions and by various methods, to the fathers by (in) the prophets, in the last of these days spoke to us by (in) a son, whom he appointed heir of all things, on account of whom also he constituted the ages;...”*

 **What is so arresting by the term “last days”? If you were living in Jerusalem at this time, what would it remind you of? What are the implications for us reading Hebrews today?**

Hebrews 1

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

There could be no more personal way by which God could reveal Himself to man than through His own Son. Sin has separated man from God and even the Law kept man at arm’s length from his Creator. In Christ, however, they had heard, seen, looked upon and handled the very ‘word of life’ himself (1 John 1:1-3), so that having seen him, they had ‘seen the Father’ (John 14:9). Paul calls upon his readers to consider the wonderful privilege that is their’s.

“Brightness” - Used of Christ in that he perfectly reflects the majesty of God. Rotherham translates this as “an eradiated brightness of his glory”.

“Glory” - can have a wide variety of meanings including praise, honour, glory, splendour, brightness, magnificence, excellence, pre-eminence, dignity, grace, majesty; the kingly majesty which belongs to God as supreme ruler, majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity. John expresses the same idea when he says: “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:14. The way the glory was revealed in Christ is described in the next expressions.

“Express image” – this is the Greek word *‘charakter’* from where we get the English word ‘character’. This is the instrument used for engraving or carving; the mark stamped upon that instrument or wrought out on it; hence, a mark or figure burned in, or stamped on, an impression; the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect. The English word character is derived from this Greek word and well describes the meaning as applied here in Hebrews. Jesus could say: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

“Person” – Gr. *‘hypostasis’*, literally means a setting or placing under; it can refer to substructure or foundation; that which has foundation, is firm; the substantial quality, nature, of a person or thing; steadfastness of mind, firmness, courage, resolution; confidence, firm trust, assurance. The word occurs also in 2 Cor 9:4 (confident); 11:17 (confidence); Hebrews 3:14 (confidence) and 11:1 (substance). In this verse it refers to all the moral attributes that go to make up the “character of Deity” as seen in ‘the son’. In subsequent verses the thought is extended to include the physical nature itself which Christ now possesses making him even more like his Father.

“Upholding” - means to carry some burden; to move by bearing; mover, to bring in by announcing, to announce or manifest, bring forth, produce.

“The word” - Jesus was the word (*logos*) made flesh because he delighted in the spoken or written word of the Deity. The same idea is expressed in Psalm 119:11 - “thy word (*Hebrew ‘imrah’*) have I hid in my heart”. As a consequence the Psalmist says 119:16 - “I will not forget thy word (*Hebrew ‘dabar’*)”.

“Power” - Gr. *‘dunamis’* meaning strength, power, ability, moral power. The word is powerful to overcome the thinking of the flesh as demonstrated in the life of Jesus and particularly in his response to the three challenging tests put to him by the tempter at the end of his forty days in the wilderness (Luke 4 & Matt 4).

“Purged” – Refers to a cleansing, purification; a ritual washing; of the washing of the Jews before and after their meals, of Levitical purification. In this case it refers to the cleansing of sins wrought by the sacrifice of Christ. His life of perfect obedience “even to the death of the cross” had as its object the washing away of sins through a declaration of the righteousness of God. Having raised Jesus from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant and caused him to ascend to the heavens, God made “that same Jesus both Lord and Christ” Acts 2:36. As with Peter’s argument in Acts 2, Paul likewise draws heavily on Psalm 110, the most frequently quoted passage in the New Testament and shows that the Christ is not only a resurrected man, but also an ascended man who now sits at the right hand of God. Paul lays the basis for this powerful argument even at this early stage in the letter.

“Sat” - Paul uses this word very effectively later in the epistle to show the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood (8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

“Right hand” - literally, it means the right or the right hand; metaphorically, it means a place of honour or authority. In this section of the epistle Paul uses this fact as one proof that Christ is superior to the angels

“Majesty” - If Christ is seated in a position of authority at the side of the greatest authority in the universe surely this makes him superior to everything both in heaven and in earth. If this is the case, then everything in daily life must become secondary to our hope and life in Christ.

“high” - i.e. high in a metaphorical sense; eminent, exalted in influence and honour. This is the last in a string of words depicting the exalted status of God and the consequently exalted status of the Son of God.

Hebrews 1

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

“Better” - The occurrences in Hebrews are significant as this is one of the key words in the Book and occurs as follows:-

Hebrews 1:4 better than the angels, i.e. a better name
 Hebrews 6:9 better things
 Hebrews 7:7 the less is blessed of the better
 Hebrews 7:19 better hope
 Hebrews 7:22 better testament
 Hebrews 8:6 better covenant better promises
 Hebrews 9:23 better sacrifices
 Hebrews 10:34 a better and an enduring substance
 Hebrews 11:16 a better [country]
 Hebrews 11:35 a better resurrection
 Hebrews 11:40 better thing for us
 Hebrews 12:24 better things than [that of] Abel

“by inheritance obtained” - What he has obtained by inheritance is a more excellent name than the angels. Applying the word “name” in a literal sense in the first instance, we know only a few angels by their name. There are some that occur in the life of Daniel such as Gabriel (the mighty warrior), Michael (one like El) and Palmoni (the wonderful numberer). Such names are descriptive of the role assigned to these individuals and the work allocated for them to accomplish. Isaiah 9:6; Daniel 12:1 etc reveal how Immanuel will assume all these roles in the Kingdom and consequently inherit the names or titles as well. e.g. Gabriel (Gibbor El) of Daniel becomes El Gibbor of Isaiah 9:6. His name is greater because he fulfils the role in a greater, more complete sense.

In addition, the word ‘name’ as with Yahweh himself, involves both His purpose (Exodus 3) and character (Exodus 34) and it is because Jesus has revealed that character in a very special way that God has reserved for him the most important role in his future purpose with the earth. He has given him a name which is above every name (Phil 2:9). In particular, Paul observes that he has obtained a more excellent name than the angels. In this regard, Brother John Carter comments:

“The abrupt introduction of angels is a skilful connecting link to the first division of the argument. In showing the Hebrews that in Christ they had something ‘better’ than they had under the Law, the apostle takes the essential elements pertaining to the Law. It had been given through **angels**; it concerned an **inheritance**; it embodied a ritual worship which centred in a **priesthood**. Thus the main divisions of the letter are as follows:

1. INTRODUCTION (1:1-4)
2. CHRIST GREATER THAN THE ANGELS (1:5 - 2:18)
3. CHRIST AND THE INHERITANCE - Greater than Moses and Joshua (3:1 - 4:16)
4. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST - Greater than Aaron’s (5:1 - 10:18)
5. THE APPLICATION OF THE FACTS ESTABLISHED (10:19 to 13:25).

VERSES 5-14: Jesus Christ is Greater than the Angels

Paul’s readers were obviously still tied to the Law which, he observes, “was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by *angels* in the hand of a mediator” (Gal 3:19). So the Apostle now cites seven passages from the Old Testament to demonstrate Christ’s superiority to the angels showing that angels were but ministering spirits whereas Christ is the **son** in the family. It is true that Israel were Yahweh’s *national* son and even the angels were styled sons of God, but there was only one individual who was ever described as “my son” and could claim God as his actual father. Paul will show in subsequent chapters that, because Christ is the Son, he inherits the right of kingship and priesthood in that world to come that will not be in subjection to the angels (2:5). These seven quotations lay a basis for this argument yet to come. See further notes on the introduction to chapter 5.


Hebrews 1

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

“Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee” - This first quotation is from **Psalms 2:7**. In context it is speaking about the time when Christ shall receive the nations as the inheritance rightly due to him because he is the only begotten son of God. This was never said to any of the angels

because their work is to assist as serving agents to minister unto those - both Christ and the saints - who are to be heirs of salvation.

The “day” of which he speaks does not have to be isolated to one event, but can be applied with equal force to the day of his birth of Mary (Luke 1:35); the day of his resurrection when he was declared to be son of God with power (Romans 1:4; Acts 13:32-34) and more specifically in the context of this Psalm and the following quotation from 2 Samuel 7, the day when he enters into his inheritance as king in his Father’s Kingdom.

 If your Bible does not ‘indent’ the Old Testament quotations (eg the Oxford KJV) then refer for a moment to another Bible that does. Notice how many Old Testament quotations are used in Chapter 1. What does this tell us about how the argument is presented in Hebrews? Taking this into account, think about how you would therefore read the chapter out aloud.

“I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son” – This second quotation is from **2 Samuel 7:14** or possibly **Psalm 89:26** and the context again directs attention to the inheritance of the Son as he succeeds to the throne of his father David which, of course, is Yahweh’s throne.

The fact that both these quotations are to be seen in the light of Christ’s future inheritance is made even plainer in the next quotation.

Hebrews 1

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

The sense of this verse is different in some other translations inasmuch as the word “again” is connected with the phrase “he bringeth again into the world” rather than “he saith again”. e.g. Rotherham translates: *“But whensoever he again introduceth the first-begotten into the habitable earth he saith - “.*


“First-begotten” – Greek word in the N.T. is translated as firstborn (7), first-begotten (2).

“Let all the angels of God worship him” - a quotation from **Psalm 97:7** or possibly Deut 32:43 in the Septuagint translation (LXX).

THE PROMISES TO DAVID



The Promises to David should elicit in us an emotional response to the mercy of God (see 2 Sam 7:12-17). That was David’s response: “Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house...? ...thou knowest thy servant” (v18-20). In the chapters following, David shows mercy to Saul’s family. Young Mephibosheth in his plea to King David says, “What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such... as I am? (2 Sam 9:8). He uses the very words David had used earlier to God. David responds by showing mercy to Mephibosheth after the pattern of God’s mercy towards him. We are also recipients of these promises through faith and by baptism into Christ. We become a part of God’s ‘house’. If we really *believe* the promises (rather than just *knowing* them) our response should be the same. After David received the promises, he was motivated to ACTION, trusting in God’s deliverance (1 Chr 18:1-3). So to, the promise of Jesus Christ reigning as king over the restored nation of Israel should be a motivator *for us* if we truly appreciate its significance. It was for “the hope of Israel” that Paul was bound with chains (Acts 28:20) – He believed that David’s throne and kingdom would be established for ever and he was prepared to suffer for preaching it.

 A summary of quotes about the promises to David is listed on the following page. Suggestion: Make a note of these quotes in your margin in 2 Samuel 7:12-17. At each Bible quote referred to, mark in your Bible the cross reference to 2 Sam 7:12-17. Jesus Christ and the future Kingdom of God is clearly the subject of these promises.

COVENANT WITH DAVID – SUMMARY

KEY VERSE - 2 Samuel 7v12-17

- ❶ David's throne & Kingdom to set up eternally (v16). See Psa 89v34-36; Isa 9v6-7; 55v1-3.
- ❷ By a fleshly descendent of David (v12). See Psa 132v11; Jer 33v17-21; Isa 11v1-5; Acts 2v30-31; 13v22-23; Luke 1v30-34.
- ❸ He would be the Son of God (v14). See Psa 89v26-27; Heb 1v5; Luke 1v32
- ❹ After David had died (v12,19). See Acts 2v29.
- ❺ But in his presence (v16). See Isa 24v23; Acts 15v16; Jer 30v9-11.

2 Sam 7v16 "...thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." David's kingdom is the nation of Israel, called the 'Kingdom of the LORD' in 2 Chron 13v8. The 12 tribes became divided after Solomon.

1 Chron 28v5 "he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel." David's throne is the Yahweh's throne.

1 Chron 29v23 "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; & all Israel obeyed him." The 12 tribes under David & Solomon were the Kingdom of God.

1 Kings 11v29-36 "I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give 10 tribes to thee (Jeroboam): (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel)" (v31-32) The 10 tribes were Divinely overturned by Shalmaneser of Assyria (2 Kings 17v1-6). The 2 tribes (Judah) were taken into captivity to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25v1-2; 2 Chron 36v17-21).

Ezek 21v25-27 "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel (Zedekiah), whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end... it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him." Judah's king would be removed and replaced by Jesus Christ be exalted (Dan 4v17; James 4v10; Phil 2v8-9)

2 Sam 7v12 "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels and I will establish his Kingdom." This would happen AFTER David died, but in his presence: v16

Jer 33v17 "David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel" (NIV). Not saying there is no interruption, but it is according to covenant.

Psa 89v3,4 "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." ... David's seed, also Son of God. "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation." Only Jesus could say "my Father" (Matt 10v32; 20v23; Luke 22v29; John 8v19,28,38,49). All others must pray "our Father" (collectively - Matt 6v9; Rom 1v7; Phil 4v20; 2 Thess 2v16)

Psa 89v26-29 "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Christ was promoted to rank as firstborn over Adam (Col 1v15; 1 Cor 15v45; Rom 5v5-19).

Seed = descendants - First Christ, secondly those that are Christ's (Gal 3v27-29). David's seed to reign over the house of Jacob for ever

Jer 33v25-26 "Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." Seed of Jacob = Natural Israel (Luke 1v33).

Isa 55v3 "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

2 Sam 23v1-5 "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (v3) Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of this!

"he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (v4) cp. Mal 4v3

"although my house be not so with God; yet he that made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." (v5) David not permitted to build God's house (2 Sam 7v11; 1 Chron 17v4). This is a covenant for life (Isa 55v1-3; Acts 13v34)

Isa 7v14 "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." = God with us

Luke 1v26-33 "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his k'dom there shall be no end." His Kingdom - David's: 2 Sam 7v16; Psa 89v35-36. The legal and spiritual heir to David's throne (Ezek 21v25-27; Luke 1v69; Rev 3v7; 5v5)

Acts 2v30 "...of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7v12; Psa 89v35-36; Luke 1v32) Even the Jews knew the Christ would fulfill covenant to David (John 7v41,42).

Rev 3v7 "he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth..." Key symbolises power and authority in Christ's possession as David's heir

Rev 5v5 "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book" The sceptre would not depart from Judah (Gen 49v9-10). Christ's Kingdom = the ancient Kingdom of Israel restored - fulfilled at the 2nd advent (Acts 15v16; Rev 20v3-6)

Zech 12v8 "In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them." The day of Armageddon when God judges the nations. The "house of David" are those who have made an everlasting covenant with God (Isa 55v1-3). We can be part of Christ's house (Heb 3v6; Luke 20v36)

The above quotes are taken generally from the West Coast Bible Marking Notes by Detroit Christadelphian book supply. Summary compiled by Bro Andrew Dangerfield.

THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN – HEBREWS 1:6

1. The firstborn son was consecrated to God (Exod.13:2; 22:29), and held the position of priest in the family (Num.3:12,13; 8:14-18).
2. He received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut.21:15-17; Ezek.47:13).
3. He was held next in honour to his parents (Gen.49:3).
4. He succeeded in control of the family (or kingdom) on the death of his father (2 Chron.21:3).
5. He could forfeit his position through misconduct or incompetency (1 Chron.5:1; 26:10; Gen. 25:31; 48:5, 13,14).
6. A younger son could assume the position (1 Sam 16:12)
7. Israel was a national firstborn (Exod.4:21-23), elevated above other nations who existed before them.

Christ the firstborn (Col.1:15; Rev.1:5)

Adam was a son of God (Luke 3:38), but he forfeited his right through misconduct. Consider the following quotations in line with the foregoing points.

1. Luke 1:32,33; 2:22,23; Heb.4:15
2. Rom.8:17-29; Heb.1:3,4; Phil.2:9-11
3. Rev.3:21; Jer.3:17
4. Rev.3:21; Jer.3:17
5. Cor.15:45
6. Psal.89:24-27
7. Hosea 11:1; Isa.49:3

Hebrews 1

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

This verse is Paul's fourth quotation from the Old Testament and is taken from **Psalms 104:4**. Whilst the apostle is using the reference to show the superiority of Christ to the angels, it also reveals the role of the angels in this present dispensation. This thought is developed in more detail in verse 14.

"Who maketh his angels spirits" - "Spirits" (Gr. 'pneuma') can mean a movement of air or a gentle blast of the wind; hence the wind itself; breath of nostrils or the mouth; it can also mean the spirit, i.e. the vital principle by which the body is animated; also the many other ways the word spirit is used with the general connotation of 'power'.

"Ministers" - This means a public minister, a servant of the state; the servant of a king, etc. Cf Romans 13:6; 15:16; Phil 2:25; Hebrews 8:2. Thus it has the literal meaning of 'public servants' and is so translated in the Diaglott Greek Text. *"And with respect to the angels, indeed he says, 'It is he who makes his angels winds, and his ministering (public) servants a flame of fire'".*

Not only do the Elohim use the forces of nature including wind and fire to accomplish their work, but they themselves can be likened unto these forces in the sense of their swiftness and power in performing the will of the Deity. It is important to note, however, that in this passage quoted from Psalm 104:4 they are styled "ANGELS" not "ELOHIM". Thus Paul directs his readers' attention to the fact that, despite their power as Spirit beings (Elohim), they are in this context 'messengers' (angels) performing a work of service on behalf of the heirs of salvation cp verse 14. He is carefully and thoroughly laying a foundation for his argument that Christ is superior to the angels and hence everything in Christ is 'better' than under the Law of Moses which came by the hand of angels.

Hebrews 1


- 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.**
- 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.**

These two verses constituting the fifth quotation from the Old Testament are taken from **Psalm 45:6,7**. Paul's object in quoting this Psalm is to show that whereas the angels are servants, the Son is a king to be enthroned and exalted in all the Earth by Yahweh. The "fellows" who are his associates are the Saints to whom Paul refers again later as those who are partakers of the heavenly calling Heb 3:1,14; 6:4.

"Thy throne O God" - The Hebrew word for God in Psalm 45 is 'elohim' which is a plural word denoting Deity in manifestation. The Scripture is quite clear that there is only one God, the Father of all (Ephesians 4:6). He only hath immortality dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Timothy 6:16). Whilst "no man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18), Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and others saw 'elohim'. Elohim is therefore a title bestowed on angels and even orders of men. In the case of angels compare Psalm 97:7 with Hebrews 1:6 and Psalm 8:5 with Hebrews 2:7. It is also used of mortal men to whom the word of God came - compare Psalm 82:6 with John 10:33-36. The judges of Israel were also on occasions styled elohim because of their role as representing Yahweh in the nation e.g. Exodus 21:6; 22:8,9 and 1 Samuel 2:25. Furthermore, it is a well established principle of Scripture that what the Eternal Father does by His agents, He is considered as doing Himself; e.g. Yahweh appeared to Abraham through three men (Genesis 18:2). God Almighty appeared to Jacob through an angel (Genesis 35:9,11). Moses was told that he was to be a god (elohim) to Pharaoh (Exodus 4:16; 7:1). Also Job describes the events of Creation as being a work involving the Sons of Elohim (Job 38:1-7). Refer to *Elpis Israel* pages 181-187 "Dissertation on the Elohim".

"A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" - Sceptre (Gr. 'rhabdos') has been translated in the KJV as rod (6), staff (4), sceptre (2). When applied to kings it means rulership such as: 'with a rod of iron' indicating the severest, most rigorous rule. Not only is the Son destined to rule by inheritance, but he is also fit to rule because his life of perfect obedience to his Father demonstrated his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. He will rule with perfectly righteous judgments and the whole world will experience the joy of the Kingdom.

"The oil of gladness" - i.e. literally olive oil; used for fuel for lamps, for healing the sick, for anointing the head and body at feasts and other special occasions. It is here used figuratively to indicate an anointing with joy. 'Gladness' means exultation or extreme joy.

 **Think how the phrase "loved righteousness and hated iniquity" is relevant to us today. How does this affect the way we view our world? If that was the attitude of Jesus Christ, how should this influence the way we live our lives today?**

Hebrews 1

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

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

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

These verses taken from **Psalm 102:25-27** contain the sixth quotation from the Old Testament in support of Paul's argument in establishing the superiority of Christ to the angels.


"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth" - The context of the words in Psalm 102 (esp vv 13-16) shows that this does not refer to the creation of the physical world described in Genesis 1, but rather it refers to that world of which the Messiah is the creator. It commenced when Yahweh established Israel as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" through the covenant given at Mount Sinai. The Jewish heavens and earth so constituted were to pass away but will be replaced by a new heavens and earth wherein dwells righteousness - the Kingdom of God on Earth which will be established for ever under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the sense that Christ is the manifestation of Yahweh, it can be claimed that this is a work of Messiah even though he was not personally present when the work commenced. On the other hand, the work of developing the new creation involving both Jews and Gentiles was commenced in him as Paul explains in Colossians 1. He is the beginning of the creation of God for in him were all things (appertaining to that creation) made. See note on 'Firstborn' v 6.

“They shall perish but thou remainest” - Peter develops this theme in 2 Peter 3 when he shows that Judah’s Commonwealth would be burned with fire and the elements melt with fervent heat. This was not to be the end of God’s purpose with Israel and the world, but it awaits the coming of Christ to turn away ungodliness from Jacob and so all Israel shall be saved.

Hebrews 1

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


Not only is Jesus the Messiah (Christ) but as a result of his ascension into heaven he has become **Lord** as well (Acts 2:36). This is in fulfilment of **Psalm 110:1** which Paul now quotes as his seventh proof of the superiority of Christ. He is even now superior to the angels in respect to the outworking of God’s purpose with the Earth (1 Peter 3:22) and is seated at the right hand of God awaiting the time when his enemies shall be made his footstool. This position was never promised to any of the angels.

 **Think of some key Scriptures where Christ’s enemies become his “footstool” in fulfilment of Psalm 110. What are some Bible references that speak of Christ “treading down” the wicked?**

Hebrews 1

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

“Are they not all ministering spirits” - This picks up the thought from verse 7 and demonstrates clearly what the role of the angels actually is. Brother Carter states: “Their work is service - they ‘do service’ (R.V.) for the heirs of salvation who are the brethren of the Messiah. They have not royal dignity like the Son. And this follows: since sonship and heirship, neither of which the Law gave (although it bore witness to it), are in association with Christ, the position of these Hebrews is now higher than under the Law. The angels gave the Law, which ministered death (2 Cor 3:7). Those angels now serve for them, to guide, protect, and help them as heirs”.

 **How often do we think about the purpose of the angels and their service? How does that affect the way we live? By being aware of their work, what are the implications for the saints in the Kingdom age? (refer to Luke 20:36; Heb 2:5) If Christ is even greater than the angels, how does that affect the way we live in day to day life?**

 **Make a list of the 7 key Old Testament quotations used here in chapter 1. Look them up and mark in Hebrews 1 as a cross reference.**

THE ANGELS - MINISTERING SPIRITS

A man or woman cannot by their own efforts alone, achieve... spiritual-mindedness. There is also the good hand of God overseeing the affairs of life, so that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.” Paul clearly defines this wonderful blessing of angelic care in the words: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:14). The angels behind the scenes, so shape the experiences of the life of the believer that the interworking of experience and the Word in the believer produces the desired character. This grows slowly, wonderfully, we know no how, just as the tree, carefully tended by the husbandman gradually unfolds into its mature shapely form beautiful with leaves, blossom and fruit.... So the whole work of salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, both in the power the Word has to change our mind and disposition; and in the wonderful grace of God in influencing the lives of His children by the angels.

(Bro Graham Pearce, *The Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit Gifts* p.21-22)

HEBREWS 2

VERSES 1-4: Jesus Christ superior in spoken word

In the first chapter Paul has shown that, in respect to God's plan of salvation for man, Christ has a superior role to that of the Angels. In the first four verses of this new chapter, he digresses from his argument, and makes an appeal to his readers to consider the significance of this fact in respect to their own lives. This is the first of several similar exhortational digressions which Paul makes throughout the epistle and which constitute a vital part of his message.

Hebrews 2

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

"Therefore we ought..." - In view of what has been said concerning the superior role of Christ and the overshadowing care of the angels towards the heirs of salvation, we need to "attend more earnestly" to the things we have heard.

"Lest at any time" - 'Lest' is a frequent word in the epistle emphasising the nature of the sober warnings contained therein. It occurs as follows:-

- 3:12 Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief
- 3:13 Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin
- 4:1 Lest .. any of you should seem to come short
- 4:11 Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief
- 11:28 Lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them
- 12:3 Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds
- 12:13 Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way
- 12:15 Lest any man fail of the grace of God;
Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you
- 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau

"We should let them slip" - Barclay paraphrases: *"Otherwise, we may well be like a ship which drifts past the harbour to shipwreck"*. Brother Carter comments that the figure indicates the peril of being caught in a tide of temptation which would carry them away from their moorings... All the habits and associations of their former life tended to draw them back to the Law.

 **How does the exhortation of verse 1 apply to us today? What steps can we take to make sure the above points do not become characteristic of ourselves?**

Hebrews 2

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

The consequences of disobedience to the Law were well known because retribution was swift and clearly defined by the Law itself.

"Stedfast" - Meaning 'stable, fast, firm'. It also occurs in 3:6 (firm), 3:14; 6:19 (stedfast), 9:17 (force).

"Every transgression" - i.e. a disregarding or violating of the Mosaic law; the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law. Also occurs in Heb 9:15.

"Disobedience" - means "a hearing amiss". It occurs also in Romans 5:19; 2 Cor 10:6. It speaks of a way of life that is developed through not listening to the Word of God as seen in Romans 5:19.

"Recompence of reward" - i.e. the payment of wages due, recompense. There is a liability for people not living under law to mistake liberty as licence and to such, the words of Ecclesiastes 8:11 are appropriate. "When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong". This shows a weakness of human nature that all do well to recognise.

Hebrews 2

- 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;
- 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

“How shall we escape” – Means to flee out of, flee away, to escape. i.e. to escape the punishment due to those who neglect the only way of salvation which is through the blood of the everlasting covenant not through the Law.

“So great salvation” - This was something the Law of Moses could not provide but this epistle clearly demonstrates that the only way is through Christ. Consider the occurrences of the word:-

- 1:14 them who shall be heirs of salvation
- 2:10 the captain of their salvation
- 5:9 he became the author of eternal salvation
- 6:9 things that accompany salvation
- 9:28 appear the second time without sin unto salvation
- 11:7 prepared an ark to the saving of his house

In view of the ‘so great’ gift they had been offered, they should consider the seriousness of treating such a gift lightly.

“Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” - i.e. ‘the way of salvation offered to us had its origin in the Lord’s own words’. ‘Spoken’ means to speak or to use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts. It has already been used with significance in earlier verses in the epistle and continues to be used in later passages as some of the following examples show.

- 1:1 God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets
- 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son
- 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast
- 2:5 The world to come whereof we speak
- 3:5 Testimony of those things which were to be spoken after
- 4:8 He would not afterward have spoken of another day
- 5:5 He that said, Thou art my son
- 6:9 Things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak
- 7:14 Of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood
- 9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept
- 11:4 By it he being dead yet speaketh
- 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be
- 12:24 The blood (of Jesus) that speaketh better things than that of Abel
- 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh
- 13:7 Remember them who have spoken unto you the word of God

“And was confirmed unto us” - The remainder of verses 3 and 4 serve to illustrate the ways in which God had unquestionably confirmed the word spoken by the Son through the signs, wonders and gifts of holy spirit witnessed in the apostles.


VERSES 5-8 The Future World Subject To The Son - Not The Angels

Hebrews 2

- 5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

After the exhortational digression in verses 1 to 4, Paul now returns to his theme of establishing Christ’s superiority to the angels and hence the superiority of life in Christ to that under the Law of Moses.

“Hath he not put in subjection” - See notes on 1:4 demonstrating how that in “the world to come” Christ will assume the roles and even the names that the angels now have. The word ‘subjection’ becomes a key word in the argument. It occurs three times in verse 8 and again in 12:9. Because Jesus as the true Son of Man had the dominion over his own flesh, it qualifies him to be the judge and ruler over mankind in the Kingdom. Cp John 5:26,27.

 Knowing that Jesus Christ is “Son of Man”, how does that affect our view of the judgement? How does this affect our relationship with Jesus Christ now?

Hebrews 2

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

“But one in a certain place testified” - The ‘one’ is David and the ‘certain place’ is Psalm 8:4-6. Although the reference appears to be made in an indefinite way, it really implies that the quotation was so well known that its writer did not need to be mentioned by name. In fact it is done in such a way as to give greater respect to the writer; much in the same way as we might speak about Paul as “the great apostle to the Gentiles”, or David, as “the sweet Psalmist of Israel”, without actually mentioning their names. The psalm is based upon David’s victory over Goliath (as can be seen from the subscription) and David in turn is quoting from Genesis 1:26-28.

“What is man that thou art mindful of him” - Psalm 8 contrasts the power and majesty of Yahweh with man who is the work of His hands. When David contemplates the great gulf that separates the immortal ‘elohim’ (translated ‘angels’ in Psalm 8:5) and mortal ‘man’ (the Hebrew word is ‘enosh’ meaning mortal), he is caused to exclaim, “What is man that thou art mindful of him?”

“The Son of Man that thou visitest him” - The term ‘Son of Man’ (Hebrew ‘adam’ in this place), in the first instance indicates one who is descended from Adam thus indicating his humanity. In this Psalm it is associated with the decree of the Elohim that man should ‘have dominion’ over the flesh in order to reveal the likeness, character or glory of God in his life. Thus “Son of Man” has become a title bestowed upon the one who has had ‘the dominion’ over the flesh. It is used principally in two instances in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel as a man of sign (Ezekiel 24:24) is always addressed by this title, for he was strengthened by El (the meaning of Ezekiel) in order to accomplish the mission assigned to him by Yahweh. The mission was that through him, Israel might come to ‘know Yahweh’ - the theme of the book repeated some 80 times.

What Ezekiel demonstrated in type, the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled perfectly in practice, thus he frequently spoke of himself as the ‘Son of Man’ (Cf Psalm 80:17). In the Lord’s case, he is careful to distinguish between this title and others, such as Son of God and Son of David. ‘Son of Man’ is used in the context of his future work of judgment (e.g. John 5:27), because he has overcome the propensities of the flesh within himself and therefore understands what all mankind experience. On the one hand, it fits him to be a merciful high priest toward those who are to be recipients of his mercy and on the other hand, a righteous judge where there is a need for God’s severity to be dispensed.

“Visit” - means to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes in order to see how he is; to look upon in order to help or to benefit, have care for, provide for.

Hebrews 2

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

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

“Thou madest him a little lower than the angels” - Diaglott: “Thou didst make him for a little while inferior to angels”.

Paul is now quite clearly applying this Psalm to Christ and shows that it was always God’s intention to elevate the Son of Man to a position of honour which will reach its climax in the ‘world to come’. This will of necessity make him superior to the angels in respect to Yahweh’s future purpose with the Earth.

“All things” - This refers to all things relating to God’s purpose with the Earth. Cp 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:22.

NOTES

NOTES

Study Group 2

“A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST”

Hebrews 2:9 – 3:19

2:9-18 The Son's life of suffering and sacrifice qualifies him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest

Hebrews 2

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

“But we see Jesus” - Note the distinction between ‘Jesus’ as his name which identifies him as a particular person and ‘Christ’ which is the Old Testament title Messiah. Paul, (like Peter in Acts 2), is building up his case from what the Old Testament writers say about Israel’s Messiah and now he is ready to forcibly direct his readers’ attention to the fact that JESUS was the fulfilment of all these prophecies and in particular the words of Psalm 8.


“For the suffering of death” - Man’s salvation could only be accomplished through the death of a righteous man who could identify with all the weaknesses and propensities of the flesh. He alone could be a true representative of the human race in which all alike are subject to mortality. Man’s salvation could not be achieved by animal sacrifice (which Paul deals with later), nor by the intercession of angels, because neither of these two extremes could be man’s representative in the complete sense.


THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST



“Unlike the animal sacrifices, Jesus had a real link with those he came to save. He was one of us even though God was his Father. As the Old Testament had put it long ago, he was from among his brethren (Deut 18:15) and in that sense he was a sheep from the flock. Yet he did not act like one of us, for “all we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa 53:6), whilst of him it was said “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1Pet 2:22). He was indeed the spotless lamb, the sinless one among sinners. In him and in him alone there actually existed a bridge between God and man. In sinlessness and redemptive purpose, he and his Father were one. The death of Jesus was a declaration of the righteousness of God. Jesus repudiated the sinful pull of the flesh, even to the extent of taking it to the tree by crucifixion, and exalted the will of his Father above all else. By this means the living way to God was opened for ever by His Son’s blood.”

Bro Harry Tennant (*The Christadelphians, What they believe and preach* - p.78)

 How does this unique understanding of Jesus’ sacrifice give us a special relationship with Jesus Christ?

 Trinitarian doctrine teaches that Jesus was ‘very God’ and therefore unable to sin. How would that change our understanding of (and therefore relationship with) Jesus Christ? How would that change our whole understanding of God’s work of salvation?

Hebrews 2

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

“For it became him” - i.e. God Himself. The NIV says: “In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering”.

“In bringing many sons unto glory” - The word “sons” speaks of a status to be attained as a result of a change to spirit nature and should be distinguished from the other Greek word ‘teknon’ often translated as children.

“Make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering” – The word ‘captain’ occurs as ‘prince’ in Acts 3:15; 5:31 and as ‘author’ in Hebrews 12:2. It means the chief leader or prince; one that takes the lead in anything and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, or the author.

Salvation is based on faith and Jesus is both the author (the one that takes the lead) as well as the finisher or perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2). He has set the example in his own life and was obedient unto death even the death of the cross.


Consider the occurrences of the word “perfect” in Hebrews:

2:10	to make the captain of their salvation <u>perfect</u>
5:9	and being made <u>perfect</u> he became
5:14	belongeth to them that are <u>of full age</u>
6:1	let us go on unto <u>perfection</u>
7:11	if therefore <u>perfection</u> were by the Levitical
7:19	for the Law made nothing <u>perfect</u>
7:28	the Son, who is <u>consecrated</u> for evermore
9:9	could not make him that did the service <u>perfect</u>
9:11	greater and more <u>perfect</u> tabernacle
10:1	make the comers thereunto <u>perfect</u>
10:14	by one offering he hath <u>perfected</u> for ever
11:40	that they without us should not be made <u>perfect</u>
12:2	Jesus the author and <u>finisher</u> of our faith
12:23	the spirits of just men made <u>perfect</u>

Those who stand with their sins forgiven, and privileged to call God their Father, experience none of that craven fear which is cast out by love. Their fear is a dread of grieving the Father, of causing a breach, of being separated from their Maker. They are not like awkward schoolboys in the presence of a stern and unsympathetic master, afraid to do anything but study, and secretly longing for the pedagogue to go away that they might breathe freely again.

They are like children in the presence of a good father, with a wholesome fear inspired by love, taking their troubles to Him, and loving to have Him near; equally ready to work or play in His sight; and drawing closer in sympathy with Him, either in their labour or their sport.

Bro Islip Collyer, “*Conviction and Conduct*” (ch. 13)

 **How does our understanding of God as our FATHER (rather than just Creator) change the way we live our lives? Think of some practical examples of how decisions in life are influenced through this relationship.**

Hebrews 2

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

Christ was not merely the consecrating priest, he was also the sacrifice and the altar. All these symbols represent principles of the atonement by which the ecclesia has been sanctified and therefore fit to be called Christ's brethren. They are “all of one” in the sense of now becoming part of God's family, having a common Father in God Himself. This oneness, however, consists both in their natural parentage as well as their spiritual. He can call them brethren because they are now children of God, but he can also identify with them in the sufferings associated with the nature they bear. Paul proceeds to draw on three Old Testament quotations to demonstrate this fact and to emphasise the unity existing between Christ and his brethren. He also shows in each case that they must identify with him in his sufferings as a precursor to being glorified together with him.

Later, in verse 14, Paul expounds further on the oneness of nature possessed by Christ and his brethren and how Christ is able to identify fully with us in “all the ills that flesh is heir to”.

Hebrews 2

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

This is the first of the three quotations to illustrate the foregoing principles and is a quotation from Psalm 22:22, a psalm associated with Christ on the cross (Cp Psalm 22:1 with Matthew 27:46). The particular verse quoted by Paul comes from the section in the psalm where the theme changes from the Lord's cries of despair on the cross (verse 21) to his confidence that Yahweh will deliver him, (verse 22). Convinced that his prayer for deliverance has been heard, he breaks forth with a song of public thanksgiving as the glorious prospect of Yahweh's Kingdom opens up before him. The keynote of verses 1-21 is “Thou answerest not”, whereas verses 22-31 is, “Thou hast answered”. Thus in verse 22, he looks to the future when he will be assembled with the “congregation of the righteous” in contrast to the “assembly of the wicked” who were gathered around the cross like wild animals.

These are his brethren, for, inasmuch as they have suffered with him, they shall also reign with him and can therefore join with him in the great songs of praise that shall come forth from the glorified ecclesia.

“I will sing praise unto thee” – Paul adds in the word “sing” not included in the Psalm.

 **Read through Psalm 22. How does this Messianic Psalm provide a good background to the exhortation given in Hebrews 2?**

Hebrews 2

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

“I will put my trust in him” – This second quotation comes from Psalm 18:2 where it is revealed that as Christ's brethren are dependent on Yahweh for strength so also was the Lord himself. The Psalm is entitled, “A Psalm of David, the servant of Yahweh, who spake unto Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him from the hand of all his enemies...” It is also recorded in 2 Samuel 22:2 and is connected with “the last words of David” recorded in 2 Sam 23. The Psalm is prophetic of the final victory that Christ will have over his enemies. He has already conquered sin and death in himself and provided a way for his brethren to likewise benefit. His ultimate victory will come when all enemies will be put under his feet at the end of the Millennium (1 Cor 15:25,26).

Paul's emphasis, however, is on the need that Christ had for strength (Psalm 18:1) and the trust that he had in his Father as ‘rock’, ‘fortress’, ‘deliverer’, ‘shield’ and ‘tower’ (verse 2). Even his enemies who gathered around the cross acknowledged that “he trusted in God”. In respect to his need, he was identical to his brethren and his trust in Yahweh is an example for all to follow.

“Behold I and the children whom God hath given me” – The third Old Testament quotation in this series is taken from Isaiah 8:18 found in the “Book of Immanuel” recorded in Isaiah chapters 7 to 12. The complete verse states that, “I and the children whom God hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Yahweh of Hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion”. Paul therefore rightly equates Isaiah and his two sons with Christ and his “children”. In Isaiah's case, the “children” were literally his own children according to the flesh, whereas in Christ's case they have been given to him by Yahweh.

The word “given” means to give, deliver, to give over to one's care, entrust, commit. This is Christ's role as firstborn son in the family to whom the Father has committed the responsibility of caring for the “younger children” in the family. Once again, therefore, Christ is seen to be one with his brethren because they have a common Father. It is important to understand Christ's role as ‘firstborn’ and our relationship to him in this role. His position as firstborn has already been introduced in 1:6 and notes on “The Law of the Firstborn” are included there. The theme continues throughout the letter and in 12:23 the “children” are spoken of as an “ecclesia of firstborns”. In Colossians 1:18 the term is used to show the relationship between Christ and the ecclesia as like

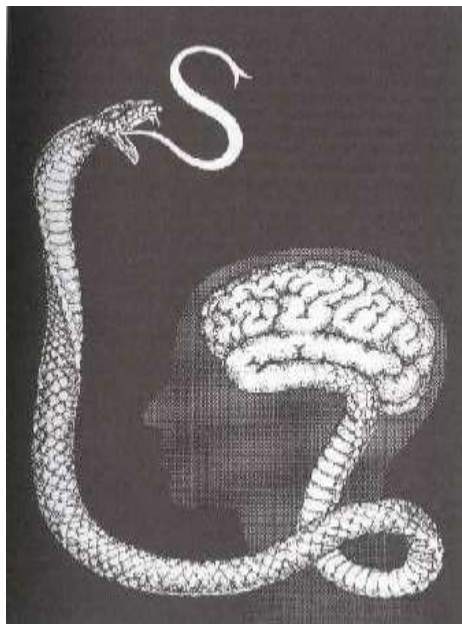
a head united to a body. True spiritual unity with God and each other through the Lord Jesus Christ can only exist when each person appreciates his or her personal responsibilities in this regard. In this respect, John's Gospel record (especially chapter 17) describes the family structure and highlights the important relationships existing between the various parts of the family viz, the Father, the Son and those "given to the Son".

Under the Law of Moses, the priesthood was vested in the Tribe of Levi and the Family of Aaron, but in reality, the priestly role was always associated with the firstborn son in the family. Such was the case prior to the Law and seen in that greater Melchizedek priesthood of which Christ himself is the great High Priest. In John 17, we have Jesus Christ at the end of his earthly ministry about to enter into heaven to take up the role of priest in the greatest way that any son has ever done. The spirit of this work, both in relation to himself and to us, is embodied in the beautiful intercessory prayer recorded in this chapter. The whole prayer is concerned with the Glory of the Father revealed in His family and is based on the priestly principle embodied in the role of the firstborn. It is significant to note the use of the word 'gavest' or 'given' in John 17:6(2),9,11,12 and later in v24 and 18:9. The sense in which these men been 'given to the son', is described in John 6:37-39; 10:27-30. This illustrates his priestly role as the firstborn son in the Divine Family and is further illustrated by the use of the term Good Shepherd found in this latter reference.

This third quotation (Isaiah 8:18) now concludes Paul's series of citations from the Old Testament to illustrate the oneness that Christ and his brethren share because of their common Father. These quotations serve as a basis for future exhortations to be developed in later chapters. He now proceeds to demonstrate another aspect of the oneness that Christ and his brethren share, viz, their nature, and shows how Christ was a true representative of the human race that he came to save. The doctrinal aspects of the subject are vitally important to a proper understanding of 'The Atonement' and are closely related to Paul's expositions in the Letter to the Romans.

Hebrews 2

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



Picture from 'Bible Basics' – Bro. D. Heaster

SIMPLE BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL:

- 1. The devil has the power of Death (Heb 2:14)**
 "SIN bringeth forth death" (Jms 1:15)
 "The sting of death is SIN" (1 Cor 15:56)
 "SIN hath reigned unto death" (Rom 5:21)
 "The wages of SIN is death" (Rom 6:23)
- 2. The devil sinneth from the beginning (1 Jn 3:8)**
 "By one MAN sin entered into the world" (Rom 5:12)
- 3. The devil... was a murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44)**
 "By MAN came death" (1 Cor 15:21)
 "For SIN... deceived me, and slew me" (Rom 7:11)
- 4. Jesus was tempted of the devil (Luke 4:2)**
 Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb 4:15)
 "But every MAN is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed..." (James 1:14)

Paul picks up the term 'children' from the previous verse and very emphatically shows the oneness in nature that exists between Christ and his brethren. Although he does not refer directly to events in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3), the foundations for all his remarks are found there. In the first instance Genesis 3:15 predicts the bruising of the serpent's head by the woman's seed. In this verse it is stated as, "...he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil". The way by which this is accomplished is, "through death". This is also founded on principles not only in Genesis 3:15 but also in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden (Genesis 3:23,24).

The way of the tree of life was kept or guarded by a flaming sword, by which God decreed that if any would try to reach the Tree it would mean certain death. Christ is the only one who ever reached the tree and that necessitated his death in order that God's righteous decrees (His righteousness) might be upheld.

Paul's point, of course, is that only a descendant of the first pair could rightly accomplish this work. It could not be possible for an angel to die for the sins of the world, nor would the blood of animals suffice (Heb 10:4), for reasons which are obvious and which he will enumerate later. Thus he emphatically states, "...he, also, himself, likewise, partook of the same (nature)".

"Partakers" – means to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer, be made a partner, to enter into fellowship, join one's self to an associate, make one's self a sharer or partner. It has been translated in the KJV as 'be partaker' (5), 'communicate' (2), 'distribute' (1).

"Took part" – means to be or become partaker; to partake. Christ partook of 'flesh and blood' in common with all those he came to save. He had identical propensities to all mankind with the same proneness to sin, but as 'the word made flesh' he had the dominion over those sin prone propensities; Romans 8:3; 1 Cor 15:50; 2 Cor 5:16,21.

"The devil" – Gr. "diabolos" is translated in the KJV as devil (35), false accuser in 1 Tim 3:11; 2 Tim 3:3, slanderer in Titus 2:3. It means a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer. It is used by the figure of personification to represent **sin**. It is stated to be:-

1. That which Christ came to destroy Cp Rom 8:3; Heb 9:26; 1 Cor 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:5
2. That which has the power of death Cp Rom 5:12,21; 6:23; James 1:15; 1 Cor 15:56

THE DEVIL





Jesus Christ came in our nature so he could destroy the devil. But if the devil was a supernatural monster, then wouldn't God have sent a powerful angel to destroy him? Why was it necessary to send someone "in the seed of Abraham" to destroy the devil? Surely it is because the devil is not a supernatural monster at all, but a common figure for our own sinful desires. Jesus Christ destroyed sin in its own territory – the human mind. Belief in a supernatural devil is so popular because it takes the focus away from our own struggle against sin and blames someone else. There are also many other damaging implications that arise from belief in a fallen angel. However, Bible teaching about the devil is simple. James says that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (Jms 1:13-14) We need to recognise the extent of our sinfulness and our true position before God. This provides the basis for self-examination, a true appreciation of grace, and a real motivation for a life lived in thankfulness to God.

If we believe in a personal supernatural devil then this:

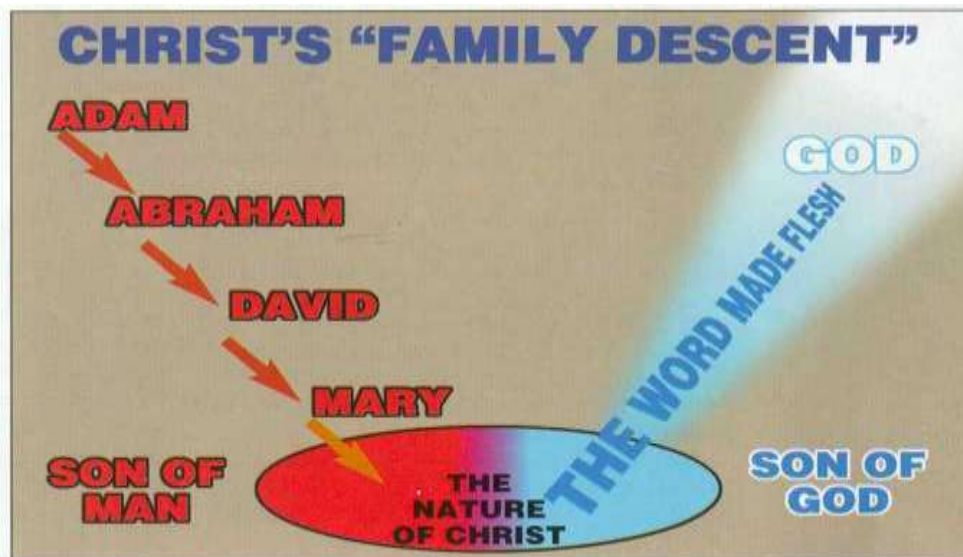
- (a) Has a devastating effect on our view of human nature;
- (b) Inevitably commits us to a belief in hell fire;
- (c) Leads logically to a belief in heaven-going and immortal souls;
- (d) Commits us to believing in judgement at death, consequently making the resurrection at the last day illogical and unnecessary;
- (e) Directly calls in question the validity of the work of Jesus at his Second Coming;
- (f) Affects radically our understanding of the doctrine of the atonement;
- (g) Changes our view of the omnipotence of God and of His character.

...Bro Dudley Fifield, *The Testimony*, Oct. 1985

 IF the devil was a fallen angel, how would that affect our understanding of immortality given by Jesus in Luke 20:36? Would *that* hope of immortality be "good news" or "bad news"?

 IF the devil was a supernatural monster roaming the earth tempting people to sin, how could you possibly explain Hebrews 2:14-18?

 How does our understanding that Jesus came in our nature affect our relationship with him now? How should that influence our view of sin?



THE NEED FOR A SAVIOUR

In the reconciliation achieved by Christ between man and God, our own position is starkly explained. Unless the Father had intervened, man was without hope and without God. He was cast adrift on the troubled sea of his own iniquity. There is no point in trying to sweeten the bitterness of this truth, or to play down man's state when he is "without God in the world". Every human creature needs to come face to face with the exceeding sinfulness of sin in order fully to appreciate his own need for salvation. The promise of Christ's coming was given in order that there could be grounds for faith for the many generations who would inhabit the earth.

The world was to learn over numerous painful centuries that man could never produce his own saviour: for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). The intervention of God was required to give hope to sinners, and to turn them into saints. If man could achieve what Christ accomplished on our behalf, there would have been no reason for his coming. Each person who comes to Christ must learn this essential truth.

(Bro Michael Ashton, *The Christadelphian*, June 1992, p.204)

Hebrews 2

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

Having explained how Christ has destroyed *sin*, the root cause of death, Paul now proceeds to show how Christ has likewise removed the *fear of death* and the bondage associated therewith. The Law of Moses produced in man a *conscience of sins* and those who saw the Law as an end in itself consequently lived in a constant state of fear - fear both of sin and death.

The more they endeavoured to seek justification by obedience to law, the more it became a burden to them and they found themselves under bondage to it, Romans 7:8-11, 24,25; 8:1,2. Paul speaks of the spirit of bondage associated with the Law of Moses, as well as with the law of sin and death, in Romans 8:15,21. Compare also John's comments in 1 John 4:17,18 where he contrasts fear and love, showing that love begets confidence and produces a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:16,21).

Hebrews 2

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

This verse is better rendered more *literally*, "Besides, he does not in any way take hold of angels, but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham", (Diaglott).

He was made a little lower than the angels (verses 7,9) and furthermore angels are not in need of his help for salvation. On the other hand the seed of Abraham are in need of help toward salvation. Why particularly the seed of Abraham? For several reasons. **Firstly**, the only ones who can be saved are those who, whether Jews or Gentiles, become Abraham's seed through identification with the Abrahamic covenant (Gal 3:26-29). **Secondly**, the Mosaic Covenant was never ordained to life but it is only through the blood of the everlasting covenant (i.e. the Abrahamic) that salvation can be obtained (Heb 13:20). **Thirdly**, Christ's priesthood being after the order of Melchizedek is identified with Abraham not Aaron. Thus the use of the term 'seed of Abraham' lays a basis for later arguments comparing the two covenants.

 **Why didn't Jesus come with the nature of angels?**

Hebrews 2

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


"It behoved him" – This means to owe, be indebted for. Rotherham translates as, "Whence he was obliged in every way..." If there was to be a full demonstration of the righteousness of God, then Jesus had to perfectly manifest the character of his Father and yet be a man who could identify with all the weaknesses of human nature; he was to be the WORD made FLESH. This could not be achieved by angels (who delivered the Law), nor by animal sacrifices and shadowy rituals nor through the ministration of high priests 'which have infirmity' (7:28).

"A merciful and faithful high priest" – The root word for mercy is defined as 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 who shows it (Vine). Note its occurrence in 4:15,16. "Faithful" is here used to mean one who is trusted or reliable as of God Himself (10:23;11:11). In the active sense it means to be believing, trusting or relying (e.g. Matt 24:45; Eph 1:1; 2 Tim 2:2 etc). The root word "faith" is one of the key words in this letter and is used with great force in chapter 11.

Hebrews 2

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

As a result of his identification with his brethren in all respects, he is able to succour or help them in their times of trial. A related Greek word occurs in 13:6 - the Lord is my 'helper'. Paul has powerfully laid the foundation for exhortations to come later in the book in which he will further elaborate on the work of Christ as a "merciful and faithful high priest".

 **What does it mean to have "succor"? How does affect our understanding of Jesus Christ and his work as High Priest today? How does that provide us with comfort. Think of some practical examples of how Jesus Christ can sympathise with our weaknesses.**

 **What does Jesus Christ do in heaven now?**

 **Why was the resurrection of Jesus Christ so important?**

HEBREWS 3

In chapters 1 and 2 Paul has shown the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ over the angels, beautifully expounding Christ as Son of God by which he obtains by inheritance a better name than they but still vitally Son of Man in that he was made perfect through suffering. Christ has then, as the captain, obtained the inheritance that he might share it with others.

However this opens up to the Jewish mind a comparison to the work of Moses in leading Israel to their Promised Land inheritance. Moses was the pinnacle of the Israelites' faith. Moses was Divinely sent (Exod 3v10) and it was Moses who received the law through the mediation of the angels (Acts 7v53; Gal 3v19).

The exalted position of Moses is observed in the way the Jews esteemed him. The law is referred to as "Moses commanded" (Matt 19v7), "Moses said" (Matt 22v24), "Moses wrote" (Mark 12v19), "Moses gave" both circumcision and the law (John 7v19,22). Christ spoke of Moses' seat (Matt 23v2), the Greek word for seat meaning "seat of exultation". The Jews elevated Moses' words, to the extent you could blaspheme against Moses (Acts 6v11).

However the law was given for a purpose (to manifest sin) and for a set time (till Christ came, the one the promises looked forward to) (Gal 4v19). Moses, as a type of the law, never entered the Promised Land, rather it was the work of Joshua, a type of the greater "Yah shall save" the Lord Jesus Christ, which Paul will discuss in Chapter 4.

Paul in Chapter 3 shows the superiority of the ministry and the faithfulness of Christ in obtaining that inheritance. It must be noted here that Paul is not showing the inferiority of Moses to Christ, rather the true power of the argument lies in Paul showing the superiority of Christ to Moses.

HEBREWS 3 CHAPTER BREAKUP:

- v1 The premise of Paul's argument, the superiority of Christ and our calling.
- v2-6 The superiority of Christ to Moses
- v7-19 Exhortation – Harden not your hearts. Will the followers of Christ prove themselves greater than the followers of Moses?

v1 The premise of Paul's argument, the superiority of Christ and our calling.

Hebrews 3

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

"Wherefore" - LINK IN ARGUMENT. Paul appeals to the believer's higher calling and outlines the premise of his argument, asking them to consider the greatness of their Lord and Master. Each phrase in the first verse is designed to provoke thought in realising the lofty status attributed to those *"in Christ"*, an introduction that will aid Paul's argument. This link in thought between arguments is repeated in 2v17, 7v25, 8v3, 9v18, 11v19.

"Holy" – sacred, consecrated, Strong: *"morally blameless"*. Rendered *saints* over 60 times in NT, this title is theirs because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17v17-19, Col 1v22). Those that are set apart for God.

"Brethren" – The Greek is made of 2 words, one of which is *"delphus"* meaning the womb. This relates us to our birth (re-birth) into Christ, which adopts us into the heavenly family (Heb 1v9, 11, 14; Rom 8v15; Gal 4v5, Eph 1v5). Paul has already expounded this in Ch 2v11,12 & 17. A work relating to his death, but also vitally to his resurrection (Psa 22 v22, Rom 6, Rom 8v29) **NOTE**; Christ first used the title after his resurrection (John 20v17).

"Holy Brethren" – this is a unique title to the saints. Israel was set apart for God (Lev 20v26), but now they are not only sanctified but also brethren of a heavenly family. A status not possible under the law rather only under Christ. As Jesus is *"the SON"* and when we are adopted into the heavenly family we become *"brethren"* (2v11,12 & 17).

“Partakers” - Stg *“a sharer, participant, partner”*. Only used 6 times, once outside Hebrews (Luke 5v7). Luke 5v7 shows the implication that one is a partner in the work, and carries with it both the glory (Gal 4v7) but also the suffering and trial (2 Cor 1v7). Paul has already shown the vital nature of this identification.

- The word is used in Ch 1v9 *“Above thy fellows”*
- The root word is used in Ch 2v14 of Christ, *“He took part of the same”* (flesh and blood)

“Heavenly calling” - Gk = Invitation – Thayer *“of the divine invitation to embrace the salvation of God”*. The invitation is to God’s kingdom and glory (Eph 1v18) and is not after the flesh (1 Cor 1v26), but is a lofty calling (Phil 3v14). Paul is contrasting the calling out of Egypt to an inheritance that was only temporary under the law, to a glorious eternal inheritance that will be realised under Christ. Paul uses the same word of the Abrahamic promise of the *“heavenly country”* (11v16) and the *“heavenly Jerusalem”* (12v22), a hope that preceded the law.

“Consider” – Gk. to observe fully, behold. Paul now begins his argument by causing the believers to focus on Christ, by observing the superiority of his ministry. This is a plea as Israel after the flesh had failed to consider and understand the full implications of the true work of the Messiah and the work of God (Isa 1v3, 5v12, Hag 1v5).

“The Apostle and High Priest” – This is the object of their consideration, Christ’s superiority is succinctly described in this title. Apostle means *“one sent”*, this refers to both Moses (Ex 3v10, Heb 3v13) and Christ (John 17v3). However Paul is using this as the one title of Christ in order to teach Christ’s greatness. Moses because of his weakness needed Aaron, who was afterward appointed High Priest. So under the law the two were separate (Num 18v7-8). However Christ is that *“merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God”* and so both offices are blended in the work of Messiah (Zech 6v13). Paul postpones his contrast of the High Priests to later in the epistle, here to focus on Christ and Moses. Thus, as an *apostle*, he is one sent forth to manifest God to man, and as *high priest*, he is the one that represents us before God.

“Our profession” – Gk. Confession. That which we have declared and believed. The premise of Paul’s exhortation to the Hebrews, as the other two occasions that Paul uses this word in Hebrews he exhorts them to *“hold fast”* (Heb 4v14, 10v23).

“Christ Jesus” – The true title of Jesus. Christ means, *“anointed”*, the Hebrew equivalent of *“Messiah”*. Anointing signified that the office (and the ability to fulfill it) stemmed from Yahweh, for the anointing oil was a symbol of the Spirit of God. It was the work of salvation that he was anointed for (Acts 2v36), and so this very title attests to the superiority of Jesus.

v2-6: The superiority of Christ to Moses

Often in an argument, in order to contrast two things, we elevate one not only through observing its qualities but also by belittling the other. However Paul is careful to esteem God’s great prophet by looking at God’s own testimony of Moses, but then to point out that Christ is yet greater. Paul is not teaching the inferiority of Moses, rather the superiority of Christ. He is very careful not to offend his audience and so cause them to not heed his words.

Hebrews 3

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

ie. “Who (**Christ**) was faithful to him (**God**) that appointed him (**Christ**), as also Moses was faithful in all his (**God’s**) house.”

NIV: *“He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house”*

Christ was truly faithful to God, speaking all God’s word (Heb 2v17, Matt 3v17, John 6v38-40, 8v38, 12v49). Moses was also faithful, as he delivered God’s word to the people and God spake through him (Num 12v6-8) and it is from here Paul quotes. Numbers 12v6-8 is the Divine summation of Moses; Paul could not give Moses higher praise than this. Paul is trying to ensure his readers don’t misunderstand his argument - that Moses represents a system of law that could not save - rather than them thinking he is personally attacking Moses (which of course he isn’t).

Yet in the very words that exalt Moses, Paul carefully shows us that this is where Christ is so much greater (v3-6). Moses was faithful as a servant *IN* God's house, but Christ was appointed son *OVER* the house (See v6).

Hebrews 3

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

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

"For this man" – Man not in original, speaking of Christ.

"Counted Worthy" - Gk = deemed fit. It was right that Christ obtain greater glory than Moses.

"More" – Paul uses this word in Heb 11v4 where it is translated *"more excellent"*, speaking of the sacrifice of Abel. This was the very principle that elevated Christ above the law, as the sacrifice of Christ was far *"better"* than the types under Moses, which Paul discusses later (Heb 9v23). But Paul's reason here has to do with the house.

"Insomuch" – Because, the reason why Christ is deemed fit of more glory.

"Builded" - Gk = to furnish, equip, prepare, make ready. It occurs 3 times in these two verses and also in 9v2 *"made"*, 9v6 *"ordained"*, 11v7 *"prepared"*.

Every house has someone to build it; here God is the ultimate builder (v4). The house being referred to is the same as was promised to David in 2 Sam 7.

In 2 Sam 7v11 we read how God will build that house. *"Also Yahweh telleth thee (David) that he (God) will make (Heb = to fashion, produce) thee an house"*. However in that promise God outlines that it will be through the seed (Christ) that the house would be built, *"He (Christ) shall build (Heb = establish; used in connection with building a family) an house for my name"* (v13).

So Christ was not only the vehicle through which God would operate to fashion His house around, but the building work is also attributed to Christ, because his work was the building of this new creation (Col 1v15-16, 2v7) and who as the son became the foundation stone of the house (Eph 2v20, 1 Pet 2v7).

Paul beautifully outlines the importance of Jesus as the ultimate Manifestation of God. The house of God is a spiritual one made up of people (2 Cor 5v1), people who are fashioned after the mould of Christ (Col 3v10), and so in this way Christ is the builder. However Christ is the image of God (Heb 1v3, Col 1v15, 2 Cor 4v4) and so ultimately God is the master builder and designer of this glorious house.

JESUS CHRIST – SON OF GOD



Do we sometimes fail to realise the incredible reality of Jesus Christ as the *Son of God*? He was one of us, suffering the same temptations and ailments of human nature – yet he had God as his Father. He was the *"only begotten son"* of God. In that he was different. But he was not *"very God"* as the Trinitarian would teach. He was not the Creator *"cloaked in a human body"*. He was *actually* God's son and he had a special relationship with God because of that. Yet he understands our weaknesses. This understanding should lead us to a life of true love for one another. In 1 John, the apostle strongly links belief in the Son of God (1 Jn 2:24) with loving one another (1 Jn 3:11). This is why John speaks so strongly about false teaching about the nature of Christ (1 Jn 2:22-23; 4:1-4; 2 Jn v7-11). John prophesied that a false system of belief would arise in the Christian community which would deny the humanity of Jesus, leading eventually to belief in the Trinity. This is why Paul condemns those who preach *"another Jesus"* (Gal 1:8,9). A true belief in the wonder of Christ as God's Son develops in us a special and right relationship with God and his Son, and a true appreciation of God's method of salvation.

Jesus Christ – Son of God and Son of Man

Jesus had not only a closeness of relationship to his Father, born out of his unique Sonship, but “he took on him (the nature of) the seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16). He was therefore both Son of God and Son of Man at one and the same time in the unity of this nature. His character displayed his unique relationship to God, but like all who are “made of a woman, (he was) made under the law” of sin and death (Gal 4:4). It is not helpful when attempting to understand Jesus’ nature to separate these two aspects of his being. Jesus was a whole and complete character. He brought his closeness to God to bear upon the problems all human beings receive as sons of Adam, and overcame them. He could only do this if he truly shared these same characteristics. The established church’s view of Jesus as a divine being in an envelope of human flesh (what they describe as the Incarnation) utterly fails to provide an answer to this need.

The uniqueness of Jesus’ conception helps describe how provision was made for his victory over sin and death. No other explanation fulfils all the requirements. We have seen how it explains his Sonship, for he was begotten by the power of the Spirit. But through Mary he was also heir to all that comes to the children of Adam: he shared their condemned nature, and knew the impulses to sin which every man and woman had to face.

(Bro Michael Ashton, *Studies in the Statement of Faith*, p.35)

Hebrews 3

- 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;
- 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.


Paul must not be misunderstood. Moses was faithful in the ministry he was called upon to perform. However Moses was faithful as a **servant** *IN* God’s house, but Christ was appointed **son** *OVER* the house.

“Servant” - Only occurs here. It means an attendant and is related to the word ‘therapia’ which occurs in Matt 24:45; Luke 12:42 rendered “household” and in Luke 9:11; Rev 22:2 rendered “healing”. The English word “therapy” is derived from the Greek, thus we have the idea of one caring for the health and wellbeing of others. God commended Moses for his work in this regard, but his work still fell far short of Christ’s work in three ways.

Christ	Moses
“Over” God’s house.	“In” God’s house
“Son” – as heir and representative of God his work was vital in “ <i>bringing many sons to glory</i> ”, and so the “ <i>firstborn</i> ” and builder with God of this spiritual house.	“Servant” – was a cherished and healing servant in the work God gave. Moses was one of the many servants who ministered in God’s vineyard (Matt 21v33-38).
“Whose house are we” – this was the genuine substance and the law pointed to it, this was the fullness of all that the law and prophets spoke of, Christ and his ecclesia.	“For a testimony” – it was the evidence or a witness to something far greater, it was the type or shadow of the very pinnacle of God’s plan with the world in Christ (Heb 1v2).

“If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”- This becomes the reason for the exhortation that will follow. Salvation is only to be found *IN* the house. We cannot let so great a hope slip (Heb 2v1), and must hold fast/keep/possess (1 Cor 15v2) the hope until the end. To the Hebrews this was a time quickly approaching. The destruction foretold by Christ in Luke 21 of Jerusalem in AD 70 was about 6 years away, their faith had to be firm (Gk = steadfast, stable) even through such a trial. A trial in which Judah failed in the time of Zedekiah.

 What are some ways in which we can help one another hold fast unto the end?

 Do we REJOICE in the hope that God has given us? Look up Deut 28:47-50 and Joel 1:12-15 and think about the implications for Judah who did not rejoice in their hope.

v7-19: Exhortation – Harden not your hearts. Will the followers of Christ prove themselves greater than the followers of Moses?

Hebrews 3

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,

“Wherefore” – Again the defining link in Paul’s argument. Having outlined the need for exhortation in the last days, Paul will now draw on the experience of those under Moses to challenge the Hebrews. Just as Jesus is greater than Moses, so the Hebrew believers had heard a greater and more complete message than their fathers. This therefore placed them in a position of greater responsibility so Paul exhorts them to heed the lessons from the past. Christ is greater than Moses, but will they prove themselves better than that generation?

“(As the Holy Ghost saith” – Paul digresses from his exhortation to outline from his quote of Psalm 95 their position and duty in observing a generation that failed to heed this exhortation at the very **“end”** of their wilderness wanderings. Paul inserts parenthesis (from v7-11) to focus them on the lesson of David’s Psalm (Heb 4v7), before returning to his exhortation of v12.

“Today if ye will hear his voice” – Paul quotes the inspired words of David from Psalm 95v7-11. Paul emphasises that even in David’s generation there was the need on a daily basis to focus on the lessons of the generation that failed to take their inheritance, and the lesson was just as relevant to the Hebrews as it had ever been. The word **“today”** gives urgency to the message and Paul refers back to it a number of times in this section of the epistle. Cp 3:13,15; 4:7(2).

The exhortation is vital for us **“Today”** because **“now is the day of salvation”** (2 Cor 6v2), and just as the thief on the cross, we must identify with Christ while there is time, and in **“redeeming the time”** we will like the thief hear those words **“I say unto thee TODAY, thou shalt be with me in paradise”**.

God had spoken to that generation from Sinai, then through his prophets. But now God had spoken **“IN His son”** (Heb 1v1), if so perfect the manifestation of God’s word, shall we not hear?

Interestingly the context of Ps 95 outlines the basic problem with the Hebrews.

- **“Let us come before His presence with THANKSGIVING”** (Psa 95v2)
- How could the Hebrews turn back to the Law if they were truly THANKFUL for the salvation outworked in the sacrifice of Christ?
- **“Let us”** is a phrase used 13 times by the Apostle in Hebrews.

Hebrews 3

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

“Harden not your hearts” – Gk = to render stubborn or obstinate. The heart circulates blood, and so represents the seat of physical life (Thayer). It denotes the feelings and character of the mind. However the ability of the word to penetrate the Hebrew’s thinking was being affected by the **“deceitfulness of sin”** (v13), like it can with us.

“As in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”

“Provocation”- Gk = irritation. Greek translation of the Hebrew word **“Meribah”**.

“Temptation” - Gk = to put to the proof, test. Greek translation of the Hebrew word **“Massah”**. Paul is speaking of trying God’s patience, as **“temptation”** is impossible for God (Jam 1v13). Temptation is a process common to flesh and blood, and is caused by the sinfully inclined lusts or propensities that act upon the thinking of man, the serpent-like appeal to satisfy selfish desire. This is impossible for God as He is Spirit.

The Apostle has a specific event in mind. **“Provocation”** and **“temptation”** are translations of the proper names **“Meribah”** and **“Massah”**. These words refer to two incidents - one at the beginning of the wilderness wanderings (Exod 17:5,6) and the other at the end (Num 20:7-9). Both of these incidents were prompted by Israel chiding with Moses and demanding the provision of water, both times Moses struck **“the rock”** that Paul in 1 Cor 10v4 tells us was **“Christ”**. This incident is specific to the Hebrews again as seen by examining the circumstances of those events.

1 st Occasion – Ex 17v5-6	2 nd Occasion – Num 20v7-9
Moses takes elders of Israel	Moses takes Aaron (High Priest)
Moses uses rod that had turned into a serpent	Moses takes Aaron's rod that budded
"Rock" Heb = T'zur. Means boulder in the earth	"Rock" Heb = Selah. Means lofty cliff
Moses told to "Smite the rock"	Moses told to "Speak to the rock"
Type Foreshadowed: 1st advent of Christ Christ came as the <i>"only begotten of the Father"</i> , <i>"the word made flesh"</i> and so represented God to the earth. <i>"As the serpent in the wilderness was lifted up so must the son of man"</i> , so Christ was smitten by the serpent power of sin manifested in the <i>"envy"</i> of the elders of Israel in that time. Living water came forth to those who recognised its significance.	Type Foreshadowed: 2nd advent of Christ He is the son on the exalted position of God's right hand, and the TRUE High Priest, by his resurrection to new life, so that he enters heaven (most holy) appearing in the presence of God for us. (Heb 9). Christ will return <i>"a second time, without sin, unto salvation"</i> , and so is not to be smitten a second time.

But Moses smote the rock again!! The exhortation to the Hebrews is vital. **Would they smite Christ a second time?** In falling away to the bondage of the law and turning back from Christ they would be going back to the elders of Israel that had smitten Christ, so declaring that they were right to kill Christ. In this they would *"crucify the son of God afresh (again)"* (Heb 6v6) and *"Tread under foot the son of God"* (Heb 10v29). This act cost Moses the ability to enter into the Promised Land, and it would do exactly the same for the Hebrews of the Kingdom of God.

Hebrews 3

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

"Tempted" – Gk. tried, examined

"Proved" – Gk. to test, approve

"Works" – Gk. toil, deeds

Paul does not directly quote Psa 95v10 here, rather modifies the sentence in order to draw another parallel to the generation in the wilderness. Rather than *"Forty years long was grieved with that generation"*, Paul states that they saw God's *"works forty years"*.

Like Israel, who had left the bondage of Egypt, the Hebrews were saved out of the dominion of sin in Christ. Israel at the end of the wanderings were about to enter the Promised Land, here the Hebrews were on the point of an epoch in time when the end would come.

"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the age are come." (1 Cor 10v11)

The Hebrews were to experience the end of the Mosaic age in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. It would then be some 40 years since Pentecost, a time in which the signs and wonders of God or the *"powers of the age to come"* (Heb 6v4) had been evidently witnessed by them all (Heb 2v4). Would they, in light of the works of God they had seen, turn back?

Hebrews 3

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

11 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

"Grieved" – Gk = to be wroth, or vexed

"Err" – Gk = to roam, wander. The Heb of Psa 95 means, *"to vacillate"*. They turned back from *"the way"* that leads to life, even though God had made it known to them (Psa 103v7). To know God is to know *"eternal life"* (John 17v3). Let us realise the importance of walking with God, lest our position be that God condemns us to die in the wilderness.

"Rest" The true Sabbath rest, the Kingdom age (Rev20v4). Paul expounds this in chapter 4.

Hebrews 3

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

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

Having completed his focus on their position and duty, Paul returns to the main thread of his exhortation. The lessons are clearly set before them.

“Take heed” – Gk = to look at, see. The same word used by Christ in Luke 9v62 *“No man, having put his hand to the plow, looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God”*. How can we look back from the position we have been called to, Brethren? Used by Paul in v 19 *“So we see they could not enter”*.

Paul is also alluding to the events of the Garden of Eden. *“Unbelief”* or *“faithlessness”* (Gk) was the very cause of sin. Eve was deceived by the reasoning of the serpent’s lie (“deceitfulness of sin”), and so she thought evil rather than believe the simplicity of God’s law. When lust had conceived in her, sin resulted, and she went and hid herself as a sign that she had departed from the living God.

But in our time of opportunity, TODAY, let us *“Exhort”* or as the Greek means, call to one’s side or implore each other that we may not allow sin to blind us.

 Think of some ways we can “exhort one another daily, while it is called Today”.

 How is it possible to become “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin?”

 Why is sin so deceitful? What are some ways we can justify sin and therefore be tricked?


“Departing” remove, or fall away. This was the sin that the Hebrews were in danger of committing. To turn back to the Law and leave the calling of Christ.

“Living God” – is another allusion by Paul to the OT. In Josh 3v10 *“Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you...”*. The living God is the only one able to get you to the Promised Land.

SALVATION CONDITIONAL



It is popular amongst many churches today to teach that salvation is given to us unconditionally. It is said that once we are ‘saved’, we can never fall from grace –The reason being that God has supposedly predestined us to be either saved or lost and that there is nothing we can do to change this. They call this “God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness”. The biggest problem with this of course is the issue of FREEWILL. What human father wants his children to act like robots? Children delight their parents when they are lovingly obedient *because they want to*, and *because they choose to*. Salvation is certainly by grace through faith (Eph 2:8). However a simple read through Hebrews shows us that FAITH is far more than just shouting out ‘I believe in Jesus’ at some evangelical meeting. *True faith changes our lives*. Salvation is conditional on holding fast to the end. It is also conditional on repentance of sins and being baptised into the sin covering name of Jesus Christ. Clear Scriptural teaching that it is possible for believers to fall away and reject the Truth (eg. Col 1v23; Mark 4v17; Ezek 18v24; Heb 4v12; 6v6; 10v26; Gal 5v4; 1 Cor 9v27; 2 Cor 11v3). The exhortation to the Hebrews was to learn from the lessons of Israel’s history, and ENDURE UNTO THE END.

 Hebrews 3:12 teaches that *it is possible* for “brethren” to fall away to a “heart of unbelief”. It is possible for believers to “depart” from God. What are the implications if we were to (foolishly) think that our salvation was automatically assured? Compare Jesus’ warning in Matthew 7:21-23 where some believe that supposed possession of the Holy Spirit guarantees their salvation.

HE THAT ENDURES TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED

"Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
(Matt 10v22)

"(Jesus Christ) will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath."
(Rom 2v6-8)

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1v22)

The Apostle Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim 4v7-8)

Hebrews 3

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

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

"For we" – this is an appeal by Paul based on the premise of his argument in v1. Look at our inheritance in Christ. We share ("*partakers*") his suffering temporarily, but we are made heirs with him of the inheritance (Gal 4v7).

"If" – as that generation failed to maintain their confidence ("*substance*" 1v3) and God swore they would not enter, so too we can only be granted God's inheritance if we remain steadfast (stable or "*firm*" v6).

"Today" – Paul stresses that God's voice still echoes forth to hearers, as it did in Sinai. Will we hear, and hearken to the lessons of the failure of that generation?

Hebrews 3

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

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

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

The conclusion of Paul's exhortation. Pause and consider the answer to these three questions.

RSV "*Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses?*"

We now have a greater "captain" who leads to salvation (2v10). Let us follow him. **Christ's leadership is superior.**

RSV "*And with whom was he provoked forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?*"

We cannot let our attitude cause us to irritate God, we must not return to the sins of our fathers. **Our attitude must be better than that generation.**

RSV "*And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest? But to those who were disobedient.*"

We understand that this cost those under Moses their inheritance, because they were willfully disobedient to the call of God. **Will the followers of Christ prove themselves greater than the followers of Moses?**

Hebrews 3

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

“Unbelief” – The root cause of failure in every case, is lack of faith. Paul will continue to emphasise this point until his argument reaches its climax in Hebrews 11. The entering of the true rest of God is only because of the superior work and leadership of Christ.

UNBELIEF IS AN ACT OF WILL, A DELIBERATE CHOICE

Whether or not there is a problem about those who claim they cannot see the truth of the doctrines we preach depends to a large extent upon our personal perspective. If we remember that **we are not talking simply about intellectual facts** but about declarations of the work of God for our salvation and the consummation of His purpose then the protestations of men about lack of perception to understand the things we preach becomes less meaningful.

The Scriptures give an emphasis in this matter which is enlightening: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not (RV, obeyeth not) the Son shall not see life” (John 3v36). Notice that the contrast is not between belief and unbelief, but it is between believing and obeying. Unbelief is shown to be an act of the will, a deliberate choice. **It is not mental confusion but disobedience**, because “God... now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17v30). Human wisdom might question this Biblical conception, but when all the facades men build are torn away, when all prejudices and inhibitions have been removed, when all the barriers erected through the fashioning of environment and teaching loved from childhood have been broken down, the stark reality remains: **men do not believe because they have no desire to**. They disobey the gospel by rejecting the whole counsel of God.

Paul gives us further insight in his letter to Corinth: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor 4v3,4).

The god of this world is what men of this world worship. It takes many forms: ambition, power, wealth, position, family, even treasured beliefs nurtured from childhood. These are the gods worshipped by men. Sometimes they create deep psychological barriers which cause men to harden their hearts against the sweet and gentle influence of the Word of God. These are the idols men venerate, that occupy their time and efforts; all in their way are manifestations of the god of this world which blinds the minds of men, preventing the glorious light of the gospel from shining unto them.

It is sad but true that if men persist in resisting the Truth, if they continue to delight in error, then a time will come when they will be so set in their own ways, so hard of heart, that they are no longer capable of being renewed by the power of God’s Word. God will confirm their choice, and by their own act of will they will have placed themselves outside the orbit of God’s grace (2 Thess 2v10-12).

Bro Dudley Fifield (*The Testimony*, October 1985)

NOTES

NOTES

Study Group 3

“SUPERIOR TO JOSHUA AND AARON”

Hebrews 4:1 – 6:6

The theme of the inheritance continues from chapter 3 with the focus changing from Moses to Joshua. Moses was not permitted to take Israel into the Land and as such he typified the Law itself which could give no-one a right to eternal life. The generation that came out of Egypt (with but few exceptions) did not enter the Land because of lack of faith. What then of the work of Joshua whose name in Greek is the same as Jesus? Was the promised “rest” (Joshua 1:13) to be fulfilled when the new generation entered the Promised Land under Joshua? Paul now describes how that “rest” was typical of the true rest that will only be experienced in Christ, by those who manifest faith. In this respect, therefore, he emphasises the power of the **Word of God** which must be heard (v2), obeyed (v6) and used like a sword to divide between that which ‘is of the spirit’ and ‘of the flesh’ (v12).

VERSES 1-11: Jesus Christ greater than Joshua

Hebrews 4

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

NIV “Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short”.

This is the connecting link with 3:19 as Paul now directs his readers to consider their own position in relation to the lessons of the past. It is the first of a series of appeals that Paul makes commencing with the expression “LET US”. See the occurrences of “let us” in the introduction to these notes.

“**Therefore**” – An important word linking chapters 3 and 4. It indicates an imperative for action, and is used in verses 1,6,11,14,16.

“**Fear**” – Gr. ‘phobos’ is the most commonly used word in the N.T. for “fear”. Vine states its meaning as (a) fear, dread, terror and claims it is always used with this significance in the four Gospels. (b) Reverential fear of God as a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a fear which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence (Rom 8:15) and which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God. Also of other superiors to whom respect is due e.g. Rom 13:7; 1 Peter 2:18.

Brother Thomas states, “*The righteous man’s fear of God is the fear of offending one he loves*” (Elpis Israel, page 145). The occurrences of the word ‘phobos’ and its cognates in Hebrews are 2:15; 4:1; 10:27,31; 11:23,27; 12:21; 13:6.

“**You should seem to come short of it**” - Cp Rom 3:23 “...all have sinned and *come short* of the glory of God”.

Hebrews 4

- 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.
- 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

NIV "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith". (Footnote says "...because they did not share in the faith of those who obeyed".)

"The word preached" - "Word" Gr. *logos*. Cp 2:2 "The word spoken by angels"; also 4:12 "the word of God is quick and powerful".

"For we which have believed do enter" - Entry is predicated upon faith and whilst those who were faithless did not enter, there is by implication in the following words the guarantee that those who are faithful will enter.

"Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" - Psalm 95 is not a reference to God resting on the seventh day of the creation week, although that was certainly a type of the greater 'Rest' the Psalmist has in mind. Thus there is to be a future and greater fulfilment of the promised rest than that experienced under Joshua. To prove this, Paul links two quotes from the Old Testament in verses 4 and 5.

Hebrews 4

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

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

"For He spake in a certain place..." - This is a proof from Genesis 2:1-3 showing that in the past, Elohim "ceased" or rested from the work of the six days of creative work and were "refreshed" on the seventh. However, this is not The Rest that God, in the Psalm, styles "my rest" although it was a type of the great Millennial Rest.

This second quotation, harking back again to Psalm 95, shows that, on the basis that God rejected the rebels from entering His Rest, it proves there must be a future 'rest' in addition to the seventh day of Creation Week and also 'the rest' when Joshua took Israel into the Promised Land.

Hebrews 4

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

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

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

Since, then, an opportunity is still left open for some to enter into this Rest, whereas those who first heard the good news were precluded from entering in because of their rebellion, we find that God limits His renewal offer to a certain day; "TODAY" (after that vast interval) - as He said through David - "Today, if ye shall hear His voice, do not continue to harden your hearts". What then is this "Rest" of God? It cannot mean the Promised Land. For if Joshua's (Jesus A.V.) settlement in the Land had been a fulfilment of God's promised "Rest", God would not have at a later date spoken of another 'day', that is another opportunity of attaining to His Rest.

"Because of unbelief" - better rendered 'disobedience' - see notes 3:12,18.

Hebrews 4

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

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

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

"There remaineth therefore a rest" - Gr. *sabbatismos* ie. the keeping of a sabbath. This is a different word from the word rest in other places in the chapter and makes the obvious connection with the seventh day 'sabbath' rest of Genesis 2:1-3.

It follows therefore, that there yet remains to be attained an opportunity for the people of God to participate in the greater antitype of God's sabbath rest. For whoever has entered into God's rest, he too has attained rest from his labours, even as God rested from His own.

“For he that is entered into his rest” - This is spoken in the present tense indicating that there is a Sabbath principle for the lives of believers now. It involves a “ceasing” from the works of the flesh and a “labouring” in the things of the Spirit. The Jews only saw the Sabbath in a negative way and, therefore, life to them, was a series of commandments forbidding certain activities (Cp Isaiah 58:13,14). The Lord, however, showed the true spirit of the Sabbath because he was always labouring in the things of his Father. We can likewise enter into such a “rest” now and Paul proceeds to show how this can be done.

v11 NIV “Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.”

“Let us labour therefore” - means to be diligent or to endeavour.

“Unbelief” - better rendered ‘disobedience’ - see notes 3:12,18.



Picture from The Bible Magazine

VERSES 12-16: The Word of God is Living and Powerful

Hebrews 4

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

“For the word of God” - see note 4:2. Paul, in fact, is returning to the thoughts of verses 1 & 2 to show that we should not merely hearken to the word of God, but allow its full vitality and power to operate in our lives. Thus he describes the Word as ‘quick’ (i.e. living) and ‘powerful’.

“Quick” - The same word occurs in 10:38, “Now the just shall *live* by faith”, with emphasis on the word *live*. This is followed by a whole chapter (11) where there is detailed many of those who **lived by faith**. Faith (belief) is active and living when it is seen in “works of faith” (James 2:14,17,18). These “works” constitute our response in times of trial, when, like Abraham, it can be demonstrated that he not merely believed the promises of a better country, but lived continually with that heavenly country in view (11:16). Where this state of mind is lacking, faith is dead. It is dead because the word itself was not seen to be living and consequently not used as a means of self examination and transformation. Romans 2 describes such people who, although they may see the shortcomings of others, fail to look inwardly and discern between that which is fleshly and that which is spiritual in themselves.

“Powerful” - literally means “in work” and is translated as “effectual” in 1 Cor 16:9 and Philem v6. Similar words in the Greek (*energia*, *energeo*) are used with significance in Ephesians 1:11,19,20; 2:2; 3:7,20; 4:16. The Word is a spirit or power “that worketh in us” to develop that Christ-like disposition which will edify and unite the Body of believers in love. Wherever there is prevalent a negative, Judaistic attitude as with these Hebrews, there will inevitably be fear and disharmony stemming from an absence of true love (cp 1 John 4:18-21).

“Sharper than any two-edged sword” - “Sword” (Gr. *machaira*) is the same one which forms part of the armour of the Spiritual Warrior in Ephesians 6:17. It was the short sword or dagger as distinct from *‘rhomphaia’* which was the longer sword. It is used here to indicate, in a figurative sense, the probing of the conscience based on the type of the priest cutting open the sacrifice to inspect it for blemishes.

“Soul and spirit... joints and marrow” - The terms ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ represent that which is ‘soulish’ or of the flesh and that which is of the spirit. It is reminiscent of Paul’s dissection of himself in Romans 7 where he speaks of himself as, in effect, two people. “So then, with the MIND I myself serve the law of God, but with the FLESH the law of sin” Rom 7:25. The priestly inspection can divide asunder these two elements and is more searching than anything a priest under the Law could do. The Word of God figuratively reaches even into the joints and marrow - it examines the very core of our spiritual being. In other words...

“It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” - “Discerner” means a judge or critic. The Word of God is the only source from which spiritual thinking can be developed and it is an essential requirement to be able to understand, analyse and overcome the thinking of the flesh within ourselves. Paul’s comments in 1 Cor 2:11,14 are very relevant to this process of self examination.

“Intents” – i.e. ideas, considerations.

“Heart” - In a physical sense it denotes the seat of physical life as in Acts 14:17; James 5:5. The word has also come to mean by extension man’s entire mental and moral activity including both the rational and emotional elements. It is used in this latter sense in Hebrews and occurs as follows: 3:8,10,12,15; 4:7,12; 8:10; 10:16,22(2); 13:9. NIV “...it judges the thought and attitudes of the heart.”

THE WORD OF GOD INFALIBLE AND OUR ONLY SOURCE OF AUTHORITY



Is the Bible actually the written word of the Creator of all things in the Universe? Is the Bible truly infallible and does it give hope for eternal life? If the answer is YES (and we know that it is), then this must have a motivating influence upon us. If the answer is YES then surely we should give our whole lives to search it out. Reading God’s Word is not like reading a newspaper or a book. Every word has weight, meaning and substance. Do we appreciate the significance of having the Word of God so readily available? Remember that many through history have struggled just to get hold of one page. If “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine”, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (2 Tim 3:16), THEREFORE we should “preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim 4:1-2). A true appreciation of the Word’s infallibility and power must have a life-changing influence upon us.

FOUNDATION CLAUSE OF THE BIRMINGHAM STATEMENT OF FAITH

“That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation (2 Tim 3v16; 1 Cor 2v13; Heb 1v1; 2 Pet 1v21; 1 Cor 14v37; Neh 9v30; John 10v35).”

🔍 Look up the following quotes about the power of God's Word: Psa 119:103-105; Prov 2:1-5; 3:1-6; John 6:63; Acts 20:32; Eph 6:17; 2 Tim 3:15-17; James 1:18-21; 1 Pet 1:23-25.

Hebrews 4

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

The word of God has now become personified with the use of the expression 'his' sight. Since the word is God's word, therefore the word is synonymous with God Himself. The thought obviously goes further than this, because Jesus as the manifestation of his Father was the word made flesh (John 1:14; 2:25). Thus, in keeping with the writer's theme of Christ as a high priest, it is descriptive of his work as the one who is not merely the offering but also the offerer whose role is to carefully inspect the sacrifice. This thought is taken up in the next expressions.

"Naked and opened unto the eyes of him" - The word "naked" means to "lay bare" as with the inspection of a sacrifice. The word "opened" comes from the root meaning "the neck". The word literally means "to bend back the neck of a victim to be slain, to lay bare or expose by bending back". The association with the priest's role of inspecting sacrifices can be clearly seen.

JESUS CHRIST – OUR HIGH PRIEST AND MEDIATOR



"The Bible tells us something which is a great comfort and provides us with a mighty source of blessing. In the first place we are told that Jesus is in heaven and is a high priest for ever. In other words, what the High Priest performed for Israel in his limited way and despite his physical limitations (he, too, was in need of help in respect of sins), Christ fulfils in a greater and a much more effective way for the believer. It is a work not of ritual but of reality. Christ is the believer's access to God and the believer's source of help. Here are the Scriptures on the matter: Hebrews 8:1; 7:26-27; 2:17-18; 4:15-16; 7:25; 9:24; 1 Tim 2:5; Rom 8:34. This is an impressive and comforting array of Scriptures for the believer. Christ, who offered himself for his sins, continues unceasingly to work on his behalf. Christ is the Mediator, the intercessor, the compassionate and understanding high priest, who is able to succour and save. Prayer is the link with God through the intercessor, who is Christ... Christ's priesthood abides unchanged and it abides continually... There is no need to solicit the services of any other person, whether living or dead in order to secure a more sympathetic ear or a more ready access to the Lord Jesus Christ. No one has greater sympathy than Christ himself, and he is ever available as mediator for his beloved servants." (Bro H. Tennant, *The Christadelphians- What they believe and preach*, p.108-109,111)

Hebrews 4

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

"A great high priest" - Not merely a high priest, but a **great** high priest. He is also styled the *great* shepherd in Heb 13:20.

"That is passed into the heavens" - Better rendered "passed through the heavens". This is what makes him *great*, inasmuch as he is the antitype of the Aaronic high priest who, on the Day of Atonement, passed through the veil into the Most Holy Place. There, by a figure, he came into the presence of God who dwelt between the Cherubim, overshadowing the Mercy Seat, above the Ark. Jesus has accomplished this in reality, for he has literally ascended into the heavens where he is seated at the right hand of God.

"Jesus the Son of God" - i.e. as distinct from Jesus (Joshua) the son of Nun (verse 8).

🔍 Jesus was tempted to sin and he could have sinned if he chose to. If failure was therefore **possible**, think of the implications if he had have failed. Think how this made Jesus' struggle so intense and excruciating. Think how he had to rely on prayer to his Father for help. How does this affect the way we feel about Jesus Christ now? See Hebrews 4:15-16.



Hebrews 4

- 15 For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
- 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need

“Touched with the feeling of” - same word as ‘compassion’ in 10:34 and a similar Greek word to ‘compassion’ in 1 Peter 3:8 and ‘suffer with’ Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 12:26. **“Infirmities”** means “to be without strength” and also occurs as ‘infirmity’ in 5:2; 7:28; as ‘weakness’ in 11:34 and the root word occurs as ‘weakness’ in 7:18.

“In all points tempted like as we are” - As the ‘word made flesh’, he was identical to us in that he possessed exactly the same propensities and proneness to sin in his flesh. On the other hand, the thinking of his mind was always a reflection of his Father’s word and hence his emotions and actions were always in accordance with his Father’s will. He was therefore the perfect high priest for he could perfectly represent man to God and perfectly manifest God to man.

“Yet without sin” - This does not mean that he did not have our sin-prone nature (Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21 etc), rather he did not submit to sin, but had the dominion over it at all times.

This is drawing on the symbolism of the Tabernacle with the Altar of Incense standing near to the Most Holy Place and the cloud of incense (typical of prayer) covering the Mercy Seat when the High Priest entered. All this represented what Christ has achieved for his brethren in reality as he intercedes on our behalf with his Father in heaven. The Mercy Seat represents the throne of grace with the Cherubim and the ‘Shekinah Glory’ representing Yahweh Himself. Also see Heb 2:17. Brother Carter concludes:

“In these verses the Apostle has gathered up the principal points in connection with Jesus that he would establish - his greatness, his Sonship, his partaking of the nature of men that he might redeem them, the “rest” of God obtainable through him, his priesthood for which his experiences qualified him. The way is prepared for the principal topic of the letter - the consideration of Jesus as God’s High Priest.”

HEBREWS 5

The Priesthood of Christ superior than Aaron's

This section of the epistle and the following one are in many respects the most important as far as the exposition is concerned. Christ's superiority to Moses and Joshua has been considered, but his priestly role and priestly ministry and his consequent superiority to Aaron, is the most important aspect of the work of Christ since it involves our relationship to God through him and therefore affects us in a very personal way.

The need for a priesthood originated as a consequence of sin, and will continue to exist until such time as sin and death are removed from the earth. In Eden, prior to the transgression, man walked and talked with the Elohim and there was no need for a mediator between them, but sin changed this arrangement. Man had created a barrier between himself and God and there was a need for a process of reconciliation to be developed that once again man might "draw nigh" to God. A new order of things was introduced known as "the foundation of the world" and "the lamb that was slain" (Rev 13:8) typified the Lord Jesus Christ who would enable men to draw nigh to God in truth, not just in shadow. Although there is no specific reference to a priesthood prior to the Flood, in effect, we find Adam assuming this role in the offering of the first sacrifice and then being clothed with the skin of the slain animal (Gen 3:21 cp Lev 7:8). The role of priest from earliest times, therefore, appears to be associated with the head of the family who, in the case of a family so large that it became a tribe or nation, was also a king. Thus the concept of a king-priest was the original pattern set forth in the Bible so that the first time mention is made of a priest, it is a king-priest, viz, Melchizedek (Gen 14:18 cp Heb 5:6,10; 7:1-3 etc).

The very first words that Yahweh spoke to Israel in the Wilderness when he called unto them out of the mountain was an offer that they might be unto Him "a *kingdom of priests*" (Exod 19:5,6). This was because Israel were constituted Yahweh's national firstborn son, intended to reveal His glory to the other nations of the world. This gives support to the fact that in practice, the role of priest was apparently assumed by the firstborn son and this seems to be inferred from the record in the time of Moses when Yahweh chose the tribe of Levi to minister unto him *instead of the firstborn*. Before the Tribe of Levi had been appointed to the service, Exodus 19:21,22,24 speaks of 'priests and people' and Exodus 24:5 speaks of 'young men' who offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. These references together with later events recorded in Exodus 28:1; Numbers 3:11-13; 8:14-18 indicate that the tribe of Levi was selected *instead of the firstborn* thus implying that the role of priest prior to the Levitical Order was vested in the firstborn.

The position of priest in Israel was not given automatically to one simply because he was of the family of Aaron. Restrictions were imposed relating to his family life and physical blemishes, and these had to be complied with before a person was considered fit to be a priest (Lev 21:17-23). All of these things foreshadowed the one and only perfect high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews, the concept of a priest is not merely applied to Christ himself, but is also associated with a priesthood styled a royal priesthood of which Christ is the great high priest. This royal priesthood is significantly styled an "ecclesia of firstborn ones" (12:23) and admission to this great assembly is based upon compliance with moral conditions, of which the physical conditions imposed upon Aaronic priests were but a type.

VERSES 1-10: The twofold qualifications of a Priest

In verses 1 to 4, Paul outlines the qualifications required of any priest to fit him as a mediator between God and man. He must firstly have sympathy with his fellow man, to enable him to represent man in the presence of God, and secondly he must be appointed by God, in order to represent God to man. These qualifications were possessed by Aaron.

In verses 5 to 10 we are shown how Christ possessed all the essential credentials to fit him to be a "merciful and faithful high priest" (2:17). In every respect, however, he was superior to Aaron, and Paul explains this in detail in later chapters.

Hebrews 5

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

NIV “Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins”.

“For every high priest” - The emphasis lies on the word *every*, as it is Paul’s intention to state what are the essential characteristics of any priesthood, whether Aaronic or in the time of the Patriarchs or as applying to Christ.

“Taken from among men” - The important point is that he must firstly be a true representative of mankind in order to be able to identify with us in all our weaknesses and trials and secondly he must be called of God (verse 4). In 5:4 and 7:5 there is a reference back to the word ‘taken’ in this place.

“Ordained for men” - to appoint one to administer an office.

“To offer” - The high priest acts as a mediator or intercessor between man and God inasmuch as he *presents* the gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the offerer.

Hebrews 5

- 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.**
3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

NIV “He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people”.



Aaron – the High Priest

Verses 2 and 3 extend the meaning of the phrase in verse 1 “taken from among men”. This enunciates the first characteristic of priesthood, viz, that the priest must be in sympathy with those he represents. It is obvious that an angel could not adequately perform this role.

“Who can have compassion” - Means literally “to be affected moderately or in due measure; to preserve moderation in respect to anger or grief; hence one who bears gently with the errors, faults and sins of others”.

“On the ignorant” - The word occurs in the Septuagint (LXX) in two significant passages, viz, Lev 4:13 and 5:18. The former relates to the Sin Offering and the latter to the Trespass Offering. These were the two obligatory offerings under the Law, but were only applicable to sins of ignorance, committed unwittingly. The law was merciless against the murderer, adulterer or with presumptuous and high handed transgressors. These offerings acknowledged that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), so that even sins of ignorance or omission are unacceptable in the sight of God. It must always be remembered that these offerings were not penalties or punishments, but a merciful provision on the part of Yahweh to permit the truly repentant offender to be reconciled to Him.

“Them that are out of the way” - means “to go astray or wander; metaphorically, to lead away from the truth, to lead into error”. The word occurs twice in LXX of Isaiah 53:6 where Israel are described as sheep that have gone astray. That chapter is a prophecy of Christ’s role as a Trespass Offering for our iniquities, (v10). Cp also 1 Peter 2:25.

“Compassed with infirmity” - means “want of strength, weakness, infirmity of the body; native weakness and frailty, feebleness of health or sickness”. It also occurs in 4:15; 7:28; 11:34 (weakness). Christ himself experienced this infirmity (4:15) and was described as being crucified “through weakness” (2 Cor 13:4).

“so also for himself, to offer for sins” - Brother Bolton comments,

“Being compassed with infirmity, the high priest of old was bound to offer for sins on his own behalf. Many have stumbled at the application of this portion of the parallel to Jesus, and have contended that it cannot be applied to him. Nevertheless the comparison is made and must be provided for. Later in the epistle it is stated of him that he needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself (Heb 7:27). This he did once for all! There is only one way of giving these words their evident meaning. As one who never transgressed his Father’s commandments, he needed no sacrifice to put away personal sins. How then can application be explained? He was a “whole Burnt Offering” in which the complete consumption of sin’s flesh was declared. Therein it was shown that human nature is not fit for the Kingdom of God. It is “the flesh”, “a body of death”. It has to be put away, and this Jesus did once for all when “he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:26).”

Hebrews 5

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

This verse states the second qualification. Since the priest had to act *toward God* as well as *for men*, he must be approved by God as well as be in sympathy with man. This verse expands the meaning of the word ‘ordained’ in verse 1, just as verses 2 and 3 expand on the phrase ‘taken from among men’ in verse 1.

“Called of God, as was Aaron” - Paul observes that this rule applied in Aaron’s case and his appointment was endorsed by God when Korah, Dathan and Abiram attempted to “take this honour unto themselves” (Num 16).

In verses 5-10 Paul explains how Christ possessed both these qualifications for priesthood, but with differences that show his superiority. In verses 5,6 he demonstrates how Christ was “called of God” to be a priest and in verses 7-9 he speaks of the sufferings of Christ which qualified him “to have compassion on the ignorant”. In verse 10 he reverts back to the theme of being “called of God”.

Hebrews 5

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

“Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee” - This is the second time Paul has referred to this quotation from Psalm 2:7. The previous occurrence was in 1:5 where it was used as the first of seven quotes demonstrating Christ’s superiority to the angels, on the basis that Christ has a future role as king when he is enthroned in Zion. In this place it is the first of two quotations which Paul brings forward to prove that Christ was “called of God” and that the nature of his call made him a superior high priest to Aaron. It has been noted in previous comments that the priesthood was originally vested in the firstborn son in the family thus constituting him both a priest and king.

The Aaronic priesthood was established as a temporary measure during the Mosaic dispensation and one feature of this priesthood was the separation of priesthood from kingship. During this time the kingship was reserved for Yahweh Himself and the priesthood vested in the Levites. Although Yahweh had said, ‘I will take the Levites instead of the firstborn’, in fact, the principle of the priesthood and kingship being vested in the firstborn son had never been over-ridden. Christ as the son of God Himself was therefore ideally qualified for the position of king-priest in his Father’s family. The quotation from Psalm 2:7 directs attention to the Son’s future kingly role, something to which the Aaronic priests could never attain.

Hebrews 5

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

This second quotation is from Psalm 110. Melchizedek is a name meaning “king of righteousness”. He was the king of Salem and priest of the most high God, who met Abram in the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s valley. He brought out bread and wine, blessed Abram, and received tithes from him (Gen 14:18-20). The other places in which Melchizedek is mentioned are Psalm 110:4, where the Messiah is described as a priest forever “after the order of Melchizedek” and Hebrews chapters 5,6,7, where these two passages of the Old Testament are quoted. The use of Psalm 110 in this place is to show that Christ had been called of God (cp v10) thus fulfilling the second of the two necessary qualifications for priesthood.

Hebrews 5

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

“Who in the days of his flesh” - Paul now reverts to the other qualification for priesthood, viz, the ability to show compassion and identify with mankind’s weaknesses and infirmities.

“When he had offered up prayers and supplications” - The word “prayers”, is a general term for any requests whereas “supplications”, literally means ‘an olive branch’ and has the idea of seeking for protection and assistance. The latter word only occurs here.

“With strong crying and tears” - One is reminded of the scene in Gethsemane and later when the Lord hung upon the cross.

“Unto him that was able to save him from death” - It was not so much an escape from dying, but being saved “out of death”. The Father was able (had power) to do such and this the Lord acknowledged in the Garden when he prayed, “Father, all things are possible”, (Mark 14:36).

“Was heard in that he feared” - ‘Feared’ here is not related to terror, but means “a godly fear” as in the only other occurrence of the word, Heb 12:28 where it is translated ‘godly fear’.

Hebrews 5

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

“Though he were a son” - The Judaisers could not accept the idea of a crucified Messiah, but Paul here shows that a suffering saviour was not incompatible with Divine sonship and that it was also one of the features of his life that actually helped him to qualify for being a merciful and faithful high priest.

“And being made perfect” - This word may apply in some instances to maturity of character, but in Christ’s case it involves the perfection of his nature as well. This is obvious, because Christ’s priesthood necessitated his ascension to the Father and this was only possible after his change to immortality.

Hebrews 5

10 Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Having shown that Christ has fully satisfied the conditions qualifying him to be a High Priest, Paul now reverts to the Divine decree of his priesthood in Psalm 110:4. This concludes his exposition of Christ's qualifications as High Priest. The next step in the argument will be to show that Christ's priesthood, being a royal priesthood, "after the order of Melchizedek", must of necessity be superior to Aaron's. In order to do this, Paul needs to show what were the special characteristics of Melchizedek's priesthood and in what respects it was superior to Aaron's. Before he can do this, he finds it necessary to rebuke his readers for their lack of spiritual maturity and their inability to understand such matters as this. His appeal to "go on unto maturity" is recorded in 5:11 to 6:20, after which, he resumes his consideration of the Melchizedek priesthood in chapter 7.

VERSES 11-14: Rebuke for dullness of understanding

Hebrews 5

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

"hard to be uttered" - It was not that Paul had any personal difficulty in explaining the position of Christ in his capacity as "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek", but he defines the reason clearly -

"ye are dull of hearing" - "Ye are become dull of hearing" (RV), implying that they had not always been so. NIV: "We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn". Diaglott: "you have become sluggish hearers."

"for the time" - Diaglott: *by this time*; they had, in other words, been in the Truth long enough to have reached the stage when they themselves should be teachers of the Word, rather than being still in need of instruction.

"ye ought to be teachers" - means instructors; Paul uses it of himself in I Tim.2:7. Isaiah uses similar terminology when he denounces the people of Judah in his day in Isa.6:9-10, and Paul's readers were in danger of falling into the same condemnation.

"the first principles" - any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole, take their rise. It was used of the letters of the Greek alphabet: here it describes the elementary principles, or "ABC", of the O.T. revelation of God.

"oracles of God" - brief utterance, a divine oracle (doubtless because oracles were generally brief);

"have need of milk" - used of milk literally in I Cor.9:7: here used as a metaphor for basic spiritual teaching; see also I Cor.3:2; I Pet.2:2. All must initially "desire the sincere milk of the word", but always with the intention that they may "grow thereby".

"not of strong meat" - "Meat" is used as a metaphor here to indicate the deeper subjects of the faith than that of elementary instruction. NIV says: "In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again".

Hebrews 5

13 For every one that useth milk is unskillfull in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

"every one that useth milk" - Used metaphorically here of receiving elementary spiritual teaching.

"word of righteousness" - this term is equated with the "oracles of God" of the previous verse. 'Righteousness' is the character or quality of being right or just. The oracles of God bore

testimony to the doctrine of justification by faith (Rom.3:21), and the Jewish minds, steeped in the ritualistic observances of the Law, were particularly unskilful (or ignorant) in this aspect of Divine truth.

“he is a babe” - this describes figuratively one who is childish, untaught or unskilled.

Hebrews 5

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.


Paul now contrasts babes, or those not of age, with spiritual adults. The **“reason of use”** is a habitual daily reading of the Word is that which exercises the senses.

“their senses exercised” - faculty of the mind for perceiving, understanding, judging. “Exercised” – In the Greek this is *gumnazo*, ie, to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind. This same exercise of the senses in the word of righteousness causes us to view all things in life from God’s standpoint, and Paul uses this same word concerning our reaction to the chastening of Yahweh (Heb.12:11).

There is no shame attached to **beginning** as a “babe” in the Word of righteousness, but there must be growth by habitual, daily application to the Scriptures so that maturity is developed and with it, a deep sensitivity to Divine ideas and an awareness of the character of God which will enable one to know how to “refuse the evil and choose the good” in all the circumstances of life.

Bro. Carter writes:

“There are some general lessons which we Gentiles would be unwise to miss. Growth is expected of all in Christ. Our growth can be tested in one way by our ability to teach others, not necessarily in public discourse or in printed word, but as seen in a readiness to give to everyone that asketh a reason for the hope that we hold. It is as much a matter of reproach with us as with those Hebrews, when with the passing years there is not growth in understanding. More than this, it is a matter of peril; for there is no standing still, and if there is not progress made, the little which had been gained will be lost. Instead of ears becoming more sensitive to the message, they will become dull; the eyes will fail to see, and the heart to understand. This is the law of life.”

 **What are some ways in which God’s Word influences our discernment of good and evil? Consider Luke 4:1-12 and think how this principle was relevant for the Lord Jesus Christ.**

HEBREWS 6

VERSES 1-3 - Exhortation to progress from First Principles

Hebrews 6

1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

NIV: “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,”

On the basis of Paul’s exhortation in the previous verses, he now seeks to motivate his readers to progress from milk to meat. They, on the contrary, sought to return to the rudimentary elements of Judaism, having never progressed beyond the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

“not laying again the foundation” - The following doctrines are intended to illustrate the first principle teachings that will not be taken up in this epistle. There was nothing wrong with these doctrines in themselves, but neither teachers nor learners should occupy their time with laying a foundation over and over again. There is an indication both in this epistle and in other New Testament letters, that Jewish converts, in particular, had a tendency to rest satisfied with this level of knowledge. Because there is a real connection between learning and practice, the connection between spiritual immaturity and the danger of apostasy is also very real.

“repentance from dead works” – a change of mind, generally used of repentance from sin or evil. See also Acts 5:31; 20:21. The ‘dead works’ are the works of the Law (cp Rom 7:5,13): Diaglott calls them *“works causing death”*. There should have been no need for the Apostle to lay down once more the basis upon which they should turn from the dead works of law which were powerless to give life. See also Chapter 9:14.

 **Why is repentance so important? How does repentance actually help us?**

“faith toward God” - this was the great obstacle for the Jewish believer - FAITH as opposed to WORKS of law - and it had been the substance of much that Paul had to say to the believers in Rome: see Rom.3:24-28. The Jew could not truly display “faith toward God” unless he forsook his confidence in the ritualistic works of law.

Hebrews 6

- 2 **Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**
- 3 **And this will we do, if God permit.**

“doctrine of baptisms” - Same word is used of believers’ baptism in Col.2:12. One writer has said:

“Why baptisms in the plural?...Paul was writing to Hebrew Christians, to whom the idea and practice of baptism was not new; and who, in learning the doctrine of Christian baptism, had to be taught wherein it differed from the merely representative or ceremonial character of the baptism they had been accustomed to... Thus to teach Jews the meaning of Christian baptism fully, a discussion of more than one baptism was needed. Paul had in his own case to explain the essential distinction between Christian baptism and that of John the Baptist (see Acts 19:2-5)”.

“of laying on of hands” - Used of the laying on of hands for the imparting of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17) or for the appointment of individuals to a particular or special service in the Ecclesia (I Tim.5:22; Acts 6:6; 13:3).

“The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment” - Paul has traversed the stages of the Jewish convert’s development from a repentance based upon faith toward God that leads to baptism and the laying on of hands to the culmination of the hope, viz, a resurrection from the dead and the day of judgment. Paul’s concern is that a continual restating of these fundamental matters is like living on a diet of milk. If there is a dullness in hearing (5:11) and a lack of desire to continue the learning process (likened to a strong meat diet) then there will be no development in an understanding of the principles of righteousness (5:13) which alone can lead to salvation.

VERSES 4-6: Warning against falling away

Hebrews 6

- 4 **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,**
- 5 **And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,**

“enlightened” - to shed rays, shine or brighten: see 2 Tim.1:9,10 - “...hath brought life and immortality to LIGHT through the gospel”.

“the heavenly gift” - Always used in the New Testament of a spiritual or supernatural gift: for example - Rom.5:15 gift by grace; Rom.5:17 gift of righteousness; II Cor.9:15 God’s unspeakable gift; Eph.3:7 gift of the grace of God; 4:7 gift of Christ. The “heavenly gift” was the Lord Jesus Christ through whom Yahweh had provided forgiveness and salvation - John 4:10.

“powers of the world to come” – Gr. *dunamis* ie. force, by implication, miraculous power. “World” = the age. Having once experienced that enlightenment which brings “repentance from dead words and faith toward God”, been baptised and tasted the heavenly gift of forgiveness, been recipients of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands, and tasted, through the good word of God, the resurrection and judgment of the age to come (verses 1 and 2), it was indeed a grievous matter if such were to fall away and return to seek life through the Law. Such Hebrew Christians were applying the legalistic rituals of the Law to life in Christ: They mistook the shadow for the substance.

HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS



Possession of the Holy Spirit never guaranteed the believer salvation. The Holy Spirit gifts were given for a special purpose. The following comments are by Bro Harry Tennant: "By this means members of each congregation or ecclesia were equipped with gifts to help them exercise functions for the instruction, correction, exhortation and public witness of the group. No one had all of the gifts and the gifted members were therefore made dependent on one another for the total work. None of the gifts provided for one member to pass on gifts to other members. Only the apostles were able to do this (see Acts 8:17-18). We do not know precisely when the bestowal and operation of the gifts ceased to happen. That they would so cease is provided for in the words of the Spirit by Paul - 1 Cor 13:8. Moreover, the cessation of these gifts is coupled with the survival of three principle virtues: "But now abideth faith, hope and love, these three" (1 Cor 13:13). Faith and hope will give place to reality and fulfilment at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the gifts were to cease before the return of Jesus because their cessation would leave faith and hope still unfulfilled." (*The Christadelphians— What they believe and preach*, p.126-127)

The Word of God – Our guide book for today

The Bible is a book filled with guidance. Most of the questions of daily life are already fully answered within the pages of the Bible which is meant to be *"a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (**Psalm 119v105**). The book of Proverbs declares: *"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life"* (**Prov 6v23**). Prayerful and regular Bible reading ensures that our feet are shown the path in which we should walk. **The Bible is the Holy Spirit's book of guidance.**

The disciple is assured that *"all things work together for good, to them that love God"* (**Romans 8v28**). The lives of true believers are in the Lord's hands, and we are to seek Him constantly in prayer for His blessings on our journey through life. He has not promised to reveal to us openly what we should do. Provided that we are following the instruction of the Word of God and prayerfully seek the Lord's blessing and help in fulfilling His commands, we know that His oversight will ensure that life's path will lead us in the steps of the Master, and bring us safely, if we continue in faith, to everlasting life at the return of Christ.

Choice is one of the key functions of the life of a disciple. He must constantly decide between the alternatives which present themselves in everyday living. His decisions should be based on the word of the Bible. It is not a Scripturally acceptable method to shrink from making spiritual choices by handing everything over to the Lord or by asking God for answers. Revelation in this way is not promised in the Bible. We are expected to exercise our minds on the problems of life in the light of Bible teaching and in prayerful submission to God. The Bible abounds in clear teaching which urges the believer to make the right choice based upon the principles set out in Scripture. For example:

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life." (**Deut 30v19**)

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (**Josh 24v15**)see also **Psalm 25v8-12**

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (**2 Tim 3v16-17**)

The Bible - Divine Instructor

The Word of God is the divine instructor of the mind and provides us with ample guidance on the everyday affairs of life. Therein is set forth clear teaching on the choices to be made in almost every aspect of Christian living. We neglect it at our peril. Moreover the Word of God is food for the mind and strengthens us in making the Christlike choice. If we humbly accept the teaching of the Word and resolve to follow it, we can rightly seek the blessing of God in prayer. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. When our choice is difficult to resolve even with the Bible in hand and on the heart, our course is to commit our way to the Lord in prayer and, without expecting direct revelation from Him, proceed to do in faith that which we believe to be wise before Him.

These simple guidelines are sufficient for the needs of life. Paul gave detailed tuition to disciples in his own time, many of whom had Spirit gifts, and concluded by saying: *"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."* (**Acts 20v32**).

Bro Harry Tennant - *The Christadelphians - What they believe and preach* (pages 129-131)

Hebrews 6

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

“If they shall fall away” - meaning to fall away from the faith. Diaglot: “having fallen away...”.

“put him to an open shame” - meaning to show alongside, i.e. expose to infamy, such as making a public example of a criminal.

The apostasy of which Paul speaks is the return to Judaism. To the Jew, the risen and glorified Christ was still the crucified malefactor from Nazareth, and no more. Therefore, a return to Judaism was exactly what Paul describes - a crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh: that is, a resumption of the Jewish way of regarding him. Note the words “to themselves”, which make the meaning obvious - namely, that by returning to Judaism, a man declared that, TO HIM, Christ should henceforward be no more than he was to those who reviled him on the cross. It was, indeed, impossible to bring repentance to such again because of their rejection of the ONLY way of forgiveness and salvation. Bro. Carter makes the following comment:

“Failure to go on and see in Jesus the antitype of the ceremonies of the law, the antitype of the animals upon whose heads hands were laid before they were slain, and of the cleansing washings; the one who had been raised from the dead as the Resurrection and the Life - the judge of all; failure to do this meant that they joined hands with all those who had put Jesus to death... They had heard and understood the message proclaimed; they had witnessed, and in many cases experienced the possession of the power given by God through His spirit for the attesting of the truth of the message. Nothing more could be done, and wilfully to leave that was to leave the God-provided way of forgiveness, and thus it was ‘impossible to renew them to repentance’. Their own act, under those circumstances, made it so”.

Paul now takes an analogy from nature showing that even in the natural course of things, the cultivated earth, watered by heaven and bringing forth abundantly, is blessed by God: whereas that yielding thorns and thistles is fit only to be burned.

NOTES

Overview study

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Hebrews 6

Peril of Apostasy (v4-8)

Failure to go on and see in Jesus the antitype of the ceremonies of the law, the antitype of the animals upon whose heads were laid before they were slain, and of the cleansing washings; the one who had been raised from the dead as the Resurrection and the Life – the judge of all; failure to do this meant that they joined hands with all those who had put Jesus to death. Their decision would be an endorsement of the action of those who crucified Jesus. In effect they would say that he was an impostor, and that all the claims made in connection with him, that he was saviour, judge and king, were false.

Such a turning back was a falling away from the only way of salvation. In some of the most solemn words in the whole of the Scriptures the apostle says: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame".

They had heard and understood the message proclaimed; they had witnessed, and in many cases experienced the possession of the power given by God through His spirit for the attesting of the truth of the message. Nothing more could be done, and willfully to leave that was to leave the God-provided way of forgiveness, and thus it was "impossible to renew them to repentance". Their own act, under those circumstances, made it so.

An analogy to this is found in nature. Tilled land which drinks in the fertilising rain of heaven, and then produces things serviceable for him for whom it is cultivated, is blessed. But if the produce by thorns and thistles, it is burned up (v7,8). The figure is frequently used. "Ye are God's field" said Paul to the Corinthians; and in the ecclesial field were varied growths, some fruitful and of service to the owner of the field, but others were like thorns and briars. Israel were God's vine, but proved largely unfruitful. The history of the ground is a parallel as well as an analogy to the story of man. Fruitful at first when the garden of Eden was planted, then cursed when sin entered the world, but at last to be healed and again produce abundantly; "and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isa 55:13).

Encouragement (vv9-12)

Dark as is the picture just painted, Paul is not in despair for them. He expressed his conviction that "the better things" – the fruitful state – "which accompany salvation" would prove true of them. As God blessed the fruitful field, He would also bless them. But they must individually – "every one of you" – show diligence, and imitate them who inherit the promises. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (v10-12).

In these verses we meet "the triad of graces" characteristic of Paul's writings: "labour of love"; "assurance of hope"; "through faith".

The Hope is Well Founded (vv13-20)

There are promises and there must be patience. The promises are sure, for God confirmed them with an oath. Abraham, the friend of God, and their ancestor, was the recipient of promises involving all for which they hoped. Since God could not swear by a greater, He swore by Himself. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord,... in blessing I will bless thee... thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen 22:16-18). It was after Abraham had patiently endured, even to being ready to offer up his son, that he received the promise. So must they endure.

The graciousness of God is seen in this matter. When men confirm by oath, it ends gainsaying. God is even more willing than men to show the certainty of His purpose; wherefore He confirmed His promise by oath. Faith thus rests upon 2 immutable things, God's promise and oath, bringing every encouragement. "God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (v17-18).

The "refuge" finds its illustration in the cities of refuge, to which the manslayer fled. There the pursued found safety, and escaped the avenger. The Hebrews likewise had sought refuge in God's asylum in Christ, taking hold of the hope connected therewith.

This hope is described as "sure and firm" and as "entering within the veil"; and is compared to an anchor of the life. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec" (v19,20). The anchor suggests the further figure. In times of storm and stress, a small boat, or sometimes a man, would put off from a ship, and enter the harbour carrying a line which was made fast to an anchor within the harbour, and the ship was thus pulled to safety. The small boat was the forerunner.

But at once the figure comes back to the Scripture parable of the priest, and the day of Atonement. The high priest entered in beyond the veil to the presence of God; so Jesus has entered as High Priest to the Father's presence. "Within the veil" is the immortal state, and fullness of joy in the friendship and fellowship of God. Jesus has passed within the veil and has entered "into heaven itself". But the state represented by the Holiest of All is not dependent upon ascent to heaven. It is not a matter of place, but of physical nature and spiritual relationship to the Father.

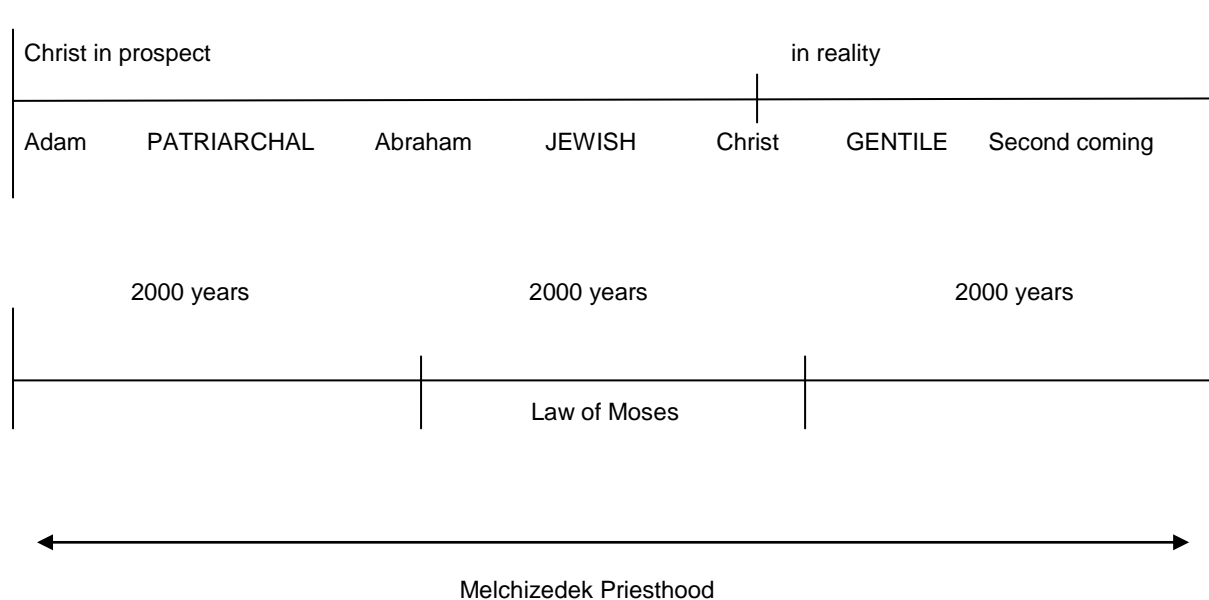
What a difference between the Aaronic High Priest and Jesus is suggested by the word "forerunner". Jesus has entered as "forerunner", that others may follow. But Aaron and his successors in the ministry of the tabernacle entered the Most Holy alone, and none could follow. While the type pointed to an opening of the way, it also indicated that it was not the means of opening it, since others did not gain access by it.

In concluding this digression on the note of the Melchisedekian priesthood, the writer has brought us back to his starting point, and is ready to go straight forward in his consideration of Jesus as high priest.

Overview study

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Hebrews 7 – 9



The above “big picture” will help our understanding of the chapters 7,8, and 9 of Hebrews. The break up of history from creation to now can be made into 3 periods of approximately 2000 years each. Note especially the relatively short time of the Law of Moses compared to the Melchizedek priesthood.

Christ's priesthood

Even though Hebrews was primarily written for Jewish believers in the first century, the principles on which God operates never change. Christ was there, in prospect, for all the faithful in the first 4000 years.

Now look at this wonderful verse and ponder it: 7v25 (Diaglott) “He is able to save completely those drawing near to God through him (Jesus), always living to interpose on their behalf.”

Now **8v1** (Diaglott) “The chief thing however, among those we are discussing is that we have such a High-priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” The priesthood changed and so must the Law of necessity. For the Jewish believers, Christ had now come in reality – faith had become sight – so why would these believers want to go back to a Law that operated under Aaron and his descendants? This was greatly inferior to the priesthood of Christ – a great contrast. Abraham “rejoiced” to see Christ’s day – he saw it (by faith in prospect) and was “glad” said Jesus. And the Hebrews should have seen this way – and we should be “glad” as well.

Now Jesus is associated with the patriarch Melchizedek, not with Aaron- of some great importance as Melchizedek’s name is mentioned 9 times in Hebrews, but the only other places are in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. We need to go back to these roots to help us understand chapters 7-9. The Hebrews of course would have known of Melchizedek from their own history.

Genesis 14 tells us that Melchizedek lived at the same time as Abraham – well before Israel as a nation and the Law of Moses.

God dealt with individuals (as He always has) but within family groups. Later of course, Abraham's descendants became a nation and so the method of God's operation changed (as with Israel at Mt Sinai receiving the Law) but Gods principles do not alter.

Read Genesis 14v1-16.

Melchizedek was the priest of God in Jerusalem. There would have been other individuals/family groups then also, having descended from Noah (Job is another example around that time). Though Melchizedek was a godly man, God chose Abraham as the founder of the nation, through whom Christ would come.

It is interesting to note that Genesis does not record any information about Melchizedek's parents (that he must have had) nor children (but may have had). This is telling us in effect that Melchizedek's position was not by heredity. He was a priest in his own right – his godly character merited that position.

Note also that Melchizedek blessed Abram and that Abram gave him one tenth of his possessions. Hence Melchizedek was greater (in position) than Abram- prefiguring Christ of course.

Importantly, Abram makes a decision at this time as to his direction in life to not go the way of the King of Salem but rather the godly way of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek had a special meal with Abram. Melchizedek (note) brought bread and wine – and what would you think they talked about? The weather and mundane things? They knew the significance of bread and wine – these things were pointing to the Christ to come, who would be their saviour of the seed of Abraham and in the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek.

Genesis says that Melchizedek was King of Salem (Jerusalem). Hebrews 7v2 comments that Melchizedek's name means "King of Righteousness" and after that King of Salem (peace). In so far as this points to Jesus, He would only be King of Jerusalem in the coming Kingdom if he was King of Righteousness first i.e Jesus wonderful character and his sinlessness was a prerequisite for him being the coming King.

The importance of all this is highlighted in Genesis 15v1: "after these things" i.e after what happened in chapter 14, God showed Abraham the innumerable stars of heaven and said "so shall thy seed be." We can be part of this seed and therefore the blessing. Do we believe this? Do we put it into practice? Look at the all-important Gen 15v6, "And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD and he counted it to him for righteousness." We can't be sinless as such but we can be faithful and God is saying that if we believe in His plan of salvation and practise its principles, God will consider us as righteous, though we fail at times. We are covered by Jesus' white coat of righteousness and our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake of we associate ourselves with Christ personally. Christ achieved the victory, and we link into Him.

Now that is the principle upon which God has always worked even in Adam and Eve's case when the animal was slain and God made them coats of skin to cover themselves – so prefiguring the work of Christ. Jesus of course was not yet born but in the Patriarchal period worthies of old were considered as righteous by God because of Jesus' work in prospect. In other words, this principle of being saved by faith in God's plan of salvation has existed for all time and the Melchizedek priesthood overarches from Adam until now. (Compare that with the Law of Moses – "the law is not of faith" Gal 3v12) The overriding Melchizedek priesthood was superior to this and for all time. Though Jesus did not pre-exist before his birth, he was in God's plan from the beginning. Surely Melchizedek and Abraham discussed this when they had that special meal of bread and wine together! Moreover, this was 400 years before the Law of Moses. Abraham did not live under the priesthood of Aaron, but he did so under the Melchizedek priesthood.

Further examples: Remember when Moses and Aaron struck the rock and said "hear now you rebels, must we bring forth water?" How could the Law of Moses assist these two leaders of Israel when their Mediator, Moses and the High Priest, Aaron failed? Answer: the priesthood of Melchizedek was always there as a "safety net" for all time – same with King David when he failed as an adulterer and murderer. The Law of Moses condemned him to death but God forgave him because the order of Melchizedek was higher and was the greater priesthood. David repented and he too knew of this order, as demonstrated in Psalm 110v4 (also look up 2 Sam 6v19).

God has sworn and will not change His mind, that the greater Son of David, Jesus, would be High Priest of the order of Melchizedek. David and Jesus were of the tribe of Judah, not Levi and Hebrews picks this point up in Hebrews 7v14. The High Priests in Israel were by heredity from the tribe of Levi, but not so with Jesus. Note the passages where Melchizedek is mentioned: Hebrews 5v6,10,6v20, 7v1,17,21 – he must be important.

Chapter 7

When we come to chapter 7 it is easier to see the outline if we bracket 7v2"...first being by interpretation..." v3 "made like unto the Son of God." The rather perplexing statements at first glance of v3 are explained by our consideration of Genesis 14. Jesus, like Melchizedek is in his own right a priest – they were both by God's appointment, not by heredity. They were chosen by God as individuals for their Godly character. Jesus was the greatest priest in the order because he was the Son of God and he was righteous and Melchizedek and Abraham no doubt understood that in advance of Jesus' time.

The Apostle is demonstrating that the priesthood of Messiah is of a superior order to that of Aaron. Aaron (and Levi) were only sons of Abraham and had not even been born when Abraham met with Melchizedek.

Verse 12 – key verse

Now, the Hebrew Christians accepted Jesus as their High Priest but wanted to go back to the Law of Moses as well. The law depended upon the priesthood. This was impossible because if the priesthood is changed so must the law (v12). This is the focal point of the apostles argument in the whole of Hebrews. The Law of Moses only existed for a certain period and it pointed forward to Jesus. It was only a shadow arrangement. Now a shadow is only a 2D grayish image of the reality (compared with 3D, real and coloured). There was a resemblance there but not the real thing. And consider this: for a shadow to be cast you must have the actual object there already in place, and this was Christ, who existed in God's mind and plan in the beginning. Jesus did not fit in with the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses fitted in with him.

The Law of Moses could not save from death itself. It only functioned for a period of time to direct them to Christ who would eventually arise out of their nation.

Aaron could only be available 16 hours a day and eventually died and could not always understand the plight of other people (eg. Eli's misunderstanding of Samuel's mother). But Christ lives forever (7v16), never goes to sleep, and understands us, as he too was Son of Man. As a result of this see verses 24-25:

Hebrews 7

24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Chapter 8

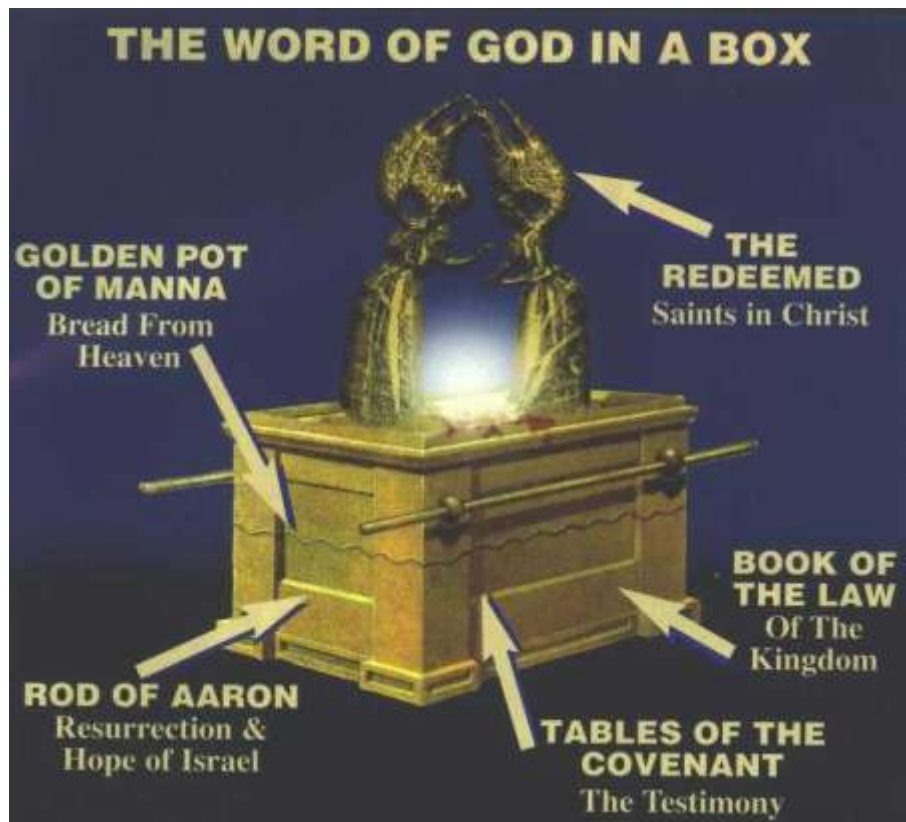
Chapter 8 then says, "this is the sum", or the material point, for all who read the book of Hebrews, including us non-Jews, and he exclaims "WE HAVE SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST" – wouldn't we be utterly foolish then to avoid his services as a mediator when we sin and as a help every day of our lives. Who else do we need?

8v5 We know that the tabernacle existed to show men the way to God – but this was built by men according to the pattern shown to Moses. The pattern of course is Christ himself, who was in God's plan. However valuable were the materials used in its construction, in the end result they were simply lifeless matter and the High Priest could only enter the Most Holy once a year. The Jews should really have understood this. Trouble was, human nature likes to see with the natural eye and not the eye of faith.

The Apostle quotes Jeremiah 31v31 in verses 8-13 where the "new covenant" is mentioned – in advance of Christ's birth.

This New Covenant is unlike the old (under Moses). The pre-eminent difference between Old and New Covenants is 8v12 “their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” The Old could not do this, but the New can, under Christ. And as the “wages of sin is death”, when sins are forgiven, our greatest enemy, death, can be overcome. Moses’ Law simply pointed forward to God’s Son who would achieve this.

So you see it is very important to see the big picture i.e. Christ and God’s salvation in Him existed from the beginning unlike the Law of Moses which ceased at Christ’s death.



“the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat...” Heb 9:4-5
(picture from Bible Magazine, Spring 2002)

Chapter 9

For further explanation of the argument so far, read 9v14. The “eternal spirit” tells us of the wonderful character of God. It is an age-abiding spirit (spirit meaning character or attitude). Jesus demonstrated in his life the same eternal character as that of His Heavenly Father.

To quote Bro John Carter’s explanation: “Spirit refers to moral character. “Eternal” because it was of that perfect quality which was of abiding worth and which qualifies for permanent existence.” Any personal meeting with Christ affects our innermost conscience and constrains us to leave off ways of unholiness and to serve the living God (not worthless, lifeless idols). This is the anti-type, the real 3D subject of which the blood of bulls and goats is only a type (2D, shadow) (v13). The reality is also the antitype. They type is only a shadow and is but an approximate image only. (The type is always inferior to the antitype.)

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves (the type) but by his own blood (the antitype) he entered in once into the Holy Place.” Jesus was righteous and he gave his life in God’s service. In his lifetime he daily sacrificed any will of his own that he may otherwise have followed and negated that bias to serve his Father totally, with His whole heart and mind. And so God raised him for the dead because he didn’t deserve to remain so. In sacrificing his life, he voluntarily allowed the Romans to put him to death for he knew that when his life was over then he would no more be tempted to depart from what was right – see Romans 6v7... “he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Remember that blood represents life (not death). Blood shed therefore represents life given. Jesus' sacrifice was not only confined to his voluntary death, it was the culmination of his whole life given in God's service. He always did His Father's will and never His own will, and so: "he poured out his soul (life) unto death" Isa 53v12.

So Paul comments on 9v22. Type – this was under the Law of Moses note. The antitype (Jesus sacrifice) is in v23 "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

Under the Old Covenant – shedding of blood was the type (shadow). Under the New Covenant – giving of life was the anti-type (reality). Jesus did not fit in with the Law (Old Covenant). Nor was the comment in v22 ("without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins") some arbitrary law that God decided on in Eden without any connection with Christ to come. This is a commentary on the Law of Moses as the context shows.

What God wanted from Adam and Eve was obedience, a life dedicated to God, but where they failed, Jesus overcame, and so the sacrifice of an animal prefigured what Jesus would do, for he was already in God's mind before Adam's sin (John 1v1 and 1 John v1).

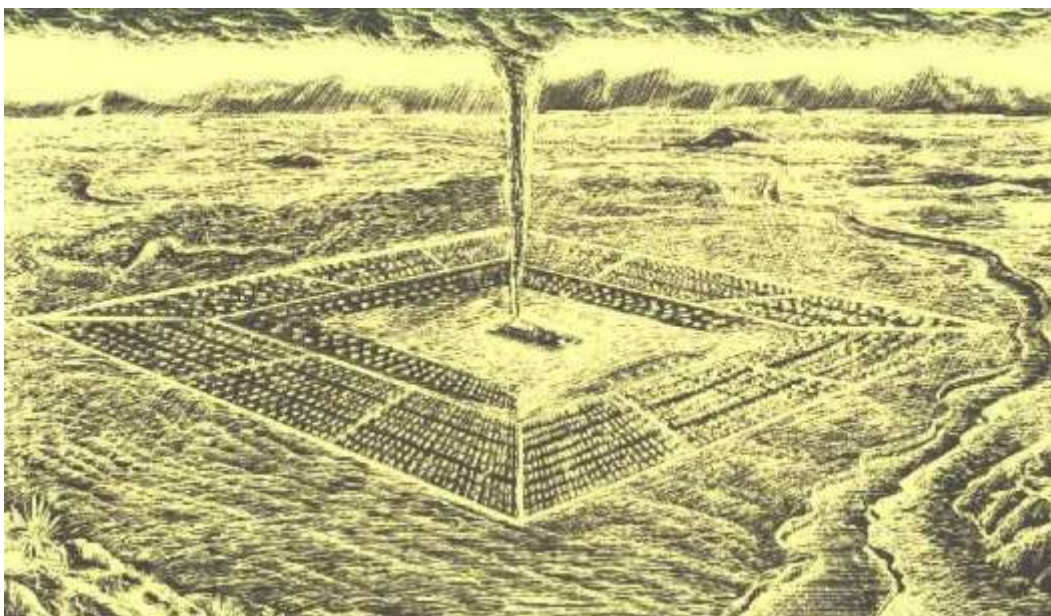
A question to all chairmen: At the memorial table, why would we quote "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (type) when the anti-type (Christ giving his life) is the reality in our remembrance?

As a result of his victory over sin and his conquering of death (by resurrection), he now is in the Most Holy (heaven itself – anti-type!) and he appears "in the presence of God for us". He is not against us. God achieved this in the real living Christ so that earnest sons and daughters of His can live forever.

v26: "Sacrifice of himself" i.e. the whole man, his whole life. The eternal spirit (character) was demonstrated in his life. (If it simply was his physical body that he sacrificed, this would be akin to a pagan human sacrifice). "To obey is better than to sacrifice and to hearken to that the fat of rams." "I will have mercy and not sacrifice". "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire" also see Psalm 51v16-17 – "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit..."

So, in his total overcoming of sin and offering his life to God under the test of an extreme and voluntary death, he is able to "bear the sins of many" as our representative...Then we are saved from eternal death by his resurrection – "saved by his life" (Romans 5). God (v10) has achieved this great work in His Son and God's honour and righteousness is upheld (Rom 5v25). We link into this by our belief, baptism and a faithful life toward God.

And "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." When Jesus returns he will then be immortal – unable to be tempted this time and unable to be persecuted to death. He will then give his faithful followers eternal life.



The tabernacle (from Hebrews notes by Bro John Martin)

Overview study

FULFILLMENT OF SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Hebrews 10

Up to this point in the Epistle, Paul has demonstrated by a series of contrasts that the greatest revelation of God's glory has now been seen in His son. The son is greater than:-

- the prophets through whom God spoke in previous times,
- the angels by whom the Law was delivered to Moses,
- Moses to whom the Law was given,
- Aaron the High Priest who ministered the Law.

As a result, he concluded that Christ's priestly ministry is greater than Aaron's, for it is able to bring man into the actual presence of God through the one seated at God's right hand. This one is the True Priest, Tabernacle, Mediator and Offering.

Paul summarises all these thoughts in 10:1-18 which completes the expository portion of his epistle before going on to the practical lessons to be derived from his exposition and which brings the epistle to a conclusion in 10:19 - 13:25.

In **verses 1-10** Paul recapitulates that **CHRIST'S ONE OFFERING** is better than the shed blood of animals and therefore leaves no place for those continuous sacrifices which were only a shadow and could not affect the conscience.

In **verses 11-14** he recapitulates that **CHRIST'S PRIESTLY MINISTRY** is better than the Aaronic, therefore there is no place left for a priesthood based on Tabernacle or Temple services.

In **verses 15-18** he recapitulates that **CHRIST'S SACRIFICE** actually effects remission of sins and **CHRIST'S PRIESTLY MINISTRY** brings man into the actual presence of God. His work is therefore identified with the **NEW COVENANT** which supersedes everything associated with the Old Covenant and which alone is able to effect a resurrection from the dead to everlasting life.

Bro John Knowles

Up until Hebrews 10:19 the epistle has been predominantly doctrinal in its message. However, from verse 19 onwards we have the more practical issues emphasised. Verse 19 marks a change in the epistle – "Having therefore, brethren, boldness (ie. Confidence) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus..." Having delivered the much necessary 'negative' exhortations, the time has now come to be more positive. The positive message could only be appreciated by first taking heed to the warnings.

In **verses 19-25** we have 6 verses which are part of a whole sentence. Those verses show how that faith, hope and love – the principles of the gospel message – can motivate us to a holiness of life which the law could never compel men to do. What gives us this confidence? It is the things just outlined in earlier chapters. It is the superiority of our high priest who never dies (unlike the priest in the temple), whose covenant is totally superior because it involves the forgiveness of our sins once and for all. There is confidence that we can have in drawing near to our God who has presented Himself now in His Son. Verses 19-25 are an appeal to draw near to God.

The Hebrews were no longer in outer court, with their sacrifice awaiting the priest to come, with a double barrier between them and God. Now they are standing in the Holy Place, where they could never have gone under the law. The veil has also been removed, that is to say his flesh (Heb 10:20). They are now looking upon the blood sprinkled mercy seat, sprinkled now with the blood of the one offering which could now bring them into the presence of God. They can see their High Priest at work, bringing their prayers from the incense altar into the presence of God. No wonder

they can have confidence with a system like that! A new and living way! We now have hope! Hope is the personal involvement that comes from our faith. Love should be the natural result.

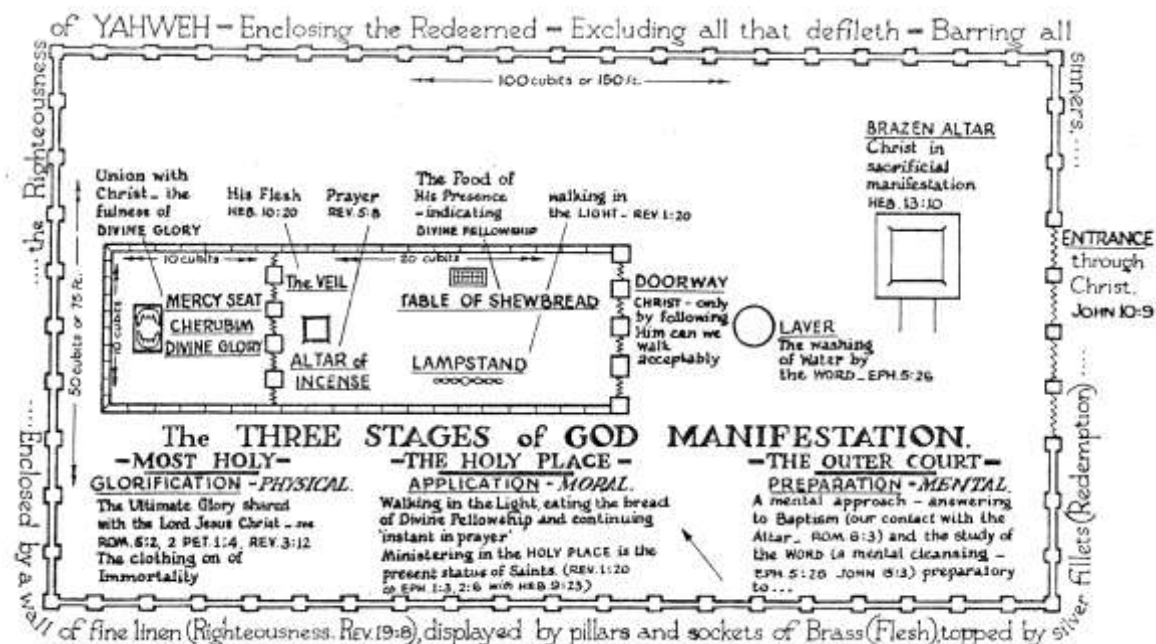
There were those who were forsaking the assembling of themselves together (**Heb 10:25**). Some were isolating themselves from the ecclesia. There is a mentality today also which says "What can I get out of my ecclesia?" That's not the right spirit. We should be saying, "What can I give for my ecclesia?" That should be our response to the love Christ has shown for us. And so much more as we see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:26-27 speak of those who are "in Christ" who then turn against the Truth, to go back to the synagogue system. There were believers who were baptised into Christ who then rejected the true gospel and turned away from forgiveness of their sins. **Verses 28-31** speak of the judgement that would come upon those who leave the truth for apostasy. For the Hebrews, the judgement of AD70 was coming. Why would they want to associate themselves with the Jewish priesthood, the very ones who crucified Messiah, right at the point of that system's judgement in AD70? How could we associate ourselves with the apostasy today as the judgement of Armageddon approaches? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

In **verses 32-39** we now have a section which is an appeal for patient endurance and faith. The apostle calls them to think back upon their earlier history. Over 30 years earlier these brethren and sisters in their first flush of enthusiasm for the Truth, had proved capable of enduring trials. They had a very clear vision of where they were going and the hope set before them. Paul now reminds them of that. He pleads with them to recapture that vision. They were now unable to look beyond the immediate problems and the material aspects of life. Until they did look beyond these things they would not summon up the resolve to adhere to the Lord Jesus Christ in the approaching crisis. We too can become like that. We can become focussed on the immediate things of this life, to the neglect of those things that are just around the corner – the really tangible things.

Would they be persecuted to death by their fellow Jews? What they didn't know, was that just around the corner the armies of Rome were going to come, and the faithful were going to be given a way out – a way that would involve them leaving everything behind where they were now. All those things would have no meaning when the brethren fled to Pella.

It is the same for us today. We also could be grasping at present comforts and luxuries now, just as the Lord Jesus Christ is knocking at the door, to take us away in a time when all these material things will have no meaning. That is the lesson for us.



The tabernacle was "a figure for the time then present..." (Heb 9v9) Diagram taken from notes by Bro John Knowles

NOTES

Study 4

WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD

Hebrews 10:32 – 11:22

Background and Introduction

For an important introduction and background to this section, read the Chapter 10 overview notes on the previous pages.

VERSES 32-39: Encouragement to continue in Faith

Hebrews 10

- 32 But call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.
- 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

“call to remembrance the former days” – Paul takes their minds back over the last thirty years, they had proved themselves capable of endurance under trial.

“ye endured a great fight of afflictions” – they need to recapture that vision of faith that helped them through. RSV *“A hard struggle with sufferings.”* Examples of these persecutions are found in Acts 8:1, 12:1-5.

There were 2 ways they had endured:

1. things done to themselves, and
2. sharing persecutions of others.

They had become a public spectacle, they had suffered defamation and persecution for their faith. It was time for them to recapture the same spirit they had in those early years.

“became companions of them” – Were they now to be *ashamed* of such associations?

Hebrews 10

- 34 for ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

“and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods” – Imagine this! House invasions because they were Christians.

“in yourselves” – margin is correct, ie. **not** in heaven their hope was in their life in Christ.

“enduring substance” – Their enduring substance was not their material goods but the hope of the truth. Can we grasp this?

Hebrews 10

- 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.
- 36 for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

“recompense” – i.e. compensation. The spiritual compensation for any loss suffered in the cause of Christ will be **exceedingly abundant!**

“patience” – Greek: An abiding under i.e. patient endurance exhibited only under trials.

“after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive” – The divine principle always at work in our lives – first – the trial, the test, suffering. Then – the promised reward. Do we expect it to be any different? The Hebrews had come to hope so ch 12:3-8.

Hebrews 10

- 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.
 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.
 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

“yet a little while” – A lesson taken from Habakkuk 2:3,4 where there are many parallels to AD70. Habakkuk says “**It** shall come” whereas Hebrews says “**He** shall come” i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ. The **“just shall live by faith”** refers to justification by faith, and those who live their lives with faith as their motivating influence. The “perdition” (i.e. destruction) is speaking of that which was coming on them in AD70.

“of them that believe” – i.e. “of them of faith...” This is the subject of Hebrews 11. This shows the vital connection with the next chapter which starts by saying, **“Now Faith is...”**

Important background to Hebrews 11


Remember that Paul was extremely keen in this epistle to make every word count. Hebrews has been described as an emergency epistle. It was written against the background of the approach of the year AD70, written to the ecclesia in Jerusalem, and written at a time when many of the brethren and sisters there were in danger of pulling back to Judaism. Our understanding of these characters and incidents in this study will be greatly enhanced if we always keep in the back of our minds that this was written particularly for the situation facing the Jerusalem ecclesia.


Remember the warnings Jesus gave about the coming Roman invasion of Jerusalem:

Matthew 24

- 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
 16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:
 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

That is the context upon which Hebrews 11 is written. Jesus had given the warnings. The Hebrews were now living in the last days, when these events were about to happen.

 **How our days similar to those in the lead up to AD70? What similar challenges to the Hebrews do we face today? Read also Luke 21:28-36 and 2 Timothy 3.**

 **With these Scriptures in mind, what are the greatest challenges we as young people face today? How can we help each other to meet these challenges?**



The destruction of the temple and the city was not far away when Hebrews was written

Bible Magazine, July 1996

Sometimes we hear Hebrews 11 spoken of as being “Paul’s chapter on faith” or “The gallery of the faithful”. However it is not really that at all. It is not a case of Paul just giving an exposition on faith and choosing characters that are examples of faith.

The particular incidents that he uses in this chapter were the ones from the testimony of Scripture which would be most likely to strengthen the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. Their situations that they faced in their days were so much like the days approaching AD70. That’s why these characters were mentioned.

Take Abel for example. He is only mentioned in 2 other places in Scripture apart from Hebrews and Genesis. He is therefore a rather obscure character as far as the testimony of Scripture is concerned. If we were writing a chapter on faith we probably would not choose Abel or Enoch. So there is a particular reason why these characters are used in the record. Many other faithful believers are left out (eg. Joshua, Hezekiah, Elijah) and others who are given only a passing mention (eg. David). Other faithful believers have “minor” incidents in their lives recorded (eg. Joseph and his bones taken out of Egypt). Why? Paul has **carefully selected** each character and each incident in the chapter because their faith was manifested in **circumstances of life exactly paralleling** those facing the Jerusalem brethren and sisters.

Also, think about why there were so many detailed examples taken from characters’ lives who lived **before** the Law of Moses was given? Because they were not motivated by law but by faith – the Hebrews especially needed that lesson.

Remember also that there is a spill over from chapter 10 into chapter 11. Chapter 11 is not a self-contained entity. Notice the final verse of ch.10 - “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that **believe** to the saving of the soul.” (10v39). In verse 39 we therefore have the connection – **believe** is the same in the Greek as **faith**. In chapter 12 we see that Jesus is the author and finisher of our **FAITH**. So there is an important connection with the end of chapter 10 and then into chapter 12.

Remember that the Jerusalem brethren and sisters had parents, children, uncles and aunts, even husbands and wives trying to **drag them back from Christ** to the Synagogue. They were under very powerful emotional ties and influences from people they greatly respected! They were also under pressure to defend the Jewish state. All these personal issues are dealt with in this chapter. The exhortation is for the Hebrews to not let their environment overcome them and to hold fast unto the truth, even to death. They were exhorted to carry a vision of the future with them even when the present seemed most bleak. Importantly, they must never lose sight of the fact that this life is a continual pilgrimage.

HEBREWS 11


VERSES 1-6: The importance of Faith

Hebrews 11

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

This is the Bible's definition of faith. You will not get a more complete definition of faith than here in verse 1. The NIV says: ***"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for."***

 How does our society view those who are "sure" and "certain" of their beliefs? However, what would be the implications of not being "sure" and "certain" of what we believe?

"substance" – Gr. "a standing under". Bullinger: "an underlaying prop or foundation". Diaglot: "basis". Faith is what holds up our life in Christ. It should stand under everything we are or do in life. Three times this word is translated as *confidence* because the confidence we have in something is what underlies our actions. Faith is that which stands under every thing we do in life. That translates into our own actions. Faith lies under our decisions we make. Our belief in the coming Kingdom changes the whole way we live. The greatest of faith, hope and love is love. However, underlying our love must be our FAITH.

"things hoped for" – or, "of things being hoped for" (Bro Thomas)

"evidence" – This means proof, a convincing argument, the sort of evidence that would be accepted in a Court of law.

"things not seen" – i.e. not seen as yet. Bro. Thomas says concerning faith,


"Faith is a confident anticipation of things hoped for, a full persuasion of things not seen"
(Elpis Israel pp162-163)

"Faith is the mirror which reflects the things of the approaching future and presents them to the believer's mind as though he were beholding, and personally in the presence of the very thing themselves." (P 90 – Faith in the Last Days)

Let's remember this definition of Faith as we look at the personalities and experiences in this chapter and see individual motivated to act by faith's power in a way that law could never effect. A large number of the examples of faith in Hebrews 11 are those who lived before the law of Moses was given. They were testified of God as righteous because they had a faith that was not based on law. The things they did in their lives were motivated by FAITH.

"obtained a good report" – i.e. they were approved of God because of what Faith wrought in their lives.

 Think of ways in which our belief in the gospel radically changes the way we live today.

 How does our faith change our perspective on life and what we see around us? How is that different to the perspective on life held by our school/university/work colleagues? How can we communicate this perspective to those outside whom we have contact with?

Hebrews 11

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

“Through faith we understand” – Faith gives a disciple insight and realisation.

“the worlds were framed by the word” – The Diaglott says, “The ages have been so thoroughly adjusted by God’s command.” Events in the world are adjusted to bring about God’s purpose. For example, World War 2 is an event which we know had a place in God’s purpose – to bring the Jews back to the land (Jeremiah 16:16). Faith gives us that understanding.

“that things which are seen were not made” – “Not from things then manifest the things now seen have come to pass”. So don’t judge by appearances, God is in control. Present conditions can rapidly change if such is His will.

Now let us see the examples of faith’s response in the incidents Paul has selected - Firstly **verse 4** the first to die in man’s history – Abel.

Hebrews 11

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Immediately we are drawn to the fact that Abel’s faith produced **ACTION**. This is what we have in Hebrews 11 – actions that are motivated by faith. Some examples of faith bringing about action:

v7 Noah – prepared; **v8-10** Abraham - went out, sojourned, looked for; **v11** Sarah – judged; **v17** Abraham - offered up; **v20-21** Isaac & Jacob – blessed; **v24** Moses - refused etc.

As an exercise, go through Hebrews 11 and highlight the action words.


The time had come for the Hebrew brethren’s faith to be put to the test ~ The time had come for action.

“more excellent sacrifice than Cain” – Roth (Greek) = *a fuller sacrifice*. Wasn’t this the whole issue that faced the Jerusalem ecclesia? Abel recognised what the more excellent sacrifice was, and he did that by faith. Would the Hebrews also be able to recognise what was the more excellent sacrifice for them, and cling to it and pursue it, no matter what the opposition might be, even if their own brothers rose up against them and threatened their lives. Would they be able to have the same faith that Abel had in the more excellent sacrifice that God had provided – Jesus Christ!

Consider these facts about Abel – His name means ‘breath’ or ‘vapour’. A similar word in the Hebrew as “vanity” (used in Ecclesiastes). Abel saw this life as vanity, and that God had provided a more excellent sacrifice which gave hope for the future. Thus Abel sought after spiritual things and how he could please his God. He was a Shepherd – and with his attitude we can see him developing like David did – a mind that **saw** the **principles** behind the law.

He understood that God had commanded offerings to remind Adam’s family of the **covering** principle, when sin came into the world. Fig leaves were man’s devising. Yahweh however had provided a covering of skins. There was to be a slain lamb meaning blood was to be spilt. Abel understood that principle. It was a fuller offering – a more excellent sacrifice. Abel understood that the slain lamb represented the embodiment of the promise God had made – the promise of a woman’s seed to crush the serpent’s head. All this was ignored by Cain. When Cain murdered his brother he actually cruelly demonstrated the **ENMITY** between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Cain was of the serpent’s seed and he demonstrated that enmity.

It is important to note that Cain was not an irreligious man. He didn’t refuse to come to the sacrifice that God had commanded. However he believed in expediency in worship – His thinking would have been something like this: “My heart is in the right place that’s what counts.” His worship was self centred not God centred.

 **How is it possible to subconsciously worship God our own way? How is this lesson of Cain and Abel relevant for the “Christian” world today? How is it relevant for us?**

Genesis 4v2-7

2 And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

There was a set time in which offerings were to be made (see AV mgn note on v3). Those offerings involved firstlings (v4). There was the fat of the offering involved. It indicated that there was a code of offering whereby one could atone for past errors.

Cain however was like so many of the Jews in AD70 who had convinced themselves that their way was God's way! There was a more excellent sacrifice that the eye of faith had to see. That is what Abel did.

The question is - Could the ecclesia at Jerusalem make that distinction?

"he obtained witness" – Diaglot says "he was attested to be righteous". In other words Abel heard God's word. He developed faith. He was justified by his faith and works.

"God testifying of his gifts" – Gr. "upon his gifts" i.e. perhaps by a visible token of acceptance e.g. Divine fire consuming the sacrifice.

"by it he being dead yet speaketh" – No words of Abel are recorded but "actions speak louder than words". It was his living faith that speaks to us. Paul begins with Abel in this section of Hebrews and he ends with Christ – see **Hebrews 12v24**.

There was blood spilt when Abel was murdered – his blood "cried out". But Christ's blood speaks of something so much different – it speaks of forgiveness and salvation.

So what are the lessons for those in the Jerusalem ecclesia?

They had been shown the more excellent sacrifice. They had accepted the one and only covering for sin. Like Abel they must persevere even though surrounded by resentment and hatred from their fellow Jews, their brothers – even if that antagonism results in their deaths. This was not unexpected. Remember Jesus's words when he said that family members would betray on another. Faithfulness to Christ would result in justification unto life!

Hebrews 11

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Enoch is only mentioned only 3 times in the Bible, Genesis 5, Jude v14-15 and here in Hebrews. Again, we have rather an obscure example. Enoch was one who "walked with God". He was in agreement with God. It says that Enoch lived for 365 years. It says in Gen 5:24 that "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." People searched for Enoch. It was known as an act of God by the people of that generation.

"was translated" - Vine says this means "to transfer to another place". Bullinger: "to transport." On other occasions, it is translated as "removed".

"was not found" – i.e. a search was made – as would happen in Jerusalem in AD 70. The same will happen to us, when we are taken to be with Christ at the judgement.

Imagine what would have been said of the believers just before the Romans invaded Jerusalem: "Where have all the Christians gone from the city? We saw them leaving the city the other day, they were all fleeing, some of them were in the fields and they didn't even go back into their houses. We've looked for them and haven't been able to find them."

“God had translated him” – Here is the reason for Enoch’s inclusion in this chapter. Isn’t this exactly what the Hebrews had been promised? That God would intervene in the siege of Jerusalem in AD70? When they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies they had to flee, and get out of the city (see Matt 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-23). The lesson for the Hebrew ecclesia in Jerusalem is that God would provide opportunity for them to be taken away, to escape when the Romans surrounded the city.

With Enoch, one day he is preaching against the evil of his times. The next day he is gone. In Enoch’s days there were giants in the earth. So to in the days leading up to AD70 – Not literal giants, but giants of iniquity. God would *remove* the Ecclesia from facing death in Jerusalem – because of their faith.

It is quite remarkable that in Genesis 5 there are all those deaths recorded in the genealogy, except Enoch. God removed Enoch from out of that atmosphere of death. He removes Enoch from the scene, although we do not know where he was removed to.

“before his translation” – very important! Enoch’s faith was manifested under trial before God acted. The ecclesia in AD70 needed to have faith **before** the event. That’s what was required in the Ecclesia too! If they were faithful before then they would also be removed!

“that he pleased God” – Imagine how Enoch’s faith was tested – by the reaction of his contemporaries to his denunciation of their life style. The ecclesia in Jerusalem also would have been subject to the same ridicule and persecution from their fellow Jews, the descendents of Cain in effect.

Enoch was a prophet. Look at his understanding for God’s purpose:

Jude v14

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Enoch’s days were days of ungodliness. It is just like the people in the days before AD70 and in Jude’s days. The testimony of Enoch is one for our days also.

Enoch understood that the promised seed would be one who would come with a multitude of saints with him. That the seed of the woman would be a vast seed, and they would come as saints of God to bring about God’s judgements upon a faithless world. Jude also says that Enoch was the “seventh from Adam”. We are also the “seventh from Adam” – we about to enter the seventh millennium.

Would the Jewish brethren and sisters show a **faith** that pleased God?

Hebrews 11

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

“without faith it is impossible to please him” – See comment by Bro John Martin –

“Faith is that quality which attributes to God the power that is necessary to overcome that which is inherent in the flesh. It is that quality which causes a person to reject self and stand upon the foundation of God’s Word as a means of salvation.” (Notes on Hebrews, p.106)

Thus a person exercising faith is one in whom God is active through the power of His word accomplishing “what is well pleasing in His sight.”

 **What lessons can we learn from this principle today?**

 **How do we develop this life-changing faith God is looking for?**

There are 2 vital aspects of faith that are emphasised in verse:

1. **must believe that he is** – ie. That God exists, in a real and personal sense. God must be a *reality* in our lives – we must come to **know God** (John 17:3).
2. **he is a rewarder** – Greek - *He becomes a rewarder*.
 - Nothing wrong with seeking that reward – cp Jesus (Heb. 12:2).
 - The reward involves God's glory – a world at one with Him – includes ourselves.
 - Let us "diligently seek Him" – Striving now "to walk with God" like Enoch.

VERSE 7: The Example of Noah

Hebrews 11

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Only one verse is given to Noah but it contains a powerful lesson:

- The days leading up to AD70 were just like Noah's – **days of ungodliness**.
- **Judgement** was about to be wrought by God – the city was to be destroyed and the Jews taken into captivity. In Noah's day, God was about to bring judgement on the world.
- The Jerusalem ecclesia had been **warned in advance** about what to expect and what action to take (see Matt 24 & Luke 21).
- They lived in the **last days** of Judah's commonwealth.

"being warned of God" – See Gen 6:13-17 where Noah was warned by God to make an ark for the saving of his household.

"not seen as yet" – Noah's faith was a perfect example of faith's definition - "not seen as yet". To believe in a great flood to come required great faith. For the following reasons:

- a. Was rain to fall for first time? (Gen 2:5-6; 9:11-13).
- b. Such a dreadful manifestation of Divine anger. Nothing like this had ever been seen. But there was no wavering of Noah's faith. In our day, God's judgements are coming. Is our faith wavering? (Dan. 12:1).

"moved with fear" – Greek: "devout care". Roth: "filled with reverence". Weymouth says he "reverently gave heed". This was Noah's motivation and it gave him courage.

"prepared an ark" – See Gen 6:22 showing Noah's simple obedience by faith. He meticulously followed God's instructions and persevered despite ridicule and provocation from those around. A lesson for the Hebrews and for us.

"the saving of his house" – Faith brought forth action which provided the basis for his salvation (1 Pet. 3:18-21 uses the flood as a type of **baptism**).

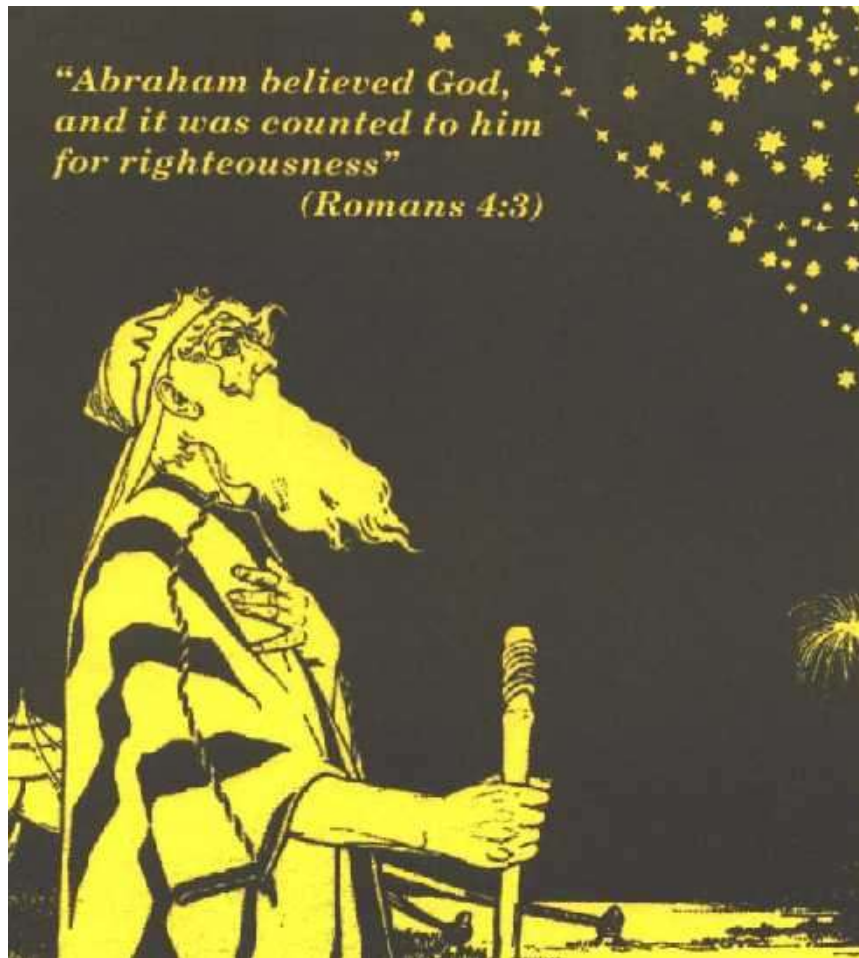
"he condemned the world" – Just like all the other characters in Heb 11, his faith resulted in actions. In 2 ways:-

1. **His words:** He was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), warning the scoffers of his generation.
2. **His actions:** His perseverance in ark building. Also his faithful marriage to one woman, and for teaching his children to walk with God.

"heir of the righteousness which is by faith" – He came into possession of something not actually his. **What was he heir of?** Righteousness. **How?** By his faith (Heb 10:38 "The justified shall live by faith").

 **What lessons can we learn from the days of Noah? Refer to Luke 17:26-27.**

Paul now turns to the patriarchs - Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob.



Picture from front cover of Bro John Allfree's book *Repentance and Conversion*

VERSES 8-12: The Example of Abraham and Sarah

Hebrews 11

- 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
- 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:
- 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Paul selects 3 features of Abraham's life as examples to the Hebrews.

Verse 8 – Departure from his native land

Verses 9-10 – Sojourning as a stranger.

Verses 17-19 – The sacrifice of Isaac

.....Again we see that **faith** results in **action**!

“By faith Abraham” – He is described as the “father of the faithful” (Rom.4:12), “They which are of faith are children of Abraham” (Gal.3:7), “Faith wrought with his works andwas made complete”(James 2:22).

“called to go out” – Abraham was called to go out twice:

1. Acts 7:2-3 – Ur to Haran

“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee.”

2. Gen. 12:1-3 – **“and from they fathers house”**

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.”

The Interlinear Bible says, "Go for yourself". The call had gone to the whole family of Abraham. But now Abraham has to go for himself.

Why is this so significant for the Jerusalem ecclesia leading up to AD70?

1. This second call to Abraham was final and absolute. So also with the Hebrews. The time was coming when they would have to "go for themselves".
2. The promises were conditional on Abraham's compliance.
3. It was a separation not just from environment but also from his father's house. Many of the Hebrews would also have to leave their families behind as they fled Jerusalem.
4. This involved an upheaval of life style.
5. A break with family ties.
6. The end of the "journey" was unknown. The same for the Hebrews – "flee to the mountains!" said Jesus. But it was the unknown. No-one likes to flee to the unknown.
7. It required faith.

Soon another **"GET OUT FOR YOURSELF"** call would come to the Hebrews and they must really literally separate from their fathers house.

"which he should after receive" – like Abram, their hope was still ahead of them – not centred in the *present* system of things. It is the same for us.

"obeyed" – which they needed to do, but would his descendants of the first century A.D. obey the call to leave father, mother, sister, brothers, lands for the sake of the "gospel" formerly preached to Abraham.

Verse 8 "Not knowing whither he went" – Just like the Hebrews, we don't know where the call of the Gospel, when obeyed, might lead us in our wanderings awaiting the revealed promises.

Verse 9

"by faith he sojourned" - Gr. "to dwell beside" rather than dwelling among. He had to live as a stranger.

See Gen 23:4: "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burial place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

Abraham had no citizenship, but his was an example of a **TEMPORARY** abiding. This thought is repeatedly stressed in subsequent verses.

"In the land of promise" - Gr. = **THE promise**. Here was real FAITH & PATIENCE. The Land was to be his by inheritance yet never once did he allow his natural sentiments to take over or anticipate by his OWN actions a fulfillment of the promise. God had said the Canaanites were "filling up the measure of iniquity". So Abram endured in patience and had no part of their ways. The same for the Hebrews – Some were claiming they must JOIN their fellow Jews because they were already living in the promised possession! – Jerusalem. It can be the same with us today. We can treat this world as if we already have all that we want and lose our sense of future inheritance.

Verse 10 "a strange country" – RSV & Roth say "a foreign land". His attitude to these things is the example to all who would claim to be his **spiritual Children** in their relationship to this world. **Especially** the Christians in Jerusalem.

"dwelling in tents" – *ie. tabernacles* There were many cities of Canaan where he could have lived if he'd wished - as Lot did.

The **tents** of the Patriarchs emphasize their **separation**, they had "COME OUT..." See Gen 13:17-18, and again years later in Gen 18:1. Look at the following examples:

- 1) **Isaac** – Gen 26:3,17 but cp. Ishmael Ch 25:16
- 2) **Jacob** – Gen 25:27 but cp. Esau Ch 36:43 Jacob again 37:1
- 3) **David** – 1 Chron 29:15 – Shows David's attitude despite living in a palace.

“He looked for a city” – Roth. “for he was awaiting the city which had foundations” – His reward was future. This is the city he gave his life for.

PROMISES TO ABRAHAM



Having expounded the deeper aspects of the promises to Abraham in Romans 9-11, Paul then launches into practical exhortation: “I beseech you **THEREFORE** brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.” (12:1). A true appreciation of the promises will therefore motivate us to live out these promises. Abraham’s life was completely changed because he *believed* what God had promised. He chose to live a separate life away from the cities of Canaan. In Galatians 3:27-29 Paul explains that through baptism into the Abrahamic covenant there is a special unity that results. Jews and Gentiles are united, as are slaves and their masters – as they were in the early ecclesias. Because of this, we are exhorted: “Put on **THEREFORE**, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” God’s promise that Abraham would inherit the promised land gives us a special relationship with “the land which Yahweh thy God careth for” because “the eyes of Yahweh thy God are always upon it” (Deut 11:12). Capitalist materialism teaches that we must work long hours to gain ownership of as much as possible right here and now. However, as the seed of Abraham we live as *strangers and pilgrims*, awaiting those promises to be fulfilled when all the earth shall be filled with God’s glory (Num 14:21).

The title *Elpis Israel* means “Hope of Israel”. This has been a banner of our community through the years. The Christadelphian magazine still carries immediately underneath the name CHRISTADELPHIAN the words: “Dedicated wholly to the Hope of Israel.” What is meant by “the hope of Israel”? We have a scriptural definition in the first chapter of Luke’s gospel. The Holy Spirit through Zechariah at the birth of John the Baptist declared:

*“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; **To perform the mercy promised to our fathers**, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”* (Luke 1:68-75).

John the Baptist was to go before the Lord, to give knowledge of salvation and prepare the people for remission of sins. This is an inspired definition of the Hope of Israel – that God had raised up the promised saviour to his nation Israel. A complimentary statement on the Hope of Israel occurs earlier in the same opening chapter of Luke’s gospel. The angel Gabriel says to Mary:

*“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall **reign over the house of Jacob forever**; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”* (Luke 1:31-33)

This was the gospel Brother Thomas taught. Christendom of the last century, though respectful to God’s word, and devout in their ways, scorned this materialistic and nationalistic concept of the gospel; to them it was nigh to atheism to say the gospel centred round the restoration of the nation of Israel with Jesus as their king. So there was a warfare between the brethren and the religious world around. Bro Roberts presented the challenge of the Truth in the book “*Christendom Astray*”. This book served several generations in the work of replacing the false hope of immortal souls going to heaven, by the hope of a bodily resurrection and an external inheritance in the land of Israel as part of Abraham’s seed. Men and women seeking truth saw the contrast of this practical political kingdom of Christ, with the vague hope of Christendom in a risen saviour. It was a startling difference, and they knew what they were embracing. Such a practical matter as the coming house of prayer for all nations, outlined by Bro Sulley in a booklet with this title, was the means of quickening some to the embracing of the true gospel. This real graspable idea of a kingdom of Israel, with Israel’s king to rule over all the earth, coupled with the signs of Jesus’ early return, brought a harvest of response in the latter half of the 19th century. A company of people came out from the churches and joined those of earlier time “*looking for new heavens and new earth (politically speaking), in which dwelleth righteousness*” and preparing themselves that they might “*be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.*” (2 Peter 3:13-14)

Bro Graham Pearce - *The True Gospel Defended and Explained*

Hebrews 11

- 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.
- 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

“Through faith also Sarah herself” – The point of emphasis here is **HERSELF**. Because that is where the problem was. Sarah thought she could provide the seed through Hagar (Gen 16:1-2). God sent angels to proclaim that the seed would come from Sarah **herself** (Gen 18:9-15). At first she laughed. But her FAITH developed. Laughter changed from incredulity to JOY as she realised God could perform what in **human terms** was **IMPOSSIBLE**.

What were the lessons for the Hebrews? What are the lessons for us?

- Don't be deterred by present appearances!
- God is in control – TRUST HIM.
- Present conditions may be reversed.

Think about the comment about the stars in verse 12: In the Milky Way galaxy there are one hundred billion stars, and ours is a relatively small “galaxy”. There are also 100 billion galaxies.

VERSES 13-16: A summary of the Patriarch's Faith

Hebrews 11

- 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Notice the 4 verbs underlined here, showing actions motivated by faith.

“not having received the promises” - Present possession of God's promise was never the pattern – nor in AD 70.

“embraced” - The patriarchs **greeted warmly** the promises. They grasped hold of them tightly.

“persuaded” - to bring about a change of mind by influence of reason, ie. ‘to acknowledge or to agree with’.

“confessed” - The confessions of the Patriarchs are clearly written in Scripture

“strangers” - Gr. ‘foreigner’

“pilgrims” - literally “to sojourn away from ones own people” – This is just the challenge that would soon be faced in the Jerusalem Ecclesia.

**MAN IS MORTAL:
REWARD IS
YET FUTURE**



“One of the joys of believing Bible teaching is to discover how all teaching holds together as a single structure, interdependent and inter-locking. To disturb one part is to disturb the whole. This holds true for our basic doctrines and for the life in Christ: each is a unit and both are bound together in the life of faith. When it became clear to our early brethren of the nineteenth century that man is mortal, a whole series of other doctrines were brought into true focus. Immortality, no longer taken for granted as a gift from God at birth in an immortal soul, would be bestowed on the faithful when Christ returned to the earth; therefore the dead would require a resurrection, and both living and dead would stand before the judgement seat of Christ; those found faithful would be clothed upon with immortality, and those found unacceptable would perish in the second death. Key verses of Scripture made this abundantly plain: 2 Cor 5v10; 2 Tim 4v1; Rom 2v5-9,16; Matt 16v27; Rev 20v6.” (Bro Harry Tennant, *Studies in the Statement of Faith* - *The Christadelphian*, 1991 - p.75)

Hebrews 11

- 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.
 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.
 16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

“country” - ie. fatherland

“mindful” – Vine “to be continually reminded”.

By faith we “forget those things that are behind” and “press forward” (Phil 3:13). Rejoice for the things that are ahead of us!

“might have had opportunity to have returned” – Diag. = “WOULD have had”

The patriarchs at any time COULD HAVE GONE BACK to UR – their FAITH prevented it.

“a better country, that is, an heavenly” - Does this describe Jerusalem of AD 60-70? NO! The Patriarchs looked to ZION – the Heavenly Jerusalem.

“he hath prepared for them a city” - A sure sign of their resurrection and occupation of the NEW JERUSALEM (Matt 22:32 etc) The obvious implication? It's NOT the Jerusalem of the 1st Century.

VERSES 17-19: Abraham's Faith in offering up Isaac

Hebrews 11

- 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,
 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:
 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

This is a well-known incident. It contains so much prophecy and parable that it could be a study in itself. But, our treatment will be brief and we will merely search out some essential teaching points to the Hebrews.

“offered up Isaac” - Greek is in the perfect tense ie. **He actually did do it.** He offered up Isaac. That was how God saw it. The act was as good as done!

“offered up his only begotten son” - Greek is in the imperfect tense. Diaglot – “**was** offering up” Paul is saying that so great is Abraham's faith that he has “joyfully welcomed” the promises involving Isaac yet now is intent on *killing that seed*.

“only begotten son” - Here was a lesson! Before the Law of Moses the Atonement and “redemption through Christ” was taught to men of Faith! Abraham's act WAS intelligent FAITH, not blind obedience. He never lost sight of the “things being hoped for” (v.1)

“able to” – Gr. ‘powerful’. Abraham attributed to God the power to perform something **NEVER DONE BEFORE – A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD!** Here was faith indeed! If God could do this, then so much more could God save the Hebrews!

“received him in a figure” - Isaac was restored after being “as good as dead” but Jesus Christ was the **“LAMB PROVIDED”** and he had really been brought back from the dead and some members of their Ecclesia *had* received him (they had actually seen him!).

SUMMARY OF LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM:

- The Hebrews claimed descent from Abraham. But could they show Abraham's faith under trial?
- Would they be able to see **God's Son** as the Lamb provided and the promised **SEED** to bring the promises to fruition?
- FAITH sometimes compels to go against what seems to be “**common sense**” – like slaying a son on whom the promises depend – like forsaking a city that was the *centre* of Jewish hope.

VERSES 20-22: Examples of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

These 3 verses cover 3 characters. There is no argument against Isaac Jacob or Joseph being used as examples of faith **BUT** the significance to the Hebrews was in *the particular incident* that Paul chooses **out of all that is recorded** of each individual. If any of us were to write about the faith of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, we probably wouldn't think of the examples that are used here in this chapter.

eg. **ISAAC** – What about his faithfulness in...

- Willing to be the “lamb provided” to be offered,
- Accepting God's choice of a BRIDE from Syria,
- Waiting patiently for a “seed” promised – 20 years,
- Faithful, dwelling among the Canaanites,

Paul uses none of these. Instead, see verse 20.

Hebrews 11

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

This incident is recorded in **Genesis 27 & 28**. Read Genesis 25

Some points to remember about the story in **Genesis**: See...

Gen 25:20-23 *Both parents knew* that Yahweh had ordained that the elder was to be subservient to the younger.

v27 From an early age the characters of the boys were *totally different*.

v31-34 Esau was clearly *a despiser of spiritual things*. He was “a profane person and a fornicator” (see Heb 12; also Gen 28:8-9 wives from Ishmael's line). “Profane” means to have no affinity with anything Spiritual at all.

Gen 26:34-35 God's principles in marriage and the example in his own parents' marriage meant nothing to Esau.

Despite all this, Isaac found himself strongly attached to his elder boy and *favoured* Esau above Jacob.

Read **Genesis 25:28** – note the AV margin: “venison was in his mouth”

Thus Isaac is strongly attracted to Esau, he felt proud of his sporting ability, hunting prowess, and the fine food – venison steaks, that Esau – in contrast to Jacob was able to provide for him.

There is a danger here for parents today. Many parents live out their own self-image in their child. You only have to look at a school football match to see parents even come to blows over their children's challenges on the sporting field. Other parents show favouritism between siblings which has sad consequences. These things brought **DISASTER** to this family! Here were 2 parents who brought a division in their marriage because of favouring one child over another.

It seems that consciously or unconsciously Isaac had determined that ESAU would have a major portion of the MATERIAL blessings when they were passed on. That is what lies behind the story of Genesis 27. That chapter shows this decision being put to the test.

Read **Genesis 27:28-29**. This is where Isaac *thinks* that he is actually blessing Esau. Brother Carter calls this “*the blessings of material prosperity and political supremacy*.” But this was directly against God's purpose: “be lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee”. Yahweh had told Rebekah through the Angel that it was going to be the opposite of that. Isaac had deliberately gone against God's purpose! Although 40 years had gone by since that message was given, but surely it was in Isaac's mind?

Now read **Genesis 28:1-4**: There is the substance of the Abrahamic covenant. He was going to give that part of the covenant to Jacob. Isaac had tried to divide the Abrahamic covenant in half. He was going to give the material things to Esau, but the Spiritual things to Jacob. But this was not God's purpose. That was the course that Isaac had set himself on because of his love for this boy.

Read carefully through all of Genesis 27 and especially verses 30-33. Those verses are very dramatic. Genesis 27:33 says that Isaac “trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who?” The AV margin says “trembled with a great trembling greatly”. He trembled because he had been caught out by God. Isaac must have had a conscience about what he had done. Notice the end of Gen 27:33: “yea, and he shall be blessed” or as Rotherham translates: “Yea, and blessed he shall remain”. In other words, the blessing will not be reversed. It wasn't that Isaac could not reverse the blessing. It was because Isaac knew deep down what the purpose of God really was.

Read Genesis 27:34-36. Here are the pleadings of Esau before Isaac. Hebrews 12:16 says that Esau found no way to change his father Isaac's mind “though he sought it carefully with tears”. Not because Isaac was a stubborn man, but because Isaac was acting by faith. Isaac knew the purpose of God and therefore would not change his mind, even with his much loved son pleading to him with tears. The final act of Isaac's faith is that he sent Jacob away to Laban's house and he passed onto Jacob in their fullness the covenants that had been made to Abraham.

Note that it says, “By faith Isaac ***blessed Jacob*** and Esau concerning ***things to come***.” Jacob is named **FIRST**. BY FAITH the **true heir** is sent to be saved **out of the land of promise**.

THUS we perceive the powerful lessons here:

Would the Hebrews allow all ties to fleshly feelings and all emotional attachments to loved ones be subservient to their **FAITH** in the will of God.

When a Hebrew Christian was faced with a member of his own family who he dearly loved (eg. a son or daughter), pleading with them to come back to Judaism. Also pleading with them to stay in the city of Jerusalem when the Roman armies compassed the city – How would they respond?

The big question for the Hebrews is – **Would they be able to show the faith Isaac showed?** That is the whole point of this verse. This is why this incident in the life of Isaac is mentioned where so many others could have been. Because it was so personal to the brethren in the Jerusalem ecclesia. Would their faith be able to triumph no matter how strong the appeals to their feelings might be? Sometimes that is also the challenge for us!

 **How can we meet the similar challenges today?**

Hebrews 11

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Once again we note the **OBSCURITY** of the incident out of all the faithful events in Jacob's life. Again, the example involves a father discriminating between 2 boys (this time - grandsons) to bestow a blessing. This is right at the end of Jacob's life.

Read the record of this incident in Genesis 48.

Gen 48:1-2 Jacob was close to death. Joseph took “Manasseh and Ephraim” (v1). Jacob said in verse 5, “thy 2 sons, Ephraim and Manasseh”. Manasseh was the firstborn. Genesis 48:1 was right when it said that “Joseph took Manasseh and Ephraim”, because that's how they were in Joseph's mind. Firstborn, then the one that came afterwards.

When Joseph brings the boys to Jacob, he brings them so that Jacob's right hand will go onto Manasseh. Jacob has changed the order! He is replacing Reuben & Simeon with Joseph's two boys – Joseph thus receiving the Firstborn's DOUBLE INHERITANCE.

- **v10** Jacob's weak eyesight (Just like Isaac)
- **v13** Joseph guided the firstborn Manasseh toward his father's right hand.
- **v14** Jacob crossed his hands “wittingly” Heb. = “to act intelligently or with care and providence”. But many of the versions say, “he put his hands across” RSV = “***crossing his hands***”.
- **v17-18** Joseph has a panic – He gives an impassioned plea for Jacob to change (“not so my father”) – read to **v20**.

Who do you think Jacob loved more than anyone in the whole world? His son Joseph! His son was also now the second most powerful man in the world!! But Jacob says (in effect), “No – this is how it is, I am not going to change my mind!”

v19 Here is Paul’s point - HIS FATHER REFUSED. Jacob had to turn aside from the pleading of the one person he *loved* and *respected* more than any other human being.

By Faith, he understood that God’s priority rests *not on time of birth*, as seen in many examples such as – Seth not Cain, Shem not Japheth, Isaac not Ishmael, Jacob not Esau, Judah and Joseph not Rueben, Moses not Aaron, David not his brothers, Christ not Adam – **God had crossed his hands!!**

LESSON FOR THE HEBREWS: In Isaac’s case the temptation to act contrary to God’s revealed purpose sprang from *himself, his own flesh*. But with Jacob the appeal came from one whom he had every reason to *love and respect* and who also held high office. Both were cases in which *faith triumphed*.

The Hebrews also would be appealed to by *strong personal feelings* and by *close loved ones*. Would they resist by Faith? Would the Jewish brethren and sisters be able to turn away from those who they loved the most and those of the most respected Jewish leaders who had taught them from youth? That’s the lesson. Would they perceive the “firstborn – replaced” policy God had followed in removing Adam and setting up Christ?

These are deeply personal things, touching the heart of family life for those in the Jerusalem ecclesia. That is why these incidents are included in Hebrews 11 – Because they are specifically relevant to the situation faced by the Hebrews.

Hebrews 11

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

This is the most amazing selection of the whole chapter! Think of all that is recorded of Joseph’s faith. But Paul selects the **LAST** recorded act of Joseph – **and the most obscure!** Nothing negative is said of Joseph – He is an incredible type of Christ.

“made mention” – AV mgn “Or, remembered.” Gr. “to be mindful”.

“departing” – Gr. “exodus”

Read Genesis 50:24-26.

v25 “And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”

Think about the sort of burial Joseph could have had! He could have had the second most lavish burial of his times. But Joseph didn’t want the pyramids and tombs of Egyptian nobles. His prominence and power had not corrupted his faith. He knew that there would be an exodus – out of Egypt and into the promised land.

So why is this incident in Hebrews 11?

Israel carried Joseph’s bones through the wilderness for 40 years! Paul says in 1 Cor 10:5 that the carcasses of the children of Israel were “strewn along in the wilderness” (Roth) because of **FAITHLESSNESS**. While Joseph’s bones were carried aloft to the land of God’s promise because he had **FAITH** unwavering! (Exod 13:19). That generation was going to have their bones strewn in the wilderness. The lesson for the Hebrews was that they were living at a time when their generation would have their bones strewn in the wilderness of Jerusalem in AD70! The Romans were about to come and destroy their city! The Hebrew ecclesia is being exhorted to have faith that “God will surely visit you, and deliver you from hence”.

So where were they going to be? Looking towards a future kingdom like Joseph, or were they going to be strewn along in the sort of wilderness that Jerusalem would become when the Romans sacked it. Their “bones” were either going to get out of the city by faith, or their “bones” would be left in that city when it was ruined.

In the day of resurrection Joseph will rise in **Shechem** (Joshua 24:32) in the parcel of ground bought by Abraham for Sarah.

WHAT WAS THE LESSON FOR THE HEBREWS?

No matter what present position they might hold or what reputation they might have – the only memorial with any future attached was to HAVE FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS SAID and leave all else behind.

OUR LESSON ALSO!

“Although a Scriptural faith is the scarcest thing among men, it is exceedingly simple, and by no means difficult to acquire when it is sought aright... this faith comes by studying the scriptures; as it is written, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” This word contains “the testimony of God”. When this testimony is understood, and allowed to make its own impression in “a good and honest heart”, faith establishes itself there. There is no more mystery in this, than how one man comes to believe another guilty of a crime when he is made acquainted with all the testimony in the case. The ability to believe lies in the understanding, and knowledge of the testimony of God.”

Bro John Thomas, *Elpis Israel*

NOTES

Study Group 5

“OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY”

Hebrews 11:23 – 12:13

It is certainly possible to know a lot about the Bible without having faith, and it is also true that before anyone can benefit from reading the Bible they must be prepared to believe it to be true. However, Scripturally faith is believing what God has said, especially His promises for the future. Faith is not therefore apart from a knowledge of God and His ways derived from His Word. In fact, greater faith comes with greater understanding of God and His ways, and this can only come from the Scriptures, applied to daily life.

Tony Benson, *The Testimony*, Feb 1994

Once again, we appreciate the true power of these examples and lessons when we apply them to the Jerusalem Ecclesia. If we cannot see their real application to the Jewish ecclesia we will not appreciate the true import for ourselves. The parallels are obvious – We live in last days also. The message was also a very personal one for them.

Only 2 more characters in this chapter are actually given in detail. From verse 32 onwards we have a list of characters with only minor detail given. In verses 23-28 Paul considers Moses. From verses 30-31 he looks at Rahab and the destruction of Jericho.

Hebrews 11

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Five demonstrations of faith in Moses' life are now chosen:

- v23** His infancy
- v24-26** His coming to adulthood
- v27** His forsaking of Egypt
- v28** When he kept the Passover
- v29** When Israel crossed the Red Sea.

“he was a proper child”- They discerned **BY FAITH** that there was a Divine purpose with this boy. All the references in Exodus indicate that there was something particularly striking with this child.

“they were not afraid of the king's commandment” - Putting Moses in the Ark was **not** an act of desperation but of **INTELLIGENT PERCEPTION**. When they put Moses in the ark, they knew that Yahweh would do something. They may not have known *what* He would do, but they **believed**. They put total trust in God.

What was the key lesson for the Hebrews? Moses's parents were not afraid of the King's commandment. The Hebrews also needed to overcome their fear - by **FAITH & INTELLIGENCE**. Amram and Jochebed perceived that Yahweh had a purpose with that boy. Did Yahweh have a purpose with the Ecclesia? Yes! They needed to believe that.

God can **“DRAW OUT”** his children from seemingly hopeless situations. So too with the Jerusalem ecclesia. Remember that Moses means “drawn out”. That is what was going to happen to the brethren and sisters when they fled to Pella at the time of the Roman invasion. Faith dictated a power **higher than** the Pharaohs or Caesars of this world who ought to be trusted.

VERSES 24-26: Moses' faith upon reaching maturity

Hebrews 11

- 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

"when he was come to years" – Stephen says Acts 7:23 that he was "full 40 years old". How is that significant? Many in the Jerusalem Ecclesia were **nearing 40 years** in the Truth. For them also there was a **CROSSROADS** – a time of decision!

"refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" - Moses made a very unnatural decision. He rejected all the privilege and fame associated with being in the royal household. Why would he do this? Because his mind was on things **"NOT SEEN AS YET"**.

Look at these verbs: **v24 Refused** (what was offered to him) – **v25 choosing** (to follow God) **v26 esteeming** (the life of Christ).

"suffer affliction with the people of God" – This means to endure ill-treatment. They were slaves but freedom was coming. They were downtrodden but they would be raised. He chose this course of life because of the future that was held for him. So also with the Hebrew ecclesia.

"pleasures of sin for a season" – RSV: "the fleeting pleasures of sin". In AD 70 those pleasures would be fleeting indeed. So too in our day!

"esteeming" - Gr. = "to lead before your mind", or to *set before the mind*. There was a careful reasoning out required. This is FAITH working in the mind.

"the reproach of Christ" – ie. **insult**. To be a "Christian" was to be subject to insult in AD 70 – but Moses was happy to endure these Centuries before Messiah was born. He had faith in a promised SEED yet to be revealed! What an example!!

"treasures in Egypt" - Treasures that even today are considered amazing! But Moses appreciated a spiritual treasure "more to be desired than much fine gold". He **had respect** (meaning he looked away towards) a greater treasure – the gift of immortality.



Exodus from Egypt - above drawing from Christadelphian Sunday School Association notes (9-12yrs), Stage 1 of 5, p.2

VERSES 27-29: Moses' faith in leaving Egypt

Hebrews 11

- 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.
- 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
- 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

This was when he returned at age 80 to deliver God's people – when he led them to forsake Egypt. His faith had now matured.

“forsook” - A strong term – TO ABANDON

“for he endured” - Roth: “as seeing Him who cannot be seen he persevered” – when Pharaoh threatened him, Moses looked to a much higher power – seeing that Yahweh was still in control.

LESSON - The Hebrew brethren & sisters also had a **HIGHER POWER** to look to, despite the threats of Jewish leaders or Roman authorities.

No examples are given between the Red Sea and Jericho – a time characterised by faithlessness.

Hebrews 11

- 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

The whole of the Israelites had to have incredible faith to believe such an unusual way of destroying the city.

From this example, we learn that faith...

- Takes God at His word,
- Doesn't argue that His methods are unusual,
- Or that they mightn't work,
- Or that there is a better way,

The faith of Joshua's new generation at Jericho had many lessons for the Jerusalem ecclesia.

“seven days” – Significant, because we are living on the edge of the “seventh day”, the seventh millennium. Today's world is like modern Jericho – it seems so impregnable but it is doomed to destruction. When is it going to fall? At the “seventh day.” What is going to bring it down? The blowing of the 7 trumpets! So it will be with the city of Rome, which falls after Armageddon. Revelation tells us that this “seventh day” destruction occurs at the **blowing of the seventh trumpet** (cp. Joshua 6:13) and the **SHOUT** of the Archangel

☒ How do we view the great cities and fortresses of man's pride in the 21st Century? We should look at these with the eye of faith also. We should see it all as a ruined heap.

Hebrews 11

- 31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Of all the examples given in Hebrews 11, this particular one was the most appropriate for the Jerusalem brethren and sisters. Why? Because here we have a woman who had DEVELOPED FAITH in God which made her believe in the IMMINENT DESTRUCTION of her city and way of life.

What was Rahab's attitude towards the city? She couldn't wait to leave it! Also, Rahab is the only example given in any detail in Hebrews 11 of a character who lived **AFTER the LAW was given!** She was going to leave her familiar environment. So too would the Jerusalem brethren and sisters.

Read through Joshua 2. Some comments:

- v1** It seems at this time that Rahab had already developed a strong faith.
- v2-5** She is commended for her faith! She could either tell a lie or tell the truth. If she told the truth, she would have died, and so would have the spies.
- v6-7** James (in ch.2:25) says that Rahab was “justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way”
- v9** Think that the words of verse 9 are coming from a harlot woman, in a Canaanite city, completely isolated from anything to do with Israel or God, and in a Gentile land. This is amazing! She uses the Divine Name! She doesn’t just say “the God of Israel”. She says that “Yahweh has given you the land” – That’s the Abrahamic covenant! The land of Canaan was to be given to Abraham. Imagine the response from the spies! She then gives a confession of humility in the face of God’s purpose: “that your terror is fallen upon us...”
- v10** “WE heard” – Does this mean all the people of Jerecho? Paul says that “she perished not with them that believed not” (Heb 11:31). So here is a woman who “heard” **and** developed faith. Others “heard” but did not believe. When did the Red Sea dry up? Forty years before! Here is a woman who has an appreciation of Yahweh’s hand in world events going back 40 years. She wouldn’t have been 40 years old! She knew also of recent events, the destruction of the kings of the Amorites and saw the hand of the Yahweh therein.

Continue reading Joshua 2:

- v11** Rahab says “our hearts did melt”. Remember what Jesus said in the Olivet Prophecy about “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:21). Rahab then says, “the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath”. She believes in one God who created all things and she knows Him by His Name Yahweh. Not only that, but she is actually quoting the Bible! She quoted Moses’ words from only a few months beforehand. She is quoting from **Deuteronomy 4:39!** Remember that they didn’t have photocopied pages of the Bible in those days. The context of Deut 4 is about the daughters of the Moabites and their immorality. And she had been a Harlot!

Read Deut 4:1-5. Verse 1 says to the Israelites that they would “go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.” **Verse 5** says that Israel will worship Yahweh “in the land whither ye go to possess it.” **Verse 19** then warns them not to worship the sun, moon and stars. And consider the words of **verses 37-39**: “because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.”

THE LESSON: Why couldn’t the Jerusalem ecclesia be just as clear about the destruction of their city as Rahab was about the destruction of Jericho?

Joshua 2:12-17

- v12** She had a knowledge of the law concerning the swearing of oaths. She wanted to save her family also.
- v17** We learn that Rahab’s salvation was dependent on her obedience to certain requirements, just as ours. The same was true for the Jerusalem ecclesia whose lives would only be saved if they took hold of the words of Jesus, in warning them to flee the city.
- v18** Rahab was to leave a scarlet thread in the window. The scarlet thread symbolises the shedding of blood for salvation. It is similar to the Passover with the blood on the door posts and lintels.
- v19** At Passover time, they were commanded to abide in the house and not to go out until the time came to leave. With ourselves, we need to abide in the ecclesia. It is so important to our salvation. It was the same with Rahab and her family. They were commanded to remain in the house, because the city was about the fall around them!

The faith required by everyone was very great indeed. The Israelites may not have known at what point the city was going to be destroyed. After walking around the city for 4 or 5 days, surely they would begin to doubt. Surely Rahab would begin to doubt. But NO! They had total faith that God would carry out the destruction of the city, exactly as He had said. So it would be in Jerusalem in AD70. The destruction would happen exactly as Jesus said it would.

Joshua 2

v21 Rahab simply said to the men, “According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.” A simple belief and obedience to God’s commandments.

v10 “they utterly destroyed” – This proved to be incorrect. Achan, a member of the ecclesia, proved faithless and disobedient (see Josha 7:20-21). What a contrast to Rahab, a Gentile woman living an immoral life in an idolatrous city. By “hearing” the word of God, developing faith and becoming obedient she finds salvation.

Now read the sequel in Joshua 6:20-26. The Israelites came in and took the city of Jericho. Verse 24 says, “they burnt the city with fire” – So it was with Jerusalem in AD70.

Interesting comment in Joshua 6:24: “Only the **silver**, and the **gold**, and the vessels of **brass** and of **iron**, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.” (The fall of Jericho into the hands of the Israelites typifies the fall of the Kingdom of Men into the hands of Christ and the saints).

 **What about us today? Are our lives influenced by our understanding of these principles?**

Rahab went on to become a part of Israel. She ended up being in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ. She was the mother of Boaz, mother in law of Ruth. She married Salmon and became the great-grandmother of David.

The lesson for the Hebrews: The brethren and sisters in Jerusalem also had to settle in their hearts what they really sought after. Did they want to be associated with that city doomed to destruction? If they did, they would die. Or would they associate with the people of God and get out when the time came? Very soon it would be too late to change their decision. **The same with us!**

Hebrews 11

- 32** And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:
- 33** Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
- 34** Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
- 35** Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:
- 36** And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:
- 37** They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Here is a wonderful list of Faith’s Conquerors:

Gideon – Small odds against strong adversaries

Barak – Ill-equipped and untrained to meet Sisera’s chariots.


Samson – In his final act – prayer and recognition of need.

Jephthae – Faith strong enough to carry out a vow which hurt himself.

David – Faith in fleeing from Saul and as king.

Samuel – Faith sown in youth and developed in life.

The Prophets – Who often spoke the Word at great personal risk.

 **Who are some of the faithful believers that are being referred to here in verses 33-37? What are the lessons to be learned from their lives?**

RESURRECTION AND JUDGEMENT



We have seen in Hebrews how Abraham's belief in resurrection motivated him to ACTION and obedience to God's command. Paul's belief in a resurrection and future judgement *compelled him* to preach and give his life for the Truth (1 Cor 15:42-57; 2 Cor 5:9-15; Col 2:12). We should live our lives *now* as if we are resurrected people (Rom 6:12-13). Resurrection gives us hope and peace of mind. The hope of resurrection is what we grasp hold of in times of crisis like sickness or at a funeral. Without resurrection there is no hope (1 Thess 4:13). Prophecies of future judgement were given to Israel to help them reflect on their lives that they might change before it was too late (eg. Mic 1:8-10; Joel 2:12-14; Zeph 2:1-3). Knowing that judgement is coming must impact on our lives today. Not just for ourselves but for those we see around us. Isaiah felt so strongly for Moab (who were haters of Israel) that he could honestly say, "my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab" (16:11). Jeremiah also had the same level of love (48:20,31-34). Do we really care for those around us who are heading towards everlasting destruction? Do we care enough to say a word or give a leaflet, or show we care?

Hebrews 11

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

This is God's estimate of those who endured by faith. For them there is better world to come. Their ideals for which they strove in life will be realised and the Hebrews had every prospect of sharing it if they held fast – **so do we!**

THE NEED FOR LOYALTY AND CONVICTION TODAY

Today the Christadelphian community - "Brothers in Christ" - is the inheritor of a noble tradition, by which elements of the Truth were from century to century hammered out on the anvil of controversy, affliction and even anguish. These pages may help us to appreciate a Bible doctrine that God does not establish Truth by the counting of heads, but by the trying of hearts, and also to understand why we as Christadelphians today resist the outstretched hands of broader ecumenical unity, and consider as traitors any among us who sell their birthright for this cause...

To uphold Scriptural teaching was the aim of many whose exploits are recreated in these studies. Their success varied, and the process was continuous, dynamic and even painful, needing to be adapted to the changing character of the corrupting prevailing. If contention over dogma and statements of faith has produced schism and unChristlike action, it has also promoted intense study of the Word of God and burning loyalties and convictions - all things this spineless generation of ours desperately needs. If the faith of Christ means anything at all, it is worthy of our highest and our all. *This, more than any other, is the basic message of this book.* Better one who, like Paul, "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal 2v5), than one who, half ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, sells his salty birthright for a mess of contemporary corruption.

Bro Alan Eyre (Introduction to *The Protestors*, pages 8,9)

Hebrews 11

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Verse 39 is a **KEY VERSE** – To receive the promise, this requires resurrection, judgement, the granting of immortality and a hope for a future Kingdom.

Here was their invitation to join those sufferers. Their reward prospects were the same. It is **made sure** by the **GREATEST EXAMPLE** of all – Jesus Christ. They must shake off apathy. Resist all the Jews' propaganda. Reject all the appeals and criticisms and recommence running their race!!

This becomes the **OPENING THEME** in **Chapter 12**. Suddenly the Hebrews are in an arena. They are running a race - The **same race** as those faithful ones who went before them. In fact those previous runners are all around them – as if in a grandstand. They're shouting encouragement. Offering their advice and example. But, especially, they must look to Jesus Christ.



THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY



To have the hope of immortality at the resurrection means we change our whole focus on life. Our world is obsessed with the here and now. The magazine covers, the TV shows, the movies – they all glorify the glamorous, youthful people of this world. They are obsessed with bowing down to worship the stars (and they even give a ‘golden image’ to the ‘best’ of them), most of whom have immoral and turbulent personal lives. Many of these people end up destroying their lives on drugs and alcohol, with millions of dollars in wealth bringing nothing but misery and heartache. So why does our world worship these people? Why does our world aspire to be like them? **BECAUSE THAT’S THE ONLY HOPE THEY HAVE.** Youth is glorified, hours are spent body building and striving to be the greatest and the strongest – all for the here and now. It has gone beyond obsession, to the extent of pagan ritual. *But we see things differently.* Our physical bodies will get weak, sick and old. They will eventually die. But in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed (1 Cor 15:50-57). When we develop the mind of Christ, we love Spiritual things, and we desire to have immortal bodies free from temptation and sin. That is a hope with real substance and one that must change our lives forever (Rom 2:7).

HEBREWS 12

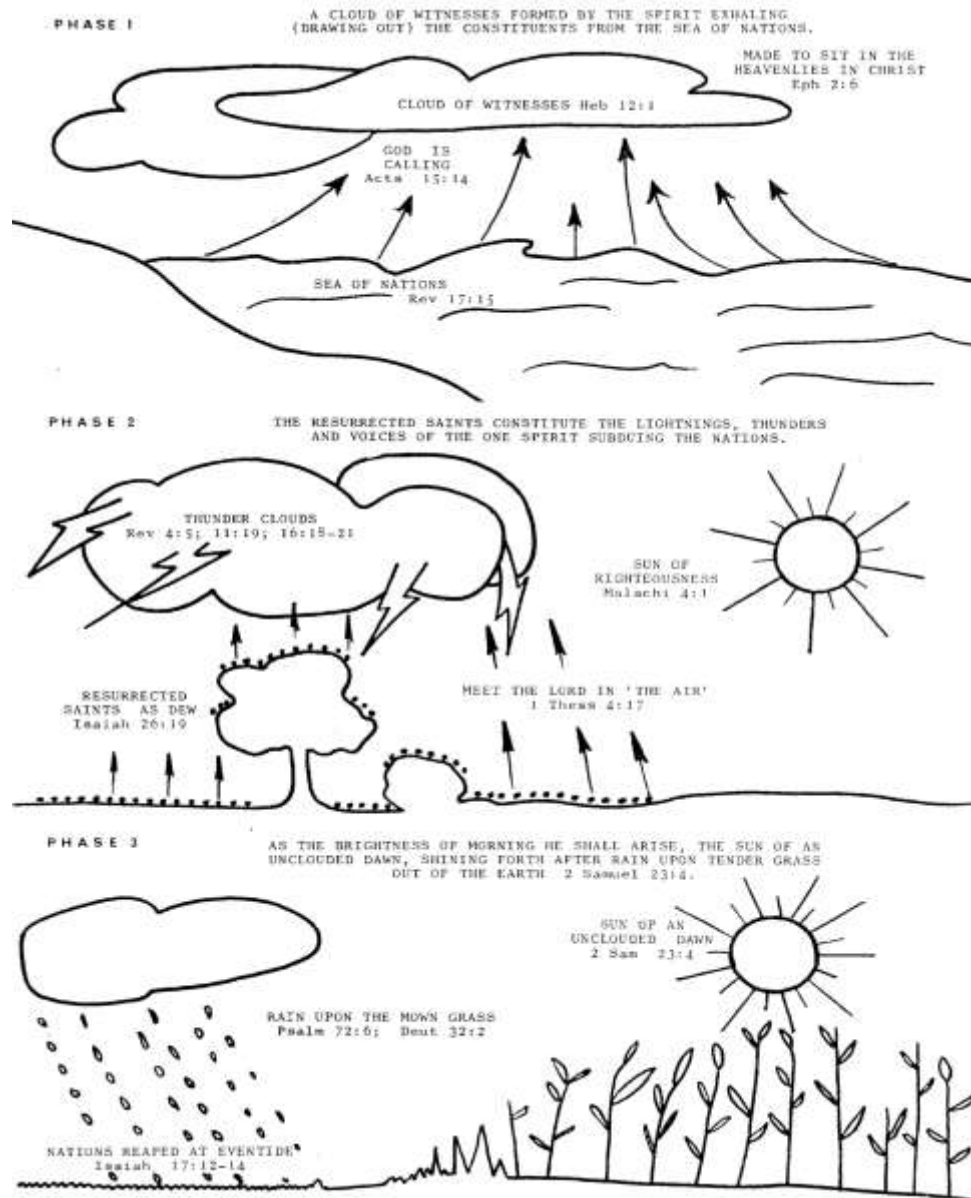
VERSES 1-3: Jesus Christ, the Victor in the race for life

Hebrews 12

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about...” - NASB “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us...” The expression ‘compassed about’ is the same as Paul saying he was ‘bound with’ a chain in Acts 28:20, and of Christ being “compassed with” infirmity in Heb 5:2.

“So great a cloud of witnesses” – Bro Thomas says in Eureka: “Clouds are opaque congeries of aqueous particles, exhaled from the waters of the earth into the air by the electricity of the expanse”.



In the Apocalypse, John records that the inhabitants of the earth are as many **waters** (Rev 17:1,15). From these waters small particles have been exhaled by the Spirit (which is the truth), from the generations of the past, which, when viewed in mass, constitute as Paul terms them, “a great **cloud** of witnesses”, but this cloud is only seen as a matter of testimony. The subjects of it are in the earth; and perceived only as particles to be exhaled or drawn out, by the power of those beams, soon to irradiate from the **Sun** of Righteousness. When he shall “arise with healing in his rays” (Mal 4:2) they will come forth from the womb of the dawn as **dew** (Psalm 110:3; Isa 26:19). The saints in the resurrection state are thus likened to sparkling dew drops. The **clouds** of the Millennial Expanse are the sparkling dew drops of Yahweh exalted by His energy to place and power; and gathered together about him as glorious and towering masses, pregnant with “**lightnings**, and **thunderings**, and voices, and great **hail**” (Rev 4:5; 11:19; 16:18-21).

Consider Psalm 36:5; 68:33-36; 104:3; Deut 32:2; Dan 7:13. The fact that the “cloud of witnesses” referred to in this verse are presently in the graves is apparent, not merely from historical evidence, but that the word witnesses (Greek ‘martyr’) is the base of the English word martyr.

“Let us lay aside every weight” - ‘Weight’ means a bulk or mass; hence metaphorically, an encumbrance or weight. Using the analogy of the athlete, it could refer to anything superfluous such as unnecessary clothing or excessive bodily weight. **Brother Carter comments:**

“One bent on winning makes everything serve that purpose. Even things good in themselves must be laid aside to win. Still more must any habit that impairs efficiency be cast off. There must be a rigorous discipline of the body; an avoidance of excesses; an observance of the trainer’s rules. It is not difficult to transfer these features from the physical to the spiritual. In words of Robert Roberts that have been much quoted: ‘In the race for eternal life, there are many things lawful enough in the abstract, but that viewed in relation to the object to be attained, are highly inexpedient, and to be laid aside, as Paul advises. It is a simple and a safe, and a reasonable, and a wise rule, and one that will give us much cause for joy at the last, to dispense with every habit or pleasure, or practice, or occupation, or friend, that hinders our progress in the narrow way.’”

“The sin which doth so easily beset us” - NASB “The sin which so easily entangles us”. ‘Which so easily entangles us’ is one word in the Greek (euperistatos). Paul’s readers stood in danger of one sin in particular, viz, turning away from Christ and reverting to an old way of life which they had left behind. They had started well, but had taken their eyes off that one who was both the author and finisher of faith.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” - Rotherham translates: “With endurance let us be running the race that is lying before us”. The assurance of victory lies in the determination to run with endurance the race before us following the example of the Lord himself (verse 2). It is also important to realise that we do not run alone, for there is the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before and there is the present benefit of “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ..” but encouraging one another all the more as we see the end of the race approaching (10:25). Towering above all this is the personal concern and care manifested by Jesus for us as the great high priest seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens (Jn 17).

Hebrews 12

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Looking unto Jesus” - Rotherham: “Looking away unto our faith’s Princely-leader and perfecter, Jesus”. This is the principal exhortation of the epistle both for the Hebrew readers in the first century and readers in all ages.

“The author and finisher of our faith” - See notes 2:10 where the Greek words for ‘author’ and ‘finisher’ occur as “captain” and “make perfect”.

“For the joy that was set before him” - This great joy was alluded to by Paul in 2:11,12 where he quoted from Psalm 22. The spirit of the Psalm embodies the thoughts of the Lord as he hung upon the cross and was encouraged by the joyous anticipation of the future fellowship he would experience in the Kingdom in company with his brethren (Psalm 22:22 and Rev 19:7). This same joy can be experienced by his brethren with each other, in measure now, and is one of the reasons Paul exhorted the Hebrews not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (10:25). Cp John 17:13; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 12; 3 John 4.

The remainder of this verse demonstrates how Christ has manifested the two roles of author and finisher.

“Endured the cross, despising the shame” - As the “captain” or “author” of our salvation he has set the example as to how his brethren should live faithfully in this life. The Hebrews were in danger of succumbing to the pressures of their environment and conforming to an old way of life which had been left behind in Christ. Doubtless the “shame of the cross” was an embarrassment to many of them. The challenge of the Truth has been the same to Christ’s brethren in all ages - ‘be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds’. Christ has set the pattern, it is simply up to us to follow.

“Is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” - As the “perfecter” or “finisher” of faith he is seated at the Father’s right hand ministering to his brethren as the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek. What more could he do and how foolish for any one to draw back unto perdition through lack of faith.

Hebrews 12

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

NASB: "For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart".

The following verses remind us that none of Christ's brethren have been called upon to endure such a trial of afflictions as he did and furthermore, the few trials we may have to bear are really for our good.

VERSES 4-13: The privilege of being chastened by the Father

Hebrews 12

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood" - Two things were apparent. Firstly, whilst they had not been called upon to fight against sin to the point where they were required to sacrifice their lives like their captain, neither had they striven against "the sin which doth so easily beset them" (verse 1), and, in failing to resist, had succumbed to the pressures of their environment and shrunk back into an old way of life which would only end in perdition. Cp 10:32,33,38,39.

Hebrews 12

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

NASB: "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 rebuked by Him, for whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."

Paul's appeal is based on the words of Proverbs 3:11,12. The following verses serve to demonstrate that there is value in Divine chastening and furthermore it is an assurance of true sonship and Fatherly love.

"Chastening" - occurs as 'nurture' in Eph 6:4 and as 'instruction' in 2 Tim 3:16. The same word together with its cognates occurs frequently in this chapter, viz, verses 5,6,7,8, 9,10,11. Cp also Rev 3:19 where both 'rebuke' and 'chasten' occur.

"Rebuke" - means to 'convict or reprove'. Cp John 3:20 (should be reprov'd), 8:46 (convinceth), Eph 5:11,13 (reprove), Rev 3:19 (rebuke).

"Scourgeth" - The only other occurrences are in the Gospel records, viz, Matt 10:17; 20:19; 23:34; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33; John 19:1. Here it is used metaphorically of the chastening by the Lord administered in love to those who are His sons.

Hebrews 12

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

NASB: "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? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."

Hebrews 12

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Note the following comments from Brother Thomas:

The Father of our spirits is a phrase which occurs in Heb 12:9. It is used by the apostle in contrast with the expression, Fathers of our flesh; and is applied to those only of mankind to whom God is related as a Father. Sinners have fathers of their flesh, but they have no Father of their spirits in the sense of the apostle. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and nothing more. It has nothing of which God is spiritually the Father. In order to have spirits of which God can or will acknowledge Himself to be parent, they must be begotten of the Father according to His will by the word of truth, and then be born of water into His spiritual family. They will then be His adopted children and enrolled in heaven; and being the subjects of a perfect remission, they will be recognised by the Judge of all as perfectly justified human spirits". Cp also James 1:17; 1 Peter 1:17; 2 Cor 3:15-18. (Bro Thomas, *The Apostasy Unveiled*)

Hebrews 12

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

v10 NIV "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness." There are limitations with human parents, nevertheless they should heed Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20,21. Family life now can be a cameo of the greater family soon to be manifested in the earth and this should be seen as a training period for that future age. The role of parents at the present should be based on the example of the great Father in Heaven and children should respond in like fashion. Despite the limitations of human parents who make judgments with finite minds, the Heavenly Father is able to judge with infinite wisdom and so direct the circumstances of our lives that, if we respond, will be to our eternal benefit.

v11 NIV - "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it".

MOFFATT says: "Discipline always seems for the time to be a thing of pain, not of joy; but those who are trained by it reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of an upright life".

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous" - Paul acknowledges that the flesh does not find a joy in the experience of pain, nevertheless James shows that it is possible to experience a measure of joy in time of trial if we have the wisdom that comes from above enabling us to see the benefits to be ultimately derived from that trial, cp James 1:2,3; Psalm 126:5,6.

"Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" - Righteousness is the fruit or harvest produced by chastening rightly borne and such fruit will be enjoyed in "peace" by those who have been exercised by it, James 3:17,18.

Hebrews 12

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Paul combines two quotations. One from Isaiah 35:3 and the other from Proverbs 4:26. This lays a basis for the exhortation to follow, that there must be a conscious awareness of the needs of those who are tending to draw back to an old way of life which offers no hope for the future.

Isaiah 35 is capable of repetitive fulfilments and can be applied in several contexts. It has been applied to the work of Christ and the Saints prior to Armageddon as the conquests of the "Rainbowed Angel" take them through the Arabian Desert on their march toward Zion (Eureka Vol 3 page 599). It can also apply to the condition of the tribes of Israel in the "Wilderness of the People" under the leadership of Elijah after Armageddon (Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained, Page 34). In this place, however, Paul applies it to believers who were once in spiritual Egypt, without hope of life, but who have been caused to rejoice with the life-giving waters of the hope of Israel. As such, we are all journeying through the wilderness of life and need to perform our roles in assisting others through this period of trial and testing, awaiting the day when we shall see Zion in its glory.

The quotation from Proverbs 4:26 is also used as a basis for exhortations to come in which Paul's readers are urged to consider their way of life in relation to the assistance they may give others in their walk toward the Kingdom.

FAITH AND CONVERSION

The planting of the Seed

At the right time the seed is planted. "A sower went out to sow his seed" (**Luke 8:5**). Whilst the parable in its context describes Israel's varied response to the preaching of Jesus in their midst, our response is mirrored in the simple story. But first note that, "The seed is the word of God" (**Luke 8:11**). The **word** is the agency of Divine begetting as we find repeatedly emphasised: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (**James 1:18**). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (**1 Peter 1:23**). "The gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation" (**Romans 1:16**).

The next stage, the response to the scattered seed, is vital. Thus far all is of God. He arranges the circumstances whereby we are brought into contact with the gospel. He has given and providentially preserved His Word that we might hear it. *Now we have to do something.* Our response, accurately portrayed in the types of soil in the parable, is not something that God will do for us. If we are stony ground, it is because we choose to be so; if we are good ground it is because we receive the Word voluntarily, eagerly, and affectionately into "a good and honest heart." God will not *make us* believe.

Faith

It needs to be emphasised that the words **faith** and **belief** in our Bibles represent the same Greek word in the original text. There is, in English, no verbal form of the word "faith", so we have to say, "He that believeth... shall be saved." But faith and belief are the same. This being so, from the Scriptures cited above, it is clear that faith is our response to the testimony of God read or preached, and our salvation depends on this response to God's overtures. Thus, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (or, *faith*)" (**1 Cor 1:21**). We labour this because there are those who argue that there is something additional to the ready acceptance of the Truth that produces faith. Some would go so far as to say that men cannot believe the gospel unless God in some way directly operates on the mind.

A moment's reflection should be enough to demonstrate that this cannot be the case. Acknowledging, as we have done, the ways of Providence in preparing the way for the planting of the gospel seed, the importance of our own personal response to the overtures of God must be clear. Consider Abraham who is the father of all them that believe (i.e. have faith): "(He) believed (faithed) God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (**Romans 4:3**). If we argue that God gave faith to Abraham, or in some way acted on his mind so that he could manifest faith, and then counted him righteous in consequence of that faith, then clearly Abraham himself was hardly involved at all, and it is difficult to see upon what basis his faith could be counted for righteousness.

Faith is the characteristic that we must voluntarily manifest if we are, in God's grace, to be counted righteous. Israel as a whole, although chosen as God's elect nation, failed to attain to righteousness "because they sought it not by faith" (**Romans 9:32**). "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (**Hebrews 4:2**). In God's grace, His purpose according to election has now moved to involve the Gentiles. The process is summarised for us the Apostle in this letter to the **Romans chapter 10:-**

- (1) It begins with "the *word* of faith which we preach" (**v8**)
- (2) Then must follow the voluntary response, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe (faith)* in thine heart... thou shalt be saved" (**v9**)
- (3) Thus the basis upon which we can attain unto salvation is clearly set out – "With the heart man *believeth* (faitheth) unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For... Whosoever *believeth* (faitheth) on him shall not be ashamed" (**v10,11**)

NOTES

NOTES



Study Group 6

“APPEAL FOR LOVE AND OBEDIENCE”

Hebrews 12:14 – 13:25

VERSES 14-17: Follow Peace and Holiness

Hebrews 12

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

“Follow peace with all men” - All the members of the body of Christ are to cultivate peace one with another in order that the ‘lame’ may be kept in the way of holiness (Isa 35:8) by those who are stronger, (cp Psalm 34:14). We will be held responsible for any discouragement or stumbling block put in the way of our brethren whom the Lord describes as his little ones, (Matthew 18). There is also a sense in which the exhortation of Romans 15:1 may apply: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves”. The desire for peace must be seen in relation to the development of a life of holiness in each member of the Body. Peace without holiness is not true peace, James 3:15-18.

Hebrews 12

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

“Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you”. This is a reference back to Deut 29:18 where the terms of the *New Covenant* were announced by Moses and styled the Covenant in the Land of Moab as distinct from the Covenant made at Horeb. The setting in Deuteronomy referred to a defection from the Covenant by the Israelites turning away from God and this is used in Hebrews as a warning to a later generation. “Any one leading another away from the Truth is a root of bitterness, from which comes a poisonous growth spreading its ill consequences among all in leading them to the defilement of false worship.” The meaning is further explained by the case of Esau in the next verse.

Hebrews 12

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Esau is now set forth as a contrasting example of one who, although a son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, lacked faith and succumbed to the flesh.

“Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau” - The warning is against self-indulgence, since such weakens the character and ensures failure in time of trial, cp James 1. Fornication is a manifestation of the lust of the flesh but is also used in the spiritual sense to describe infidelity and departure from the Truth as depicted in Babylon the Great (Rev 17:1,5,15,16). A profane person is one who treats sacred things with contempt. In the case of Esau, he treated his birthright with contempt, (Gen 25:33). As the first born son he would have inherited the right of succeeding his father as head of the family and the privilege of approach in worship on behalf of the family. Instead, he despised his birthright and the title “Firstborn” was given to his brother Jacob. The Hebrews had to realise that they were called to be an ecclesia of “Firstborn ones” (verse 23) and needed to beware lest they, like Esau, despised their birthright by reverting to an old way of life in which there was no profit, only death.

Hebrews 12

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

“He found no place of repentance” - “Repent” means to change one’s mind. In this case it was Isaac who would not change his mind. Esau pleaded with his father to “repent” and to give him the blessing but it was too late, (Gen 27:34,36,38). **Self indulgence blinded him to the value of the birthright and the same could well apply to the Hebrews and to ourselves.** NIV says: “Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.”

REPENTANCE, CONVERSION AND BAPTISM



“Repentance is a change of mind for the better; in fact, for the best: not by violence or pressure, but by the gentle power of the seed of the Word of God taking root and growing. Salvation is not possible without repentance, and repentance is not possible without the Word of God. Once we realise how deeply offensive to God is a sinful and godless life, we are filled with a deep sorrow for the past. This is described as “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” (2 Cor 7:10) ...There are 3 parts to the process of acceptance with God: repentance, baptism and conversion.... Baptism is as necessary as repentance and conversion. It is the means whereby a faithful person is washed clean and is reborn to a new life in Christ Jesus. Bible Baptism, without any doubt whatsoever, is full immersion in water of an adult who repents, believing the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. ...Obviously conversion is closely related to repentance. It is the new thrust of life in a Godward direction... Conversion is a change of direction to take on the yoke of discipleship.” (Bro Harry Tennant, *The Christadelphians – What they believe and preach*, p.198-199)

VERSES 18-24: The 2 Covenants Contrasted

Verses 18-21 describe the circumstances of the Old or Mosaic covenant to which the Hebrews were tempted to return. Verses 22-24 contrast the New Covenant which is better. Mt Sinai is used as a symbol of the Old and Mt Zion of the New, similar to Galatians 4:21-31. In the case of Sinai, it was a literal mountain their fathers had come to, but Zion, as yet, is still a symbol for the future. Paul says, in effect, “Ye are not come to a tangible Mt Sinai and to burning fire, etc, but to a spiritual Mt Zion”.

This section includes a series of particulars that Paul enumerates relating to the Old Covenant in verses 18 & 19 and which he contrasts with features of the New Covenant in verses 22-24. This is seen in the following table.

In the former we have:-

- The tangible Mount Sinai
- The blazing fire
- The thick cloud
- The darkness
- The tempest
- The trumpet-sound
- The terrible voice

In contrast with these:-

- The spiritual Zion
- The heavenly Jerusalem
- Myriads of Angels
- The ecclesia of Firstborn ones
- God the judge of all
- The spirits of just men made perfect
- Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant
- The (better) blood of sprinkling

Hebrews 12

- 18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,**
19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched” - The details referred to here and in the following verses relate to the record in Exodus 19 and comments in Deut 4:12,16-19; 5:4, 23-26. Note the following references:

“That burned with fire” – Exod 20:18; 24:17; Deut 4:11; 5:22-26

“Blackness” – Deut 4:11; 5:22

“Darkness” – Deut 4:11; 5:22

“Tempest” – Exod 20:18

“The sound of a trumpet” – Exod 19:16-19

“The voice of words” – Deut 4:12,33; 5:22

“They that heard intreated.” – Exod 20:18,19; Deut 5:24-27; 18:16

Hebrews 12

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Although there is no specific reference to Moses “fearing and quaking”, Paul includes him as experiencing the terror of the occasion along with the general multitude.

Hebrews 12

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

“Ye are come unto Mount Zion” - Zion stands in contrast to Sinai (v18) and represents freedom in Christ as opposed to bondage to Law. Psalm 87:5,6 speaks of those who are “born in Zion”. Having been begotten of the ‘Spirit-Word’, the child of God will be brought to the birth in the day of Zion’s glory. Cp also Psalm 2:6; 48:2; Rev 14:1. See further comment below under the expression ‘Heavenly Jerusalem’.

“The city of the Living God” - The expression ‘Living God’ comes from the Hebrew, ‘Elohim Chayim’, a significant title occurring as follows:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Deuteronomy 5:26 | “For who hath heard the <u>voice of...</u> ” |
| • 1 Samuel 17:26,36 | “That he should defy the <u>armies of...</u> ” |
| • 2 Kings 19:4,16; Isa 37:4,17 | “Sennacherib reproached...” |
| • Hosea 1:10 | “It shall be said, ye are <u>sons of...</u> ” |
| • Matthew 16:16; 26:63 | “Thou art the Christ, <u>the Son of...</u> ” |
| • Romans 9:26 | “There shall they be called the <u>children of...</u> ” |
| • 2 Corinthians 3:3; 6:16 | “For ye are the <u>temple of...</u> ” |
| • 1 Timothy 3:15 | “The house of God is the <u>ecclesia of...</u> ” |
| • Revelation 7:2 | “I saw an angel having the <u>seal of...</u> ” |
| • Hebrews 12:22 | “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the <u>city of...</u> ” |

 **What is the significance of Yahweh being the “living God”? See also Daniel 6:20.**

“Heavenly Jerusalem” - Cp Galatians 4:26 “Jerusalem which is from above is free and is the mother of us all”. Also Revelation 3:12; 21:2,10; 22:19 where the New Jerusalem is seen as “coming down from God out of heaven”.



The New Jerusalem – As depicted in Revelation 21 (painting by Simon Sawell)

“And an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly” – NIV “To thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” Cp Rev 5:11,12. The Millennium will be ushered in with great inaugural ceremonies in which Jews, Gentiles, Saints and Angels take part, cp, Psalm 2:6; Phil 2:9-11.

Hebrews 12

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

“To the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn” - Roth. “And an assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in the heavens”. Israel were Yahweh’s national firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) but consider the great privilege of those who have been adopted into the household of God, Romans 8:29.

“To the spirits of just men made perfect” - Cp other occurrences of the term ‘spirits’ in Hebrews 1:7 (“Who maketh His angels spirits”); 1:14 (“Are they not all ministering spirits”); 12:9 (“In subjection unto the father of spirits”).

This verse develops the thought from verse 9 which spoke about the Father of Spirits. Here it refers to the sons of that Father as “spirits, even justified ones made perfect”. They are ‘just’ because they have ‘lived by faith’ (10:38), and they are ‘spirits’ because having previously been ‘begotten of the spirit’ Word in the days of their mortality, they are ‘born of the Spirit’ in the day of Zion’s glory. Thus, in anticipation of this great event, Paul can say that they have already in a spiritual sense ‘come to Mount Zion’. They have been made perfect on the basis of faith not law.

Hebrews 12

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

“Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant” - This summarises all the arguments that Paul has been developing throughout the epistle. Note particularly the use of the name Jesus as distinct from the title Christ.

“The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” - The term ‘blood of sprinkling’ is a reminder of the words of 9:12 etc, and the mention of Abel’s blood refers back to 11:4 where it is said of Abel that “he being dead yet speaketh”. If the blood of Abel cried unto God for vengeance on Cain, the blood of Christ speaks of better things, viz, that the way has been opened for those justified by his blood to enter with him into “the Most Holy”. The word “speaketh” becomes the basis for a further contrast with the voice that was heard at Sinai (v19). From this word, Paul’s exhortation changes from blessing to warning.

The word “speaketh” is a significant word and occurs as follows:-

- 1:1 God who *spake* in time past ...
- 1:2 Hath in these last days *spoken* unto us in a Son
- 2:2 If the word *spoken* by angels ...
- 2:3 Began to be *spoken* by the Lord
- 2:5 The world to come whereof we *speak*
- 3:5 For a testimony of those things which were to be *spoken* after
- 4:8 Would he not afterward have *spoken* of another day
- 5:5 But he that *said* unto him, Thou art my Son
- 6:9 But we are persuaded better things .. though we thus *speak*
- 7:14 Of which tribe Moses *spake* nothing concerning priesthood
- 9:19 When Moses had *spoken* every precept
- 11:4 Abel .. being dead he yet *speaketh*
- 11:18 Of whom it was *said*, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called
- 12:24 The blood .. that *speaketh* better things than that of Abel
- 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that *speaketh*
- 13:7 Remember them .. who have *spoken* to you the word of God

VERSES 25-29: God is a Consuming Fire

Hebrews 12

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

“him that speaketh” - That is Jesus, whose blood has just been mentioned as speaking better things. This voice speaks of salvation identified with the New Jerusalem in contrast to the voice that invoked terror in the hearts of those who heard it at Sinai.

“For if they escaped not who refused... how much more shall not we” - Those who refused to hear the voice of the Old Covenant spoken from Sinai had no means of forgiveness open to them under the terms of that covenant, only a fearful looking for of judgment. How much more should we “fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (4:1).

“Him that spake on earth..him that speaketh from Heaven” - Once again there is the contrast. The voice of Elohim spoken from Sinai, announced a Law which “gendereth to bondage” (Gal 4:24). On the other hand, the “voice” of Christ’s blood that he has taken with him into the Holiest of all, even Heaven itself, identifies him as the forerunner we are invited to follow (9:24).

Hebrews 12

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

“Whose voice then shook the earth” - This reference is to Exod. 19:18,19, “The whole mount quaked greatly” at the voice of Elohim and the people.

“Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” - This is a quotation in part from Haggai 2:6,7 where Yahweh proclaimed: “Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, ...”. ‘Heavens’ and ‘earth’ are frequently used in the Bible as symbols of two classes representing ‘rulers’ and ‘ruled’ respectively. In the first instance, when Yahweh established the “Jewish heavens” at Sinai, the “earth” (i.e. the Jewish people) shook, cp v19-21.

The quotation from Haggai speaks of the time to come when Yahweh will shake the “heavens and the earth”, referring to both rulers and ruled in the Jewish society, (Deut 32:1; Isaiah 1:2). This refers to the end of the Jewish commonwealth which came to pass in AD70 at the hands of the Romans, and Paul was now writing this epistle to Hebrews living in those last days of Judah’s commonwealth. It was with this in mind that Paul commenced the epistle with the statement, “God... hath in these *“last days”* spoken unto us in a Son” (1:2). Similarly in 9:26, “But now once in *the end of the age* hath he (Jesus) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”. The quotation in Haggai continues with the expression “and the sea and the dry land”, referring to a subsequent “shaking of all nations” which will usher in the coming of that one who is “the desire of all nations”. Paul omits this, because it is not part of the warning he wishes to give to these Hebrews living at the end of the Mosaic Age.

Hebrews 12

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

“The removing of those things that are shaken” - The Hebrews are reminded that the Mosaic order was to be removed because their contemporaries, as well as previous generations, had “refused him that spake on earth” (verse 25). The exhortation to them (and ourselves) is, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven”.

 **How does a knowledge of God’s future judgements affect the way we live now? How does it influence us in our attitude towards the world? Does it create in us a sense of urgency?**

“That those things which cannot be shaken may remain” - The “voice from heaven” calls both Jews and Gentiles to become part of the New Jerusalem here styled, “Mount Zion, the city of the

Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem". These are the new heavens and earth which shall remain, Isaiah 65:17,18; 66:22; 51:16.

Hebrews 12

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved" - The Sinaitic Covenant constituted Israel the Kingdom of God in a national sense. That phase of the Kingdom was about to be removed but we have been "translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son" that cannot be removed (Col 1:13-18).

"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably" - This picks up the warning from verse 15 and lays the basis for Paul's final words of exhortation in 13:9,21,25.

Verse 29 is a quotation from Deut 4:24. Brother Carter says:

"But neither they nor we can trifle with God. He promises good things but will not have them despised. In the words of Moses, when he warned Israel against forgetting the covenant, and turning aside to other gods (Deut 4:23,24), Paul concludes this section. And as he uses the words there is implied that God will not treat any less lightly any forgetfulness of the new covenant: God is the same, He does not change. To those who refuse His counsel, He is a consuming fire."

HEBREWS 13

VERSES 1-7: Let Brotherly love continue

There is a strong connection between doctrine and practice that applies in all ages and circumstances. Many of the Hebrews were drawing back unto perdition, seeking justification by law, and as Paul demonstrated in Colossians 2:23, this has the tendency to concentrate attention on the flesh. The practical outworking of the doctrine, is the elevation of the flesh manifesting itself in acts of selfishness and sin (cp Ephesians 5:1-5).

Hebrews 13

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

"Brotherly love" – Gr. 'philadelphia' occurs also in Romans 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:7 (2x). A community whose organisation is based on law, is not strongly fortified when problems arise that challenge its unity. We must seek "the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace" (Eph 4:3,4), something which can only be achieved when the characteristics of Ephesians 4:2 exist.

"To entertain strangers" – Gr. 'philoxenia', like 'philadelphia' (v1), Gr. 'phileo' combined with 'xenos' "a stranger or guest". It means to show affection to strangers and is set in juxtaposition to 'philadelphia', which means to show affection to brethren. It also occurs in **Romans 12:13**. A similar Gr. word 'philoxenos' occurs as "hospitality" in **1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 4:9**. The same idea is expressed in Matthew 25:35, 38, 43-44 where the word "stranger" is 'xenos'.

 **Think of ways in which we can show hospitality to others. Look up the above quotes in bold.**

Hebrews 13

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

"As bound with them" - literally "having been bound together", cp 10:33,34.

NIV "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and sexually immoral". The marriage vow had suffered a twofold abuse. There were some who were forbidding people to marry (1 Tim 4:3) and there were the licentious who did not honour the marriage vow (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Thess 4:2-6; Eph 5:3-5). See also Rev 21:8.

Hebrews 13

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness" - NIV "Keep your lives free from the love of money". A great challenge today! Cp 1 Tim 3:3; 6:9,10; 2 Tim 3:2.

"Be content" - cp Luke 3:14; 2 Cor 12:9; 1 Tim 6:8.

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" - These words of God were originally stated by Moses in the conclusion of his fourth discourse in Deut 31:6,8 and restated in Joshua 1:5. The words were spoken at a period of transition from Moses to Joshua, typical of the situation in which the Hebrews found themselves and also similar to our own situation today as we await the coming of the greater than Joshua. The statement was also made to Solomon at the time of the transition of the kingship from his father David (1 Chron 28:20).

Hebrews 13

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

v6 NIV "So we may say with confidence, The Lord is my helper..." This is cited from Psalm 118:6. The Psalm figured prominently in the events of the last week of the Lord's ministry, Matthew 21:9,42; 23:39.

v7 NIV "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." If these Hebrew brethren were living in Jerusalem, then the Apostles and James were some such leaders.

VERSES 8-14: Here we have no continuing city

Hebrews 13

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

This statement appears to be a reference to Psalm 102:25-27 previously quoted in Heb 1:10-12. It is used to demonstrate the immutability of everything associated with the Lord Jesus Christ and the New Covenant in contrast with Moses and the Old Covenant. As a consequence, the Hebrews needed the warning that they....

Hebrews 13

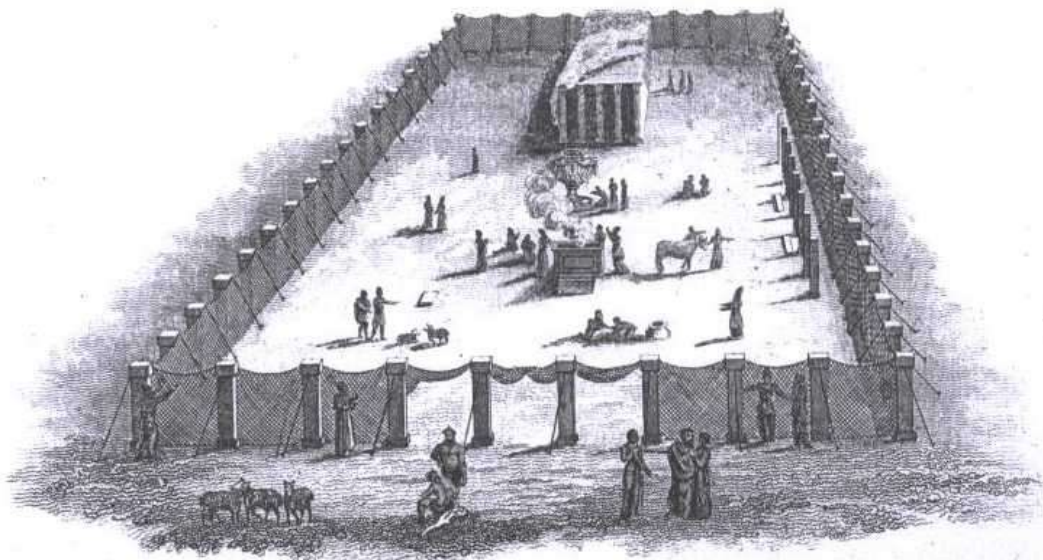
9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

"Be not carried about" - Also used in a similar way in Eph 4:14 and Jude 12.

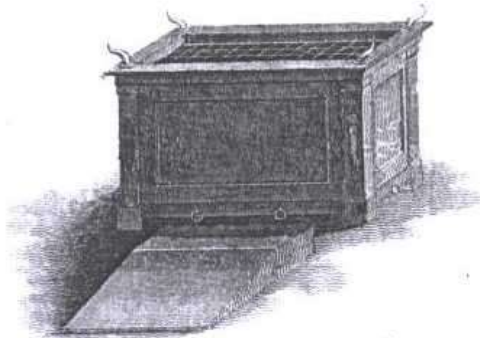
"With divers and strange doctrines" - i.e. doctrines of the Law that were different from, and foreign to the doctrines they had been taught and which should now be leading them on to maturity in Christ. Although the Law of Moses was holy and just and good, it formed no part of the way of salvation in Christ which, like Jesus Christ himself, was also the same yesterday, today and for ever (cp v8).

"Be established with grace and not with meats" - 'Grace' and 'meats' are here contrasted and stand, respectively, for the way of life in Christ as distinct from the ritual of the Law.

 **How does the unchangeable character of God and His Son give us great comfort? (Mal 3:6)**



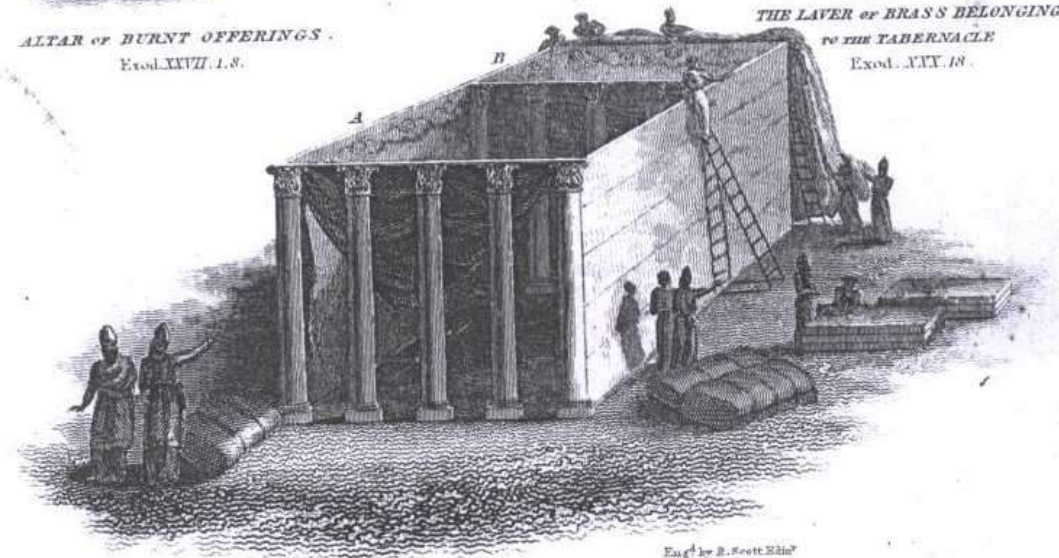
TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.
With the Court of the Tabernacle. Exod. XXVI. XXVII.



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERINGS.
Exod. XXVII. 1. 8.



**THE LAVER OF BRASS BELONGING
 TO THE TABERNACLE**
Exod. XXX. 18.



TABERNACLE UNCOVERED. Exod. XXVII.
A. The Holy Place B. The most Holy or Holy of Holies.

Published by Blackie & Son Glasgow.

“But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.” (Heb 9:11)

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” (Heb 13:10)

Hebrews 13

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

“They have no right to eat” - All through the Epistle the sacrifice of Christ has been expounded as fulfilling the types of the bullock and goat on the Day of Atonement. Once again Paul refers to these types, this time to bring his exhortation to a powerful climax. One of the very special features of the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement was that whilst the flesh of other sacrifices was eaten as food by the priest and sometimes by the offerer, in this case it could not be eaten by anyone and must be “burned without the Camp” (Leviticus 16:27). The reason for this prohibition is related to the disposal of the blood of these sacrifices, concerning which there were fundamental rules to be observed. **The bodies of those animals whose blood went into the Holy Place, had to be burned outside the Camp. They must not be eaten (Lev 6:30).** It was only the flesh of those animals whose blood was taken no further into the Tabernacle than the Outer Court, that could be eaten (Lev 6:26; 10:17,18 and cp. 1 Cor 9:13; 10:18). In actual fact, there were only three offerings whose blood stood related to the Holy Place:-

- (1) The bullock of the Sin Offering, Leviticus 4:5,16.
- (2) The goat on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16:15.
- (3) The blood of the Red Heifer, Numbers 19:4 (Rotherham).

The following comment by Bro W.F.Barling is relevant.

The blood of the Sin Offering which could be eaten proceeded no further than the Outer Court, that division of the Sanctuary which typified Israel as seeking reconciliation; while the bullock, whose blood made reconciliation in the Holy Place - that division of the Tabernacle which typified Israel enjoying fellowship with God - symbolised an atoning offering which was in reality distinct from the Mosaic system since it was burnt outside the Camp (and so fell outside that system).

Paul's message is abundantly clear. Eating implies identification and fellowship. If his readers should desire to live under the Mosaic system, they, like the sacrifices they would be permitted to partake of, would never proceed beyond the Outer Court. They would never have true fellowship with Yahweh. The offering of Christ is identified with those sacrifices whose shed blood typified **fellowship with God.**

Hebrews 13

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

“Wherefore Jesus also ...” - The “burning without the Camp” pointed to the fact that it was not on the Tabernacle altar that the acceptable offering for sin would be made; it was a prophecy that this sacrifice would be outside the Mosaic system. This was remarkably fulfilled in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ who literally “suffered without the gate” in being crucified outside the city walls. Paul, however, is not concerned so much with the physical location of Christ's crucifixion as he is with the spiritual and moral lessons to be learned from the circumstances.

To the Hebrews, it meant identifying with one who had been rejected by their fellow countrymen and who had died upon a tree and been cursed by the Law. There is a great challenge both to them and ourselves to see the lessons which apply in principle and practice. Hence Paul's appeal...

Hebrews 13

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

“Let us go forth therefore unto him” - The appeal is to break with everything that is identified with a shadowy institution which can never bring true fellowship with God. On the contrary, it leaves the individual (like those assembled before Mount Sinai) with a certain fearful looking for of judgment because they have drawn back unto perdition.

“Bearing his reproach” - The cross must come before the crown, both for the Lord and his brethren. Cp Heb 10:33; 11:26; Matt 5:11 (revile); Rom 15:3; 1 Peter 4:14.

“For here we have no continuing city” - In the case of these Hebrews, the literal city of Jerusalem was about to be destroyed (12:25-27), but the figure goes much further than this. The worthies of chapter 11 lived as strangers and pilgrims while they looked for a city whose designer and builder is God. This is the heavenly Jerusalem, the spiritual Mt Zion.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH



Belief in the Kingdom of God on earth totally changes our outlook on life. To pray ‘Thy Kingdom come’ (Mt 6:10) is as radical today as it was in Roman times. It is a rebellion against this world’s values. Knowing that God’s Kingdom is soon to replace the kingdoms of this world means our lives will not be pre-occupied with building up our careers and businesses. We will shy away from materialism and all the associated effort which it demands. We will not strive for building up possession on this earth *now*, because we will see the earth as being our eternal possession. If we selfishly build up our own possessions and ignore the needs of others we have denied the Faith (1 Tim 5:8). The love of money is to err from the Faith (1 Tim 6:10) – It is to deny the hope of the Kingdom. Why would a believer be swayed by political parties and pressure groups when we know that the present system is soon to be done away with? The hope of God’s Kingdom on earth should compel us to service and inspire us to repentance. If Christ’s return is soon, what manner of persons ought we to be? (2 Pet 3:11). For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also (Mt 6:21).

Look up the following beautiful quotes about the Kingdom of God on earth - the hope of Israel: **Psa 72v8; Isa 11v9; Jer 33v15; Zech 2v12; 14v9; Matt 5v5; 6v10; 19v28; Mark 11v17; Luke 1v32-33, 70-75; 19v12-19; 20v33-36; Acts 1v3,6,11; 3v19-20; Rom 4v13; 15v8; Gal 3v29; Rev 5v9-10; 11v15.**

VERSES 15-19: The Sacrifice of Praise to God

Hebrews 13

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

“Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually” - The preceding references to offerings and sacrifices were associated with the Sin Offering and the Burnt Offering. From man’s point of view, the Peace Offering was the one that he most desired to engage in and partake of, because it typically represented fellowship with God and, as such, would normally be the last to be offered in the sacrificial order, e.g. Lev 8:14,18,22; 9:22; Num 6:14,16,17 Deut 27:7. (See note on 10:5-7).

A thanksgiving offering was one form of voluntary Peace Offering (Lev 7:12), and in this respect could be said to be the highest form of worship that man can offer to God. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me...” Psalm 50:23; 119:108. In Ephesians 5:1-4 Paul concludes that thanksgiving is the antidote for conquering sin. Note the connections in Eph 5:2, where “offering”, is identified with the Meal Offering in Heb 10:5, and “sacrifice”, is identified with the Peace Offering in Heb 10:5.

THE NAME OF GOD AND HIS PURPOSE WITH THE EARTH



What does it mean to ‘give thanks to God’s Name’? This is repeated many times in the Psalms where it says, “Praise the name of the LORD.” Why? Because to understand THE NAME of Yahweh is to understand His character and purpose. Truly Knowing who God is and His purpose with the earth should generate praise within us. In Exod 33v18 Moses asks ‘Show my thy glory’. He wanted to know God and His ways (v13). God replied by saying, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy” (v19) God’s Name is Yahweh – meaning “He who will be”. We might ask: WHO will God be? Answer: He will be mighty ones (Elohim). God will be seen in people. These will become mighty. Who are these mighty ones? His children – the Ecclesia. His character will be found in a family of believers. This can be YOU and ME! This is why we hear of God’s Memorial Name expressed as *Yahweh Elohim*. This is simply saying that God wants to have a family who are like Him. A *memorial* helps us remember something important. So when we hear God’s Name it helps us remember His purpose with the earth.


 How does the character of God generate within us a love for Him? Refer to Exod 34:6-7.

Exod 3v15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The LORD God** (**Hebrew: Yahweh Elohim**) of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: **this is my name** for ever, and **this is my memorial** unto all generations.

Zech 14v5,9 "...the LORD my God shall come, and **all the saints with thee**... And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall **there be one LORD**, and **his name one**. (This chapter is about Armageddon and the return of Christ to set up God's Kingdom on earth)"

Rev 14v1 "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having **his Father's name written in their foreheads**. (This chapter is about the Saints with Christ in the Kingdom)"

Rev 3v12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God**, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

 **We can easily live today as if our present world is going to continue forever. How does the principle of Heb 13:13-15 change our perspective of the world in which we live? Do we live our lives differently as a result?**

Hebrews 13

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

"Communicate" – Translated 'fellowship' in the majority of occurrences e.g. 1 John 1:3,6,7.

"With such sacrifices God is well pleased" - "Sacrifice" is used in the New Testament for Peace Offering, cp 10:5. In view of the foregoing reference to fellowship, the appropriateness of the Peace Offering is obvious.

Hebrews 13

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

"As they that must give account" - There is a lesson to be learned from the false shepherds of Israel who were indicted by God in Ezekiel 34.

"That they may do it with joy" - There is a joy even now in the experience of true fellowship 1 John 1; 1 Thess 2:19. Brother Carter comments:


"There are no rulers now, as there were then. The spirit gifts were withdrawn, but not before the Word of God was given in the writings of the New Testament, thus supplying that which the spirit gifts had provided in the way of instruction. Where there are wise stewards of the manifold grace of God, who out of the abundance of their heart bring forth from the treasury of the Word of God that which is food along the way for their Gentile fellow-heirs, the exhortation is not without its bearing today. Anarchy is hateful to God. Submission to the Word of God is the reasonable and beautiful attitude of a wise man. And that involves submission one to another, a position not inconsistent with the arrangements for the wise conduct of ecclesias by "faithful men able to teach others"; men wise in counsel, instructed in divine things, with the honour of God before their minds. Such are not unmindful of the trust that is theirs; in their day they "watch ... as they that must give account".

Hebrews 13

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

NIV: "Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon".

 **How does this influence the way we live our lives at School/University/work? What influence does it have upon others who we work with?**

VERSES 20-25: Final Exhortation

Hebrews 13

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

“The God of Peace” - The preceding verses contain an appeal based on the principle of the Peace Offering. It was an offering that represented ultimate fellowship and peace with God arising from that which has been accomplished through the blood of Christ. Since it is God that accomplished this condition of peace, He is here styled the “God of Peace” (Cp Romans 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16).

“that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.... through the blood of the everlasting covenant” - Paul has spoken about eternal ‘salvation’ (5:9), ‘redemption’ (9:12), ‘Spirit’ (9:14), and ‘inheritance’ (9:15); all associated with the hope embodied in the New Covenant which he here styles the ‘everlasting covenant’. It is an Everlasting Covenant, in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant which was only temporal, shadowy and totally ineffective in ever “bringing any one again from the dead”. (See note 8:13). This verse clearly shows the representative nature of Christ’s one great offering and that in the process of obtaining redemption for mankind, he likewise “obtained eternal redemption *in himself*” (9:12). Proponents of the erroneous doctrine of ‘Substitution’ cannot reconcile this statement with their views on the Atonement.

“That great shepherd of the sheep” - When God delivered Israel from Egypt, He did it by the hand of Moses, who is styled by Isaiah “the shepherd of His flock” (Isa 63:11,12). A greater deliverance has been accomplished by “the Son of His right hand”, here styled “the great shepherd of the sheep”. Cp 1 Peter 5:3,4.

Hebrews 13

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

“In every good work” - Cp 10:24 where Paul commenced this appeal: “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good work”.

“To do his will” - Cp Heb 10:7,9,10.

“That which is wellpleasing” - Cp Rom 12:1,2; 14:18; Eph 5:10; (rendered ‘acceptable’ in each place) and Phil 4:18; Col 3:20.

v22 NIV: “Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.” The appeal in this letter had been strongly made, because it was a matter of life and death. Any words of denunciation (e.g. 6:12) had been written in order to encourage and exhort them.

Hebrews 13

23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

These comments and greetings are some of the very few personal matters mentioned in the Epistle which, although it is untitled in its introduction, was clearly written by one who was personally well known to the Hebrews and who, likewise, were keenly interested in the writer’s affairs. The mention of Timothy gives further strong support to the writer being Paul.

Verse 25 is no mere formal greeting, but highlights a word that has been a key expression in the epistle, (Cp 2:9; 4:16(2); 10:29; 12:15;28; 13:9). Paul has powerfully shown the contrast between law and grace and concluded that it is “by grace ye are saved”, therefore “let us come confidently before the throne of *grace*, that we may obtain mercy and find *grace* to help in time of need.”

NOTES