

Commentary on the Book of Hebrews

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Hebrews 1

¹God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

²in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

God's Word was given over a great length of time, spoken directly to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with great faithful men such as Moses and Joshua. As time went on, God spoke to His people through the mouthpiece of the prophets. David, for example, was confronted not by God directly but through the mouth of the prophet Nathan. God spoke through Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and many others to give Israel the thoughts and intentions of God. More recently, God spoke directly through His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, sending Him directly to this earth to speak of the kingdom of God and salvation. It is risky business and outright dangerous to be looking for additional revelation other than what has already been given in God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19). What has been given in Old Testament times is for our learning (Romans 15:4), and it is sufficient to make us adequate and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). As the church was established, the epistles that were inspired of the Holy Spirit were added to the inspired canon of God's written Word, the Bible. God now tells us not to add or take anything away. God spoke in many ways and over many portions of time to give us one cohesive and complete revelation of Himself and what He wants from us in this world. If we don't listen to that, we have no hope for salvation or sanctification (Luke 16:31). Speaking to the Hebrews, the person and deity of Jesus Christ was of ultimate importance. The Jews needed to recognize how He fulfilled the qualifications of an ultimate High Priest Who could provide atonement for His people once and for all. They needed to see how He was God and perfect for the task. Jesus Christ is heir of all things; in other words, He, by virtue of being the Son of the God Who owns everything, also owns all things. Jesus even made the world along with the Father (John 1:1, Genesis 1:26-27). Though we cannot be sure of human authorship of the book of Hebrews, we know that it is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

³And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

When we see Jesus as recorded in the Scripture, we see God. He is the radiance of His glory, meaning that we see the majesty of God, a hint of which was given at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9). We see His power, His authority, and His sovereignty over all of creation, including sin, sickness, and death. Nothing is more powerful than He is. We see that Jesus is the exact representation of the nature of God. The love, the righteous indignation, the perseverance, and the holiness of Jesus all reflect precisely the values and virtues of God Himself. When we see the Son, we have also seen the Father (John 14:9). Just by His very word, He upholds all things. As Colossians 1:17 says, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." Without the word and power of Christ, the world couldn't even exist. Jesus did what God had asked Him to do, making purification for sins so that we could be forgiven and have the hope of heaven. We know that He succeeded in His mission because He is now seated at the right hand of God in heaven, a position of authority over all things, submitting only to God Himself, the Majesty. The Hebrews needed to see that Jesus was indeed God in nature, in essence, and in authority. He was God even though He was the Son of God.

⁴having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

**⁵For to which of the angels did He ever say,
"YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"?
And again,
"I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM
AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?**

The author's point to the Jews are that these passages in Psalm 2:7 and 1 Samuel 7:14 demonstrate that God had a begotten Son. In other words, Jesus was more than just a heavenly being or an angel, which are also created beings. Jesus is God, having not been created but rather having been with God from the beginning. Simply put, He is higher than the angels in authority and position, and He has a more important name than they have, namely "Son."

**⁶And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,
"AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."**

Drawing from the passage in Psalm 97:7, we see that God did indeed have a firstborn Son that was higher than the angels because the angels were told to worship Him. Worship of anything other than God the Father is an abomination, and certainly the Jews would have understood that. So, the fact that Scripture says that the angels should worship Jesus affirms His Deity and Oneness with God. As the firstborn of God, He was with God in the beginning. When He came into the world and was obedient to the point of death, He received the name above all names, deserving worship even from the angels.

⁷And of the angels He says,
"WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

⁸But of the Son He says,
"YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.
⁹"YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;
THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU
WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."

¹⁰And,
"YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE
EARTH,
AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;
¹¹THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,
¹²AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED
BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."

¹³But to which of the angels has He ever said,
"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"?

¹⁴Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

The contrast between the angels and the Son is again made. Psalm 104:4 says that the angels are His ministers. Psalm 45:6-7 says that Jesus was anointed above His companions, meaning that He stands in a position of higher authority than the angels, being seated at God's right hand. Psalm 102:25-27 affirms the eternal nature of Jesus, that He was with God in the beginning and that His years will have no end. To no angel did God ever say to sit at His right hand as Psalm 110:1 indicates. This status is unique to the Son of God. The angels, on the other hand, are ministering spirits, servants of the believers. Jesus was a servant and now is exalted in heaven. His name, nature, and place is much higher and better than the angels whose job it is to minister to the saints. It should be clear to the Jews that the Old Testament taught of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, that He was indeed the Son of God and higher than the angels.

Hebrews 2

¹For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

²For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

³how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

The Jews as followers of the Law understood the literal and severe commands of the Law, such as an “eye for an eye,” etc. They fervently practiced the death penalty. It was a harsh religion that clearly emphasized that sin carries penalties. Furthermore, as the men of old received revelation from God, often it was given through angels (e.g. Genesis 19). The promises and judgments given by those angels proved unalterable. Judgments came and promises were fulfilled. Therefore, if it is indeed true that salvation is found in faith in Jesus Christ, the penalty for rejecting Christ could be assumed to be likewise severe if not more so. If the angel’s words were unchangeable, how much more the words of Christ? As such, it is imperative for the Jews and for every person to pay close attention to what we have heard in the Old Testament, through Christ, and in the New Testament Scripture so that we don’t drift away from it. Eternal ramifications exist depending upon what we do with Christ.

After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

⁴God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Salvation was preached by Jesus as He walked this earth. After He died and rose again, He revealed Himself to the twelve disciples and to the five hundred (1 Corinthians 15:6). God also bestowed gifts upon the disciples to do good works as God willed, never according to their own fleshly wills. These miracles were evidence that God had indeed come to indwell His people in the person of the Holy Spirit and that the church had been born. Establishing the church indwelt by Him was a large part of Christ’s purpose in coming.

⁵For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

⁶But one has testified somewhere, saying,

"WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM?

OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?

⁷"YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS;

YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR,

AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

⁸YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET "

**For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him
But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.**

Drawing from Psalm 8:4-6, the author makes the point that part of God's plan and design is to subject all things to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:27-28). The saints will one day reign with Christ in the world to come. It is not for the angels to rule but for Christ.

⁹But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Jesus, though He is God, also needed to be made for a time lower than the angels as He took on human flesh. This was so that He could die in our stead as the perfect sacrifice. Now, He is crowned with glory and honor, having by the grace of God tasted death for everyone. Those Who believe will have the promise of reigning in eternity with Jesus.

¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

God's delight and plan was to bring many sons and daughters to glory through knowing and loving Him. This was why He created Adam and Eve to begin with. It was for love, not because God needed something in addition to Himself. Rather, He wanted to share His goodness and sufficiency with them. Though mankinds fell into sin, through Christ they can be restored into right fellowship with God and receive the promise of eternal life. All things exist for Jesus, since He is God. If God didn't want things to exist, then they wouldn't. As He walked this earth and died for sin, His suffering was great. As He endured it faithfully without sinning, it proved that He was indeed God and the perfect sacrifice.

¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

**¹²saying,
"I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,
IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR
PRAISE."**

**¹³And again,
"I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM "
And again,
"BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."**

¹⁴Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

¹⁵and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Through salvation in Christ, we are adopted into the family of God, being made brothers and sisters of Him, all sons and daughters of the Father as Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17-18 indicate. Since we are made up of human flesh and blood, Jesus had to partake of the same and die as a man in order to free us from the devil's hold and from sin. Christ's victory over sin and death rendered the devil powerless for those who would believe and trust in the name of Christ.

¹⁶For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

Christ didn't come to die in the form of an angel for the angels, but He came as a man to die for mankind, the descendants of Abraham whom God had promised to Him (Genesis 12:1-3).

¹⁷Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

By having endured life in human flesh, Jesus is a merciful high priest for us. Since He was tempted in the same things in which we are tempted and since He suffered in the same ways that we suffer, He is able to come to our aid and deliver us from evil. He is both a faithful and merciful Savior, having shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sins.

Hebrews 3

¹Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

²He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.

³For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.

⁴For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Those who have received Christ as Savior are holy unto God because of the blood of Christ. He is our Apostle and High Priest because He was sent of God and able to make atonement for our sins. No man could do what Jesus has done. Jesus was faithful to do what God had asked of Him to do. The author now contrasts Christ with Moses. We already know that He is higher than the angels, but now we see that He is also higher than Moses, somebody whom the Jews really respected. Though Moses was faithful to do what God had asked of him, He wasn't perfect like Christ. Christ's obedience was perfect, and thus He deserves more glory and honor. Jesus is also God, which makes

Him higher than any man. Just as the builder of a house deserves more honor than the house itself, so Jesus deserves more honor than a man whom He created.

⁵Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;

⁶but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house--whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Moses was by and large faithful in what he did as a servant in God's house, that is, the Old Testament tabernacle. These things were symbols of that which was to come in Christ. Indeed, Christ is faithful as High Priest over us as His house, in whom He lives if we are truly of Him. This we will know if we hold fast our confidence and hope until the end. This is not to say that we won't stumble, for all believers stumble in many ways (James 3:2). Rather, it affirms that those who truly love God will be kept by Him, even if they struggle with the flesh more than others (Philippians 1:6).

⁷Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says,

"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,

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

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

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

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

Just as the unbelieving Jews did not get to enter the promised land because of their unbelief, mankind must choose whether they will receive Christ and enter the promised land of heaven or die in the wilderness of their own sin as Psalm 95:7-11 indicates.

¹²Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The author wants his readers, many of whom profess to know Christ, to be sure that none of them still possesses an evil, unbelieving heart that rejects Christ just as their forefathers had done. He commands them to encourage one another each day in the truth of God's Word so that sin doesn't creep in and lead them astray. Sin by nature is deceiving, leading to a false sense of calm and security and a temporary pleasure thereby hardening our hearts to the eternal truths of God. We need to be reminded and encouraged in our walks concerning the eternal truths of Christ in His Word. There will

be a day of judgment. Some will fall away from the grace of God by blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:10), while others will enter His rest because of their faith. We need to be careful that we are on the right path.

¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

**¹⁵while it is said,
"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."**

¹⁶For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?

¹⁷And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

¹⁹So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

The eternal rest of God is heaven, and faith is the access key. As Psalm 95:7 says, the unbelieving Jews in the Old Testament were left to die in the wilderness as God made them wander for forty years so that the wicked unbelieving generation would die off. Unbelievers can be sure that they will not enter God's rest in heaven. Believers have hope of the promised rest, leading even now to the Spirit's peace and joy in our hearts if we do not let sin sap our strength and steal our joy. Our assurance is rooted in its beginning point, the moment we chose to place our trust in Jesus Christ. The confession of our faith in Him is what we must never stop believing, for it is our assurance of our eternal life.

Hebrews 4

¹Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

²For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Like seed scattered on the ground, some catches root and grows while others dry up or gets eaten by the birds (Matthew 13:1-9). The good news preached is like scattered seed. Some who hear will profit by it by believing it and receiving Christ. Hearing the gospel alone doesn't save a person, but the hearing must be united by faith. We have a responsibility before God to receive and believe the truth, to repent of our sins, and to

trust in Christ for salvation. The last thing we as believers want is for anybody to come short of the promise of entering His rest. The promise remains and the entrance to heaven is made available in Christ, but the message heard through the preaching of the Word must be received in faith. Otherwise, there is no eternal rest.

**³For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said,
"AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,"
although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.**

⁴For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";

⁵and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."

⁶Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,

**⁷He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,
"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."**

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

⁹So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

¹⁰For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

¹¹Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

The author quotes several Old Testament passages (Psalm 95:7, Psalm 95:11, Genesis 2:2, Exodus 20:11) to emphasize the point that the rest that is referred to cannot be understood to be only a temporary earthly resting period. Since it is possible for some to still enter God's rest and since those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedient, it only makes sense that the rest referred to is an open invitation to enter heaven. God has been calling people to repent and obey from Moses' time to Joshua's time and to David's time and beyond and before. The invitation remains open to enter His rest for those who would believe. Joshua led the Israelites in conquering Canaan, yet there was still a promise of rest in the future. This had to refer to something eternal, something spiritual. Our Sabbath rest is a resting from our trying to earn salvation by works and trusting in Christ for salvation, Who has already finished the work on the cross. This eternal rest is our eternal Sabbath.

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4:12 is such an important verse in understanding the sufficiency and potency of the written Word of God. This is why we must be devoted to preaching it, reading it, and teaching it. It can cut through to the innermost thoughts of the heart and reveal to us the truth about who we are and how we need to change. It is alive, it is active, it works, and it is powerful unto salvation (Romans 1:16). We must never underestimate it or underutilize it. Since God can see everything, even the deepest innermost thoughts of our hearts, He can speak to us in regard to our deepest needs through His Word. He sees and knows even what we are blind to in our own hearts. God's Word makes our hearts bare before Him so that we can properly dissect and diagnose the issues of our hearts and be sanctified before Him.

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is our great high priest Who lived on earth, died, and rose again, having passed through the heavens to sit at God's right hand in His eternal, spiritual heaven. Our confession needs to be heeded and remembered because our God is very real, and His Word is very powerful. Our high priest is particularly sympathetic to our circumstances and struggles because He walked the earth. He understands the weakness that comes with humanness, and He knows the lure of temptation. Yet He never sinned, and thus He is the perfect one to go to when we need help, understanding, comfort, and deliverance from sin. For the believer, His throne is not one of wrath but of grace, and we can take comfort in drawing near before it. We can have confidence that we will find mercy and grace in our time of need.

Hebrews 5

¹For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;

²he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;

³and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.

The earthly high priest was appointed to serve his fellow man in religious matters pertaining to God, offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins, including himself. This awareness of his own frailty enabled him to deal gently with the ignorant and misguided. It made him sympathetic. Our Savior never did sin, but still He is sympathetic to our nature and condition. He is the perfect high priest.

⁴And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him,

**"YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU";**

⁶just as He says also in another passage,

**"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."**

No one could appoint themselves as a high priest. It had to be bestowed upon them when God called them as He did Aaron. Christ did not glorify Himself by choosing to become a high priest, but He was appointed one by God as Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4 indicate.

⁷In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

⁸Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

⁹And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

¹⁰being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

As a priest, Christ offered up prayers to God, and God heard Him because of His purity. That He cried and suffered furthered the testimony that He can relate to us and sympathize with us. Even though He was the Son of God, even Jesus had the opportunity to learn obedience through what He suffered. He had a choice to make in the Garden of Gethsemane whether to go to the cross or not, and He did obey. If even our perfect high priest learned obedience, so much more do we need to learn it. Fortunately, He will gladly help us to do so. Having obeyed God and gone to the cross, He has proven Himself perfect. He is the only source of salvation for those who will believe in Him and obey Him. The belief part has been detached from the obedience/repentance part in the modern gospel, but from the beginning, this was not so. Those who trust Christ prove

their love by their obedience, albeit imperfect, for faith without works is dead (James 2:17, 26). Salvation is only through Jesus Christ, and we must choose to follow Him.

¹¹Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

The author of Hebrews had much that he wanted to teach his readers, but before he could expound about the significance of the comparison of Christ to Melchizedek, he had a significant and lengthy rebuke ready. He called them dull of hearing. They should have become teachers, but they didn't know enough to be teachers, even struggling to be able to learn more now. They needed somebody to teach them the elementary principles of the things of God once again, for they were drinking milk like babies rather than eating the solid food of a weaned child, let alone that of an adult. These were infants in Christ, being not accustomed to receiving the teaching of God's Word. They were certainly not mature in Christ because they lacked discernment, struggling even to judge between what was good and what was evil. That is about as basic as it gets, and such a failure would certainly have opened their hearts to deception and evil acts. They needed the basics, they needed to be trained in good and evil, and they needed to steadily grow to maturity, a long, significant, and tall task. This is the call of every believer, to grow to maturity.

Hebrews 6

¹Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

²of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Maturity requires that we first master the elementary things of God's Word. Over time, the church seems to have watered down even what is considered elementary. Obviously, the most basic teaching is about the gospel, for the foundation of our faith is repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. But the author also includes teaching about the washing and laying on of hands along with teaching about the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment to be basic things. In today's churches these would be considered boring or irrelevant, let alone basic. These teachings involved the relevance of the

practices of the Law for today and things pertaining to the end times and eschatology. These are not basic things in most churches today judging from the content preached from the pulpit. Yet we should have moved even past these things by now.

³And this we will do, if God permits.

The author decided not to lay again the foundation in his letter according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, as Hebrews unfolds, some significant matters are attended to as the writer peels back layers of symbolism concerning the Old Testament and the gospel according to Christ.

⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

⁶and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

The only unforgivable sin is to reject the call of the Holy Spirit by blaspheming Him and refusing to trust in Christ and repent (Luke 12:10). It is not good enough just to hear the message, but it must be believed such that it changes us from the inside out. It is not good enough just to be enlightened enough to grasp the message of the gospel. It is not enough to sample or taste-test the gift of salvation without actually purchasing the whole offering. When the Spirit calls people, enough light enters the heart and mind such that they are considered partakers of the Holy Spirit. He has called them enough to respond to the gospel, but He doesn't override their will and ability to choose. These who are called taste spiritual things and get insight into heavenly matters, but it makes no difference to them in terms of how they respond. These who reject the gospel and blaspheme the sacrifice of Christ have missed their chance to respond to the light that they have been given. Until they die and go to heaven, they can respond in faith, but most don't even bother to concern themselves with eternity. Their chance at repentance passes them by forever.

⁷For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

⁸but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

True believers will produce good fruit (Matthew 7:16-20). Their lives are of a spiritual benefit for others, and they receive a blessing from God. Those whose lives produce thorns and thistles end up being burned because their works are dead and worthless. This is not to say that a believer who has gone off course for a time cannot produce good fruit or lead others astray. We can all be deceived and create a thistle instead of an apple. These who make shipwreck of their faith are close to being cursed (1 Timothy 1:18-20),

producing dead works that will be consumed by the fire of Christ's judgment. Their souls, however, will still enter heaven because they have truly believed (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Unbelievers, however, are cursed eternally, and they have no hope of heaven. A person who claims to be saved and then totally spurns Christ and never has any good fruit should question his or her salvation. This is not to say that they can lose their salvation, but it should be enough to make them ask whether or not their partaking of the Holy Spirit was genuine, full, and sincere (2 Corinthians 13:5).

⁹But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

The author really cares for his readers, and he doesn't believe that they are those who will fall away and prove themselves to have never really believed. He believes that their lives will show better things, things pertaining to salvation. (We should note that, since the readers are grouped as those who are saved and since they are contrasted with those who do not believe, this goes to prove that verses 4-6 are indeed speaking of unbelievers rather than believers losing their salvation, as some teach).

¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

¹¹And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

¹²so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

These believers had in fact already demonstrated themselves to be genuine by having good fruit to show for themselves. They had already done good work and love in God's name by serving the saints. In fact, they were still ministering to the saints. The author wanted the believers to continue to be diligent in doing good works and in serving one another. The more we are faithful, the stronger our hope and assurance grows as we see God continue to teach us and mold us into His likeness. The author didn't want the believers to be sluggish but to rather imitate those who were truly of God, those who faithfully held to their confession and endured in righteousness.

¹³For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

¹⁴saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."

¹⁵And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

God promised Abraham a son and a great number of offspring (Genesis 12:1-3, 22:17). In so doing, He swore by Himself, for there is no greater assurance than when God tells

us something. He is sure to follow through, and He did indeed bless Abraham. Even today, Abraham's spiritual descendants increase as people place their faith in Christ just as he was saved by faith. He received the promise of God by patiently waiting and believing, albeit imperfectly.

¹⁶For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

The way disputes between nations, gangs, tribes, etc. have been settled throughout history is by making an oath by swearing by someone or something that they view as of a higher authority than themselves. This confirmation is viewed as sufficient to end whatever dispute was going on.

¹⁷In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,

¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

God and His Word should be sufficient for us to know that He will not go back on His promise to us. We who have placed our trust in Him can be confident in the gospel such that we can take refuge and be encouraged in the hope set before us of eternal life. Our hope is absolutely certain, and nothing and no one can take it away from us.

¹⁹This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

²⁰where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Our hope of eternity anchors our soul, enabling us to be sure and steadfast because we have entered the very presence of God. The veil to the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle kept people like us out because the holiness of God would have killed us. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle and only once per year. The veil, however, was torn when Christ died on the cross (Matthew 27:51). He, being our new high priest, has entered the presence of God, being seated at God's right hand. Through Him and by Him, we, too, can enter the presence of God. Jesus Himself even indwells our hearts, the new temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19). Jesus is our high priest of the order of Melchizedek, which the author is about to explain.

Hebrews 7

¹For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

²to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

³Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

Melchizedek is referenced in Genesis 14:18-20. He appears sort of out of nowhere and then is not mentioned again. Some believe that he was Jesus preincarnate, but that is not clear from the passage. If anything, verse 15 of this Hebrews chapter shows that the comparison of Christ to Melchizedek are to show that there is a similarity and likeness between the two, not an overlap. The comparison to Melchizedek is made to differentiate Jesus from the priestly order descended from Aaron. Melchizedek, for example, came before Aaron and during the time of Abraham. There was no tabernacle at the time, no priestly offerings, and no Levitical system. The Law had not even been given yet, for Moses had yet to be born. Even so, Abraham gave this king of Salem (his name meant king of righteousness and his title meant king of peace) a tenth of his possessions as an offering unto God. Nothing is given as to Melchizedek's genealogy, but he is there and then not heard from again in the Scripture. It is as if he had no beginning and no end, which is why he makes for a good comparison to Christ, Who is eternal. Christ's priesthood is perpetual.

⁴Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

⁵And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

⁶But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.

⁷But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

⁸In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.

⁹And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,

¹⁰for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Levi was a descendant of Abraham, and, in a sense, through Abraham, he paid tithes to Melchizedek. This showed that Melchizedek was greater than the Levitical priesthood. It seems as though Melchizedek lived on because we know nothing more about him. The lesser, Abraham and, by implication, the Levitical priesthood, was blessed by the greater, Melchizedek. Melchizedek didn't have any authority to receive tithes under any law

because the Law had yet to be given. But even those who, under the Law, would have had authority to receive tithes, (namely Levi indirectly through His forefather Abraham) gave a tithe to Melchizedek. Thus, Melchizedek, is, in that sense, greater. His differentiation and even superiority to the Levitical priesthood is the thrust of the author's message to the Hebrews because of its relevance and foreshadowing to the superiority of Christ's priesthood.

¹¹Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

If the Law was sufficient to save and make a man perfect, there would be no need for another priestly line to exist, namely that of Melchizedek, which ultimately points to that of Christ. If salvation could have come through Aaron and Moses, there would be no need for Jesus. But Jesus did come, so there must have been reason for Him to do so.

¹²For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

The priests were in charge of enforcing the law, so if the priesthood changed, then the rules would also change. In other words, how we are saved cannot be bound up in keeping the Law or else there wouldn't have been a need for another priesthood.

¹³For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

Melchizedek is not of the tribe of Aaron or of the Levitical priesthood, nor did he officiate at any altar that we know of.

¹⁴For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

Similarly, our Lord Jesus Christ was not of the tribe of Levi but of Judah. Judah had nothing to do with the priesthood according to the Law of Moses. That was Levi's responsibility.

¹⁵And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

¹⁶who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

**¹⁷For it is attested of Him,
"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."**

So as Psalm 110:4 states, Jesus is a priest of the tribe of Judah, separate from the Law of Moses and according to the likeness and priestly order of Melchizedek. This is due to the fact that He came to earth and conquered death, proving that He possessed an indestructible life. Just as it appears that Melchizedek had no beginning or end, our Lord proves that He is God by living forever, even rising from the dead. He is not a high priest by lineage or genealogy but by virtue of His power and deity.

¹⁸For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

¹⁹(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

The Law was powerless to save, being unable to make anyone perfect. Its purpose was to reveal sin, not to save us from it (Galatians 3:24). Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. The hope Jesus offers is a better hope in that it is able to make us draw near to God, something the Law could never do in and of itself. In that sense, it was weak and useless, being unable to save.

²⁰And inasmuch as it was not without an oath

²¹(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him,

**"THE LORD HAS SWORN
AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND,
'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'");**

²²so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Jesus became a priest, establishing a new covenant according to a new priestly order by virtue of an oath made by God decreeing His priesthood. The Levitical priests became priests without an oath because it was by genealogy. But Jesus' authority is based upon God's will and design as Psalm 110:4 again illustrates.

²³The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing,

²⁴but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

²⁵Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

There were many Levitical priests because, as one would die off, another would take his place. Death prevented them from continuing. Jesus, however, because He lives forever, is a high priest forever. Therefore, He is able to save those who draw near to God

through Him. His purpose is to make intercession for those who wish to know God. He is the means of access to a relationship to God, and it is through Him that we have a right to enter God's presence and bring our requests before Him.

²⁶For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

²⁷who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

²⁸For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

Our high priest as believers, Jesus Christ, is innocent, undefiled, separate from sin and sinners, and exalted in the heavens. He does not need to offer sacrifices for His own sin as the priests of old did because He is free from sin. He died once for all on the cross, taking upon Himself all of our sin for the final time. The Law of Moses appointed weak, human high priests, but God's plan which came after the Law appointed His Son as a perfect high priest forever. Jesus Christ established a new covenant.

Hebrews 8

¹Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

²a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

Jesus is our high priest if we have received Him by faith. He is the only way to access the presence of God. He currently reigns with God in heaven, being seated at His right hand. The presence of God in heaven is the true sanctuary and true tabernacle which we all long for. It is not of man but of God. Presently, Christ indwells our hearts, but we long to see Him face to face in heaven.

³For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.

⁴Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

⁵who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

⁶But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry by becoming the mediator of a new and better covenant enacted upon better promises. Priests had the job of offering gifts and sacrifices before God. Jesus' job was to establish a new heavenly covenant, not a mere earthly one. He was not serving a mere earthly pattern (Exodus 25:40), for His job was to establish heavenly things, things that the earthly priesthood was only a copy and shadow of.

⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

⁸For finding fault with them, He says,

**"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;**

**⁹NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.**

**¹⁰"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE
OF ISRAEL**

**AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**

**¹¹"AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME,
FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.**

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

¹³When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

In Jesus, the old covenant became obsolete (Jeremiah 31:31-34). We can now see how the entirety of the Law was a foreshadowing of the second covenant which was necessary to come. God promised to write righteousness on the hearts of His people because the new covenant was a matter of the heart. Clearly, the first covenant wasn't faultless, otherwise there would have been no need for a second.

Hebrews 9

¹Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

²For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

³Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

⁴having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;

⁵and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Without going into detail, the author points out some of the basics as to the design of the Old Testament tabernacle. The tabernacle was the house of worship where the priests made the offerings on behalf of the people. The offerings were done in the holy place, which was the second innermost portion of the tabernacle. Only the priests could enter this portion. The holy place had the lampstand, the showbread, and the table. The innermost portion of the tabernacle was called the holy of holies, in which was the most valued items in regard to God's working in Israel's history. These included the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered in gold in which was Aaron's rod that budded, the ten commandments, and a golden jar of manna. The ark had cherubim of gold erected upon it, in between which was the mercy seat. This earthly sanctuary was very much part of the first covenant between God and Israel. In addition, there were regulations of divine worship.

⁶Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship,

⁷but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

Once the tabernacle was properly arranged according to God's prescribed design, the priests regularly offered up the sacrifices of the people in the holy place, doing their service of divine worship, which was being obedient to God. Obedience was always more important to God than the sacrifices themselves (1 Samuel 15:22). The high priest was the only one who could enter the holy of holies, the innermost portion of the tabernacle where the glory of God dwelled. He could only go in once per year having cleansed himself with blood offered up for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

⁸The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

⁹which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,

¹⁰since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

The author makes it clear that the Holy Spirit had not disclosed the full meaning of the holy place and how it would be entered, for it was merely a shadow of the better new covenant under Christ. Yet with Christ's coming, the revelation had now become clear. The tabernacle was merely a symbol for the present time, and the various washings, regulations, gifts, and sacrifices were never enough to cleanse a person's conscience. The Law was not given to save but to show us our sin. Why else would God have ordained the tedious nature of sacrifices unless He had a message to show His people that they were fallen and needed redemption? They were saved, as Abraham was, by faith, not by keeping the rituals of the Law (Romans 4:3). These regulations for the body were between Israel and God, but God was most concerned about their hearts and the heart of every man. With Christ's death and resurrection, a time of reforming of the old covenant had come as He revealed the true spiritual meaning of the Old Testament symbols.

¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

¹²and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

When Christ came, He entered into a tabernacle that is not of this world but spiritual and heavenly. As our high priest, He tore down the veil that prevented the ordinary man from entering the presence of God, and He made it possible for God to dwell in our hearts and to come near to man. This He did by the shedding of His own blood, offering Himself up as a perfect sacrifice for sin so that we can all enter the holy of holies in the spiritual sense. Our eternal redemption was accomplished not by the blood of bulls and goats and calves but by Jesus' sacrifice.

¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,

¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The blood of bulls and goats and the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer offered to God in the old covenant were for the purpose of sanctifying and cleansing the flesh. It was a way of outwardly consecrating the Jews before God. However, it could not do what Christ's blood did because the perfect sacrifice of Christ alone can change us from the inside out, redeeming our conscience and changing our hearts.

¹⁵For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Since Christ was the one Who died for sin, He is the One Who has the role of mediator of the new covenant. In other words, salvation is only through Him and no other means. Through Him alone is redemption for sin possible. Man has been sinning from the beginning. They sinned before the Law was given, they sinned under the Law, and they sin today. It is Jesus' sacrifice that blots the sin of all believers away, including those who walked by faith even before Christ came. All who have responded to the call of God in faith will receive the promise of eternal life. Now that Christ has come and definitively spoken, salvation is by no other name (Acts 4:12). More revelation has been given, and we are accountable to know it, to believe it, and to preach it.

¹⁶For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

¹⁷For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

By God's rules of establishing a covenant between He and man, there must be the death of the One who made it. This is the way it is because this is how God says it is. As long as the one who made the covenant is alive, the covenant is not in force, according to God. The point is that Jesus' death and then resurrection was sufficient before God to establish a new covenant with Jesus as the mediator of it.

¹⁸Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

¹⁹For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

²⁰saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU."

²¹And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

²²And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

²³Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

The first covenant was also inaugurated with the shedding of blood (Exodus 24:8), but it was only animal blood and not that of our precious Savior. This was merely a shadow of what was to come in Christ's perfect sacrifice. It is so important that we understand that the old covenant and system of worship was a copy of spiritual things to come in the new covenant. Thus, the symbols in the Old Testament, such as the tabernacle and the vessels of ministry (altars, etc.), were sprinkled with animal blood, water, scarlet wool, and hyssop to show their imperfection. The people and even the book of the Law were sprinkled with blood, foreshadowing the need for a Savior and a new covenant. Indeed, the gospel requires the shedding of Christ's perfect blood, without which there is no forgiveness of sin. His blood spiritually sprinkled on our hearts and appropriated by repentance and faith is the core of the gospel message and new covenant.

²⁴For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

²⁵nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.

Christ entered heaven itself, not a mere copy of the true one. He now sits at God's right hand making intercession for us and advocating for us. He only needed to offer Himself up as a perfect sacrifice one time unlike the priests of old that had to enter the holy place time after time.

²⁶Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Christ's institution and establishment of the new covenant serves as a consummation of the ages in that the old covenant has passed away and God has now spoken to us of His spiritual kingdom more clearly than ever through His Son Jesus Christ. There is no need for Him to be crucified over and over again, for His blood has been shed once for all.

²⁷And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

²⁸so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Christ's second coming will be to take up His church into heaven with Him so that they get to see the fullness and culmination of their great salvation. His is coming again not to die for sin but to establish an eternal kingdom as King. He is coming to reign, and we who are His eagerly await His coming. Every person will die once. There is no reincarnation. After death, every person will face the judgment of God. Those who never received Christ on the merits of His sacrifice will not enter heaven. However, He died that many would come to know Him, but sadly few will respond in faith.

Hebrews 10

¹For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

It is essential to view the Law as a shadow of what has come in Christ. There are things to learn from the Law, principles that are indeed timeless as they point to Christ and how He desires us to live. However, the Law was never given to save because it cannot. If it could, the sacrifices wouldn't have needed to be continually offered up because they would have already made the one offering them pure of heart. But the Law did not clean the conscience, for it made people even more aware of their sin. This was God's intention all along (Galatians 3:22). Before we can turn to God in faith and obedience, we need to first become aware of our fallen nature. The Law serves to make this happen, shutting us up under sin and death with no hope of earning our way to heaven. Only Christ makes eternal life possible for those who draw near to Him.

³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The sacrifices year by year and day by day served as regular reminders of the sin of the natural man. Until we put our faith in Christ, our sins remain on our account. The blood of bulls and goats never brought salvation to the people of Israel. It was merely an outward, symbolic consecration to God, differentiating them from the pagan nations around them. Only those who acknowledged their sin and walked by faith before God leading to obedience from the heart could be saved.

**⁵Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,
"SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,
BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;**

**⁶IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE
TAKEN NO PLEASURE.**

**⁷"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME
(IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME)
TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"**

**⁸After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT
OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE
YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law),**

**⁹then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away
the first in order to establish the second.**

¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

As Psalm 40:6-8 says, burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin cannot make God accept us. Christ came and did perfectly the will of God so that we could be saved on His merits. The sacrifices done according to the Law could not save. Thus, there is no longer any need to perform sacrifices since Christ has established a second and better way. Through His perfect obedience and sacrifice we can be sanctified once and for all. It is the offering up of His body that counts, not the blood of bulls and goats. In Jesus, there is more than external symbolic consecration. There is a setting apart and reformation of our hearts.

¹¹Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

¹²but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

¹³waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

**¹⁶"THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,
AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"**

He then says,

**¹⁷"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS
I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."**

¹⁸Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The Old Testament priests daily offered sacrifices, but these could never take away sin. Jesus, however, offered Himself up as a sacrifice for sins for all time. There is no longer any offering for sin because Christ was the perfect and final offering for sin (Psalm 110:1). We have forgiveness, and that is what we need. In God's eyes, we stand perfected for all time, even though in this life God is still teaching, molding, and shaping us into His image. Positionally before God we are perfect; practically in this life, Christ is still sanctifying us. But He will complete the work that He started (Philippians 1:6). The new covenant is a transformation of the heart in which God's law, His moral imperatives and desires, are written on our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:33-34). He remembers our lawless deeds no more. The Law shows us right from wrong, but only in Christ can forgiveness be found.

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

²⁰by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

²²let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Christ has made it so that we can boldly and confidently enter the presence of God and offer up our requests before Him. The new covenant is a real and living relationship with the God of the universe inaugurated by Christ Who by His sacrifice tore down the veil that had prevented us from entering God's presence. With Christ as our high priest, advocate, mediator, and intercessor, we can draw near with full assurance and sincerity before God with cleansed consciences. We don't even have to worry about external washings and regulations because in Christ even our bodies have, in a spiritual sense, been washed clean before God.

²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Our confession of faith is our anchor as we confess Christ as Savior and Lord of our lives. This we are to hold tightly to so as not to waver and doubt. It is important to remember what Christ has done for us, to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ in faithfulness, love, and good deeds, and to gather together with other believers. Where there are true believers, there needs to be fellowship. Christ knows that being around those who have likewise been redeemed is of great value to our individual walks with Him. As the day of Christ's second coming grows nearer every day, the more difficult it will be to walk in faithfulness. The more we will need to be encouraged by one another. We must never underestimate a kind word spoken for the purpose of encouraging a person in their walk and service before Christ. Our Lord is faithful to enable us to persevere.

²⁶For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

²⁷but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

Every person will have a chance to receive the truth one way or another in their lives. Otherwise, they could not be held accountable for a choice they did not make (Joshua 24:15). God has revealed Himself through creation, through His Son, through His Word, and even in our consciences which convict us of right and wrong (Romans 1:18-20, 32, Psalm 19:1-2, Ecclesiastes 3:11). As the human heart encounters the knowledge of the truth, it can either seek Jesus out, in which case He will be found (John 3:21), or it can reject Him, in which case there will be a terrifying expectation of judgment by fire which will consume Christ's adversaries (Isaiah 26:11). This eternal torment (Revelation 20:15) should motivate people to seek out Jesus, and it certainly has relevance in providing urgency to the gospel message. For those who reject the gospel, there is no sacrifice of Christ to be available for them to save them.

²⁸Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

²⁹How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

In the Law, there were many sins that held the penalty of death on the testimony of two or three witnesses. It was indeed very, very severe, and as a shadow of the new covenant now revealed in Christ, we see how it illustrated that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Hell is indeed a very severe penalty. Those who reject the Son of God and thereby trample Him under foot will most certainly face His wrath and vengeance. They also blaspheme and insult the Holy Spirit of grace and refuse to appropriate the blood of the covenant which alone could have saved and purified them.

³⁰For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY " And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

³¹It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

As Deuteronomy 32:35-36 states, God will judge and hand out vengeance for those who refuse the sacrifice of His Son. It is the most loving thing our Lord could have ever done by giving up His Son and letting Him die an excruciating death on our behalf. To reject Him is certain to bring us God's wrath for all eternity. To fall into the wrath of God is a terrifying thing. Hell's is God's punishment, not the devil's playground. This is why we should fear Him (Luke 12:5).

³²But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

³³partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

These believers were enduring great persecution, even joyfully accepting the seizure of their property. They refused to denounce Jesus, and they maintained their joy by knowing that they had eternal possessions as an inheritance. They were publicly insulted, and many of their brethren were imprisoned. Yet they showed compassion and sympathy, not neglecting them but associating with them. They were not afraid to stand for Christ. It did not take long for the persecution to start once these put their faith in Christ. The world doesn't like Christ, and they will hate us on account of hating Him (John 15:18). All who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12).

³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

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

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

³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

The author wanted the believers to endure in faith and confidence, for they had a great reward to look forward to. As believers, we may stumble (Peter even denied Christ three times). But because of Christ in us, we are not those who ultimately shrink back to destruction. Our faith by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit in our hearts will preserve our souls. God's desire is that we walk with endurance, doing the will of God for us, even if it involves suffering, knowing that we will be rewarded accordingly. As Habakkuk 2:3-4 says, Christ will be back soon, so let us look forward eagerly to His coming and to our eternal rewards for our faithfulness (2 Corinthians 5:10). We have the promise of eternal life, and Christ will deliver on His promise.

Hebrews 11

¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

²For by it the men of old gained approval.

Hebrews 11:1 is the clearest definition of faith in the Bible. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. It is being convinced beyond all doubt that what we hope for in heaven and eternity is real and guaranteed to those who believe. Faith is the conviction of things not seen. It is trusting Christ and His Word about spiritual and kingdom truths even though we can't see them with the physical eye. It is believing what God says because

He says it and being totally confident in what He has said. Believing what God had revealed to them was how the people of old were saved. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to Him as righteousness. There were many more who were saved by their faith as well. God had not yet spoken to them in the coming of His Son, so they were not accountable for that revelation. They were accountable for what they knew and for what they had heard from God. They were accountable for whether or not they would believe God and walk obediently by faith.

³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Those who walk by faith understand that God created the world by His very word, making what we see from that which was unseen, creating something out of nothing. Those who refuse to believe that God spoke the world into existence as this verse so clearly states have an issue of faith to deal with.

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Abel obtained a testimony that he was righteous by faith. In other words, Abel was saved on the basis of his faith by offering a sacrifice that was pleasing to God. We don't know precisely what Abel knew about how to sacrifice to God, but we do know that God honored his sacrifice and rejected Cain's. Something was right about Abel's motives, while something was definitely wrong in Cain's heart. Cain didn't do right, and Scripture indicates that he knew better (Genesis 4:7). Abel's faith leading to his obedience was his salvation. His faith speaks as a testimony to us even today as we learn just what it is that pleases God.

⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Enoch apparently was taken by God directly into heaven (Genesis 5:24). He never had to suffer physical death because God took him up to heaven directly and miraculously. His testimony to all who would come after him is that he was pleasing to God on the basis of his faith.

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

It is not sacrifices, ritual, or human attempts at piety that impress God. It is faith and faith alone that pleases God. Without faith, pleasing God is completely impossible. Those who come to know God must believe that He is Who He said He was according to His Word and that He rewards those who seek Him out. Saving faith requires that we believe in the God of the Bible, the I Am, not just any generic god. In our time under the

new covenant, Jesus is the name through which salvation is possible. Faith also requires that we believe that God will reward us with heaven and an inheritance. There is an incentive to believing, and there is nothing wrong with looking forward to the reward.

⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

God spoke directly to Noah revealing His plan for him and his family and for the world. Noah by faith believed God, and this was how he was saved. His obedience to actually go and build the ark despite the ridicule of the world served as evidence of true faith. His testimony of faith and obedience stood in stark contrast to the lack of belief in the world, condemning it by example. By faith he became an heir of righteousness.

⁸By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

⁹By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

¹⁰for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham demonstrated his faith by obeying God when God spoke to him and told him to get up and go to a place that God would show him in due time. He didn't know where he was going, but he went anyway. The land to which God took him would become the inheritance for his offspring, the nation of Israel. He was willing to move to the land of promise and leave the familiar customs of his homeland because he believed God. He lived in tents with his sons because he was looking toward the heavenly city with eternal foundations, built and designed by God. His heavenly mindset and desire to please God outweighed any temporal inconveniences because he was looking forward to the treasure of heaven.

¹¹By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

Sarah was also considered righteous before God on the merits of her faith. She was granted by God the ability to conceive even though she was well past child-bearing age. Sarah's faith, like all others in this passage, was imperfect. She, along with Abraham, even laughed at God concerning their promised son. Yet her testimony is that, despite her doubts, she did put her faith in the word of God to her. She believed that God was faithful and that He would keep His promise. Thus, she was saved by faith.

¹²Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.

Abraham had countless offspring through the generations as God had promised him in Genesis 15:5, 22:17. This all happened despite the fact that he was an extremely old man when Isaac was born. Physically, he was the father of the Jews, and spiritually, he is the father of all who would believe in faith as he did.

¹³All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

¹⁴For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

¹⁵And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Abraham and Sarah died before they got to see the fruition of God's promise to them. They enjoyed their children and grandchildren, but it was only many years after they died that Israel would become a great and numerous nation. Even today, spiritually many still follow Abraham's testimony of faith. Those faithful men and women of old died before receiving the full fruition of God's promise to them, just as we die before we actually get to experience heaven. We who believe welcome the promises of God by faith even though we cannot yet experience them. We see them by faith, not by sight. We confess that we are but strangers and exiles who make our way through this world even though we are citizens of heaven. Heaven is our eternal home, our true country. While we are passing through this earth and this life, as short as it is, we who walk by faith make it clear that we are much more interested in our true home. Realizing just how much better the true country of heaven is, we press on in faith, not turning back since we recognize the passing ways of this world. Those who walk by faith have a city in heaven prepared for them, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2). God is not ashamed to be called their God because they love Him and He loves them. Faith makes this relationship possible.

¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

¹⁸it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."

¹⁹He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Abraham was tested by God and asked to offer up his son Isaac, the son of the promise and the one he had waited so long for (Genesis 21:12). Yet Abraham was willing to obey God because he believed that God would raise him from the dead. He was so convinced

that God's promise to him was sure that he was willing to even sacrifice Isaac knowing that God would have to bring him back. That is amazing faith. In a sense, Isaac, the only begotten son of Abraham, served as a type of Christ Who was to come to die and be resurrected for the sins of all people.

²⁰By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

Isaac also was saved by faith. Only one of his sons could receive the blessing, and Jacob stole it from Esau. Isaac's faith, even though he was deceived by his son, was shown in that he believed the promise of God to Abraham as his blessing demonstrated (Genesis 27:27-29).

²¹By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

Jacob's faith was demonstrated as he was dying by blessing each of the sons of Joseph, believing in God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 48:16). He also worshipped God, which is a guaranteed outcome for those who believe His words.

²²By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

Joseph demonstrated his faith by believing that Israel would one day exit from Egypt. He, too, believed God's promise to Abraham that Israel would receive the promised land. In fact, he ordered that his bones would be kept until they were buried in that land (Genesis 50:24-25, Exodus 13:19). He had full confidence in God's word.

²³By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Moses' parents demonstrated faith by believing that God had a purpose for their son and by refusing to allow him to be executed. Instead, they hid the child and trusted God for his preservation, being unafraid of the king's edict to kill the young children.

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

²⁵choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

Moses demonstrated his faith in God's plan and purpose for Israel and that God was the one true God. He decided to give up the comforts and status of being raised in the king's palace, and he chose to be associated with the slaves of Israel. He gave up the passing comforts and temporary pleasures of sin for the sake of God's purposes. The reproach of His Lord was more important to him than the wealth of Egypt. Even though Moses didn't even know the name of Christ, Scripture says that he considered the reproach of Christ. This implies that anytime an Old Testament person believed God, they also believed Christ. They couldn't worship God without also worshipping His Son even if they didn't know His name. By faith, they honored Christ by honoring God. Looking toward the heavenly reward is so central to the gospel. We must be those who look forward to eternity and the pleasures of heaven. Moses didn't fear the wrath of the king in that he trusted God enough to do what was right. This doesn't mean he wasn't concerned enough to flee to the wilderness. Surely, he felt fear, but he didn't let fear dictate his decision-making. He let faith lead him. Thus, he endured by walking by faith, seeing Him who is unseen. Moses also obeyed God by faith by keeping the Passover and sprinkling the blood as God had told him to do so that the firstborn of Israel would not be killed along with the Egyptians (Exodus 12:12-13).

²⁹By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

At least some of Israel passed by faith through the Red Sea, trusting God for their safety and miraculous preservation.

³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

At least some of Israel had faith enough to believe God that just by doing as He said, walking around the wall and shouting, that Jericho would be defeated.

³¹By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

Rahab, though living a sinful lifestyle as a prostitute, chose to walk by faith (James 2:25) and welcome the spies from Israel in peace as they were scoping out the land in order to defeat it as God had commanded them. By cooperating with God, despite the risks to her life, she demonstrated faith. In fact, she is named in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5).

³²And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

³³who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

³⁴quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

³⁶and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

³⁸(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

The author testifies that there are countless others who also walked by faith, from Gideon to Samson to David and even to unnamed prophets of God. Most suffered ill repute because of their testimony before God. Many suffered greatly, some were grotesquely martyred, and some performed miracles. The bottom line is that they all believed God and did what He said no matter what. Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah among others were outstanding testimonies of faith, refusing to compromise and being willing to say what God told them to say no matter the cost.

³⁹And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

⁴⁰because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

Approval before God was gained by faith in each and every case, and the same is true today. Today, we have a fuller and more complete understanding of salvation and God's working throughout history. God has something even better for His church because He has drawn near by indwelling the hearts of those who believe. The salvation of the faithful men and women of old was ultimately culminated in Christ's shed blood, just as ours is today. They, like us, are made perfect in and through Christ. They did not know His name, but by worshipping God by faith according to the revelation of God given to them, they worshipped Christ and were saved.

Hebrews 12

¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Sometimes it is easy to feel as if it is too hard to be faithful and too difficult to believe. Yet there are many who have gone before us, who, despite their shortcomings, have endured in faith. Therefore, we, too, should lay aside all that holds us back from being and doing what God wants us to do. Sin so easily entangles even the most faithful of believers, and we must by faith lay it aside and press on, running with endurance the race that God has given each of us. Our faith is imperfect, but Christ is the One Who has authored our faith and Who will be faithful to perfect and complete it. He will fully sanctify us and one day glorify us, taking us with Him into God's presence in heaven. Jesus' endured because He was able to look past the pain to the joy that would be His by making it possible for many to come to faith. He looked to the heavenly prize and despised the earthly shame and suffering. God exalted Him for His faithfulness and seated Him at His right hand. We, too, will be exalted in due time for our faithfulness if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).

⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

**⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,
"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,**

NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

**⁶FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."**

⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

⁹Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

¹¹All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Sometimes resisting sin and standing for Christ will cost us our lives. The author's message to his readers and to us is that we must whatever we need to in order to avoid the entanglements of sin. In the garden, Christ sweated blood as He undertook the strains of doing God's will. God's will is not easy often times, and we must struggle against our flesh. But we must be willing to fight, for when we resist the devil, he will flee (James 4:7). Quoting from Proverbs 3:11-12, the author reminds us that God disciplines those sons whom He loves. We who are Christ's children by adoption through the blood of Christ should expect to be trained in how to walk in holiness. When we veer off course, God, in His great love, will intervene to convict us of sin and lead us back to the way of righteousness. If He didn't discipline us, we would have reason to believe that He doesn't love us. But it is because He cares for our well-being and because He wants us to be trained in holiness that He will correct us. He may allow difficulty into our lives to sharpen our faith (James 1:2-4). Though discipline is not fun or enjoyable, afterward it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness. God knows that this is best for us, and in the end, it will bring us the greatest joy. God's discipline is always purposeful, and it always results in increased holiness and peace.

¹²Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

That God's discipline is motivated by love and for our best interest doesn't make it any more enjoyable in the process. As such, it should be a motivator to deter us from wanting to sin. It should move us to want to strengthen the parts of our hearts and minds that are weak. It should encourage us to study God's Word all the more. It should lead us to avoid dangerous places that could make us stumble. Sin is a downward death spiral of destruction, and rather than letting things go from bad to worse, we need to start drawing near to God so that He will draw near to us (James 4:8). As we refrain from sin over time and continue to grow in faith and obedience, what was weak can be made well rather than disjointed even further.

¹⁴Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

We are to do all that we can to live peacefully with one another (Romans 12:18). We shouldn't be those who try to pick fights or who like to get on each other's nerves. As we grow in holiness, it will help others who need to know Jesus to see Jesus in us.

¹⁵See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

¹⁶that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

¹⁷For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

The grace of God means that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven for those who truly repent. No person should ever be told that they cannot be forgiven. The only people who won't be forgiven by God are those who harbor sin in their hearts and who lack the faith to believe. Some people, like Esau, want to change, but they just love their sin too much. It can bring them to desperation and to tears, but still they just can't turn to God and abandon their sin. Esau was evil, immoral, godless, and short-sighted, desiring to sell his entire inheritance for a single meal. The author wants there to be no bitterness in the body of Christ because bitterness stems from jealousy, lust, distrust, and many other vices that divide. Contentment and joy should mark Christ's people, not bitterness. This is why we must be willing to forgive and not harbor grudges.

¹⁸For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,

¹⁹and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.

²⁰For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."

²¹And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."

God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai in a manner that created great fear among the Israelites. Between the trumpet sound, the fearsome words, the gloom, the whirlwind, and the blazing fire, it was just too much for them to bear. Even Moses was full of fear and trembling (Deuteronomy 9:19). God's holiness was so frightening that if even an animal approached the mountain, it would be killed (Exodus 19:12). God was sending a message to Israel and to all people of all time as to just how holy He is and how corrupt they are apart from Christ.

²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Mount Zion speaks of the heavenly kingdom and the New Jerusalem, our dwelling place with the living God. We will be in His city with countless angels and the multitudes of those who have confessed Christ as Lord and who have finally been made perfect. We will worship Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant established by the shedding of His blood on the cross. In Genesis 4:10, we read that Abel's shed blood was crying out to God in heaven. But Christ's blood sacrifice speaks much more loudly to God than Abel's murder, and God hears our mediator and accepts us as His own.

²⁵See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

Our call as believers is to share the good news of forgiveness in Christ. It is imperative that people listen to the message and respond in faith. Jesus is alive, and He is speaking through His living and active Word. God warned many disobedient people in the Old Testament, and many were killed by Him for their disbelief. Given His love for His Son, certainly we would expect God to be faithful and just to execute wrath on those who reject Jesus. Equally so, we know He will be faithful and true to forgive those who ask.

²⁶And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."

²⁷This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

When God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai, His voice shook the earth. Yet there is a time when both heaven and earth will be shaken in the future. God will bring wrath upon the earth in the last days, and eventually He will create a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10-12). Created things will pass away, and there will be a new creation (Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:1). That which cannot be shaken, such as our souls and our eternity, will be sure.

²⁸Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.

Indeed, we are inheritors of a certain coming kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. It cannot be shaken, and it will not pass away. Given our eternal hope and inheritance, we should be thankful to our Lord and motivated to serve Him in reverence and awe. We should never forget that our God is the same God today as He was when He manifested Himself as a consuming fire on the mountain. He is that powerful, that holy, and that magnificent.

We must never underestimate or undervalue our Lord. Every time we think of Jesus, it should motivate us to thank Him and serve Him.

Hebrews 13

¹Let love of the brethren continue.

Love in the body of Christ is a defining mark (John 13:34-35) that sets us apart from the world. Jesus demonstrated love (Romans 5:8), and we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hospitality is also commanded of believers, especially toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to be those who look out for those whom we don't know but who need our help. We should be compassionate as the story of the good Samaritan illustrates (Luke 10:30-37). We never know if we, too, might be in the presence of an angel (e.g. Genesis 18:2).

³Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

Some of the believers were in prison due to the intense persecution of the time. They deserved to be remembered and cared for as best as was possible. In order to be fully sympathetic, the author advised his readers to think as if they were in prison along with their brethren. This would help them to be compassionate and to think how they could best minister to them. Christians should also look out for their brothers and sisters who are suffering for whatever reason, since when one part of the body suffers, all suffer.

⁴Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

The marriage bed is only for intimacy within marriage. It is not for intimacy before marriage (fornication) or with somebody outside of the marriage (adultery). Too often the church does not view marital purity as essential as it ought to. Since Jesus compared lust to adultery, Christians need also to control their thoughts lives in all purity. Those who live in sin and who do not know Christ will face His wrath on judgment day. Believers who sin in any way can expect the discipline of the Lord.

⁵Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

**⁶so that we confidently say,
"THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.
WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"**

The love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Loving wealth can control us and lead us into all kinds of other sins (Luke 16:13). In Christ, Who is all we need, we should be content (1 Timothy 6:8). Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6). The security of a relationship with God is more valuable than anything this world has to offer (Psalm 118:6). He will never leave us or forsake us as Deuteronomy 31:6 says.

⁷Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

We should remember and value those who have been instrumental in leading us to the gospel, to faith, and to growth in the Lord. Those who teach the Word are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17). They deserve respect insofar as they imitate Christ and rightly teach His Word. A godly example is a great blessing.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

Our God doesn't change, His gospel doesn't change, and His Word doesn't change (1 Peter 1:25). The Jesus of the Old Testament is the same as the Jesus of today. There is not a harsh God of the Old Testament and a compassionate God of the New Testament. God has always been constant, and our interpretation and understanding of Scripture must always reflect that reality. New and strange teachings will always creep into the church, and it is imperative that we know God's unchangeable Word so that we are not deceived. An environment of grace leads to growth, not a legalistic one made up of Old Testament rituals or any manmade standards. Rituals do not sanctify, for salvation and sanctification are and have always been a matter of the heart.

¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Our altar of worship and our avenue of salvation is the cross of Jesus Christ. It is not a manmade altar for bulls and goats. Just because a person was of a priestly lineage or because they are a member of the clergy or some denomination does not mean that they have partaken of the gospel. They may have their altars that they preside over, but only those that know Jesus have access to God directly.

¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.

¹²Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

¹³So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

The blood of the animals for the sacrifice for entering the holy place was drained from their bodies which were burned outside of the camp as a symbol of sin being removed from the people of Israel. Jesus died where sin was most present, outside of the tabernacle and in the camp of the everyday person. This He did as a symbol that He bore the sins of all people, not just the privileged, the religious, or the social elite. If we want salvation, we must meet Him on His terms, outside of the camp, bearing His reproach. It is not popular to acknowledge sin and a sin nature, let alone Christ as unique Savior, but it is what must be done.

¹⁴For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

This world and this earth is not our home, but our enduring city is in heaven. That is where we belong, and that is what we should be seeking.

¹⁵Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

¹⁶And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Because of Jesus and by His empowering, we should continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. He is not interested in bulls and goats but in our hearts, hearts that speak glory, honor, and praise to Him. He delights in thankful hearts. He also delights when we do good and share with those in need, for sacrificing for others' well being demonstrates both love and faith.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

The church is to be led by faithful men called elders. These deserve our obedience as long as they are in line with obedience to God. We should let them lead us and teach us according to God's Word, for it is their job and their responsibility before God to look over us as a shepherd looks out for his sheep. They will give an account to God for just how well they shepherd those God entrusts to their care. We shouldn't do things to make them miserable, but we should follow faithfully in their teaching according to the Scripture, bringing them joy as they see us grow. This is profitable then for all in the body of Christ.

¹⁸Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

¹⁹And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

The author asks the believers to pray for him and for his brethren that they could come to them quickly to visit them and encourage them. They testified that they had a clean conscience before God and that they desired to obey God in all things. This is the testimony that the leaders of God's people need to have.

²⁰Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

²¹equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The ultimate example of how to lead God's people is given by Christ Himself, the great Shepherd of the sheep. He was raised from the dead by God Himself. The author prays that the sheep will be equipped in every good thing to do God's will. He prays also that Christ will continue to work in them according to what is pleasing in God's sight. His prayer is for their continued devotion and sanctification. In order to be able to be adequate and equipped for every good work, they need to keep studying God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

²²But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

The author wants his brethren to listen to what he has said in this brief letter, to heed the exhortation, and to do as he has said. It is not too much for them to bear, even though, at times, it is very direct.

²³Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.

²⁴Greet all of your leaders and all the saints Those from Italy greet you.

²⁵Grace be with you all.

Timothy had been released from prison, and the author may be able to visit his readers along with him. He sends his greetings to the local elders and to all the believers. He also sends greetings from the church in Italy. Finally, he prays that grace will be with them all, guiding them, shaping them, leading them, and helping them to grow to maturity in Christ.