

Analysis of
HEBREWS

"THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST"

"But now He [Jesus] 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."
Hebrews 8:6

Annotated Outline of Hebrews
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Introduction

Authorship

We do not know who wrote this letter. There is a strong likelihood that the author was a Messianic Jew. He was a Jewish person who had become a committed believer in Christ. He had a pastor's heart and was dismayed by the possibility of his audience rejecting, because of persecution, their prior confession of faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. He does everything in his power to persuade them not to depart from their original confession and to remain true to Jesus.

The writer is very familiar with the OT Scriptures. He is very familiar with OT passages that prove Jesus is superior to angels. He is very familiar with the priesthood, with the high priesthood, and with the qualifications of a priest. He is very familiar with the Levitical sacrificial system, and he is familiar with the Old Covenant and the [New Covenant](#). He does a superb job of exegeting the only two obscure OT passages that discuss the cryptic Melchizedek – Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:4.

The writer is a fluent speaker and writer of the Greek language. He uses [vocabulary](#) that is not found anywhere else in the Greek NT. He is [well versed in the Septuagint](#), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is likely, therefore, that he was a [Hellenistic Jew](#).

Ancient testimony gave four men as [possible authors](#) – Paul, Luke, Barnabas, and Clement. More [modern writers have suggested](#) Apollos, Peter, Jude, Stephen, Silas, Epaphras, and Philip. We know with certainty that the writer was a contemporary with, and a personal acquaintance of, Timothy (Heb. 13:23). If anything, that gives a slight edge to the Apostle Paul as being the author. But the style and the vocabulary are distinct from Pauline literature. Thus, none of these have become overwhelming favorites. The safest, and most accurate answer is that we do not know who wrote this letter. That conclusion does not present a barrier to its inspiration, however.

Recipients

The Greek / English title of the book, “To the Hebrews” is probably accurate, even though it was probably not part of the original document. The closely-reasoned logic of the author in favor of Jesus as being the superior fulfillment of the OT prophecies argues heavily that the readers were Jewish, though Hellenized to some degree. Scholars argue on both sides of the question as to whether the writer was located inside or outside [Israel](#), and as to whether the readers were located inside or outside the country. That makes little difference to me, for in neither instance does it change my understanding of the theme of the letter and its implications.

I believe that the readers were Jewish Christians, and that they were under duress. Much like the community discovered at Qumran, they may have attempted to isolate themselves from the world and from what they had originally considered to be apostate Judaism. But now they were under pressure to forsake their Christian beliefs and return to Judaism. We know that they had been persecuted in the past and had withstood those persecutions. It is my belief that people from the Jewish community were urging them to renounce their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. In fact it may be true that they were undergoing persecution in that regard. The writer urges the readers to stay true to the confession they had once made in regard to Jesus being the Messiah. The entire argument of the book makes its case in that regard. Maintaining their steadfast faith in Jesus as their Messiah assures them of full participation in His coming Millennial Kingdom with all those rights and privileges.

Date of Writing

We do not know the precise date of writing. Since the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple in AD 70, it seems safe to assume that tragedy had not yet occurred when this letter was written. If it had already occurred, it would have been compelling proof that the writer could have used in his discussion that the [New Covenant](#) had replaced the [Old](#) one. The writer's mention of Timothy's release from prison (Heb. 13:23) reinforces an upper limit of the date of writing. Probably the author penned this letter some time in the 60's A.D. Beyond that we cannot be more precise.

The Theme of the Letter

The great bulk of the letter to the Hebrews is **The Pre-eminence of the Messiah-Son in His Person and Work** (Heb. 1:1-10:18). In broad terms,

Part 1 is the theme: God's Revelation to Man (Heb. 1:1-3);

Part 2, The Superiority of the Messiah-Son to Angels (Heb. 1:4-2:18);

Part 3, The Superiority of the Messiah-Son to Moses (Heb. 3:1-6);

Part 4, The Parenthetical Second Warning: The Danger of Failing to Enter God's Rest through Trusting in Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:7-4:13); and

Part 5, The Superiority of the Messiah-Son to Aaron (Heb. 4:14-10:18). This fifth part breaks down as follows:

First, Jesus is a more accessible high priest (Heb. 4:14-16)

Second, He is a better priest in essence (Heb. 5:1-10)

Third, The parenthetical warning to the readers: Press on to maturity in Christ! (Heb. 5:11-6:20)

Fourth, Jesus participates in a better priesthood (Heb. 7:1-8:6)

Fifth, Jesus mediates a better covenant (Heb. 8:7-9:28)

Sixth, Jesus has offered a better sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-18)

The second major division of Hebrews is **The Appropriation and Application of the Person and Work of the Messiah-Son** (Heb. 10:19-13:25)

Part 1. Exhortations to Live in the Faith (Heb. 10:19-39)

Part 2. Illustrations of Living by Faith (Heb. 11)

Part 3. The Application of Past Lessons to the Present Time (Heb. 12)

Part 4. The Personal Note (Heb. 13)

This letter is written to Messianic Jews who are under duress for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They are considering reverting back to Judaism. The writer does everything in his power to

persuade his readers of the superiority of Jesus, His sacrifice, His priesthood, and His [New Covenant](#) in comparison to the Levitical priesthood under the Old Covenant. He warns them of the futility of moving backwards. He is persuaded that they will move onward and adhere to their original confession of faith in Jesus, assisted by the writer's severe warnings. He urges them to enter the rest of participating with King Jesus when He returns to rule upon earth.

HEBREWS¹

"THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST"

"But now He [Jesus] 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."

Hebrews 8:6

A 1 THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE MESSIANIC SON IN HIS PERSON AND WORK 1:1 - 10:18

B 1 The Theme: The Superiority of God's Revelation to Man in His Messianic Son 1:1-3

C 1 The Supremacy of His Revelation in the Messianic Son 1:1-2a

D 1 The former manner 1:1

E 1 The person: {1} God,

E 2 The communication: after He spoke²

E 3 The time: long ago

¹ Title - Hebrews: As nearly as we can reconstruct, the author, unidentified, wrote this letter to a group of Hebrew Christians. By that I mean they were Jewish people who had become convinced that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, and had placed their trust in Him. Eventually, they came under persecution, ridicule, attack, and perhaps excommunication. Now, they were having second thoughts. They were tempted to renounce their faith in Jesus as their Messiah and revert to Judaism. The whole letter to the Hebrews seems designed to dissuade them from apostasy and to motivate them to uphold their earlier confession of faith in Jesus as Messiah. The letter amounts to an apology – a systematic defense – of Jesus as being superior to angels, to Moses, possessing a better priesthood, a better law, and mediator of a better covenant. Jesus offered a superior sacrifice. If the readers reject Him, there is no other sacrifice for sins.

² Heb. 1:1 - He spoke: God is a gregarious being. First, He exists as a Triune Being. Each of the members of the Godhead communicate with one another. Second, God has created intelligent beings with whom He enjoys communicating – angels (messengers) and men. Only of man is it said that God created man “in Our image, according to our likeness” (Gen. 1:26-27). Only of man is it said that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God has communicated with man through His [Natural Word](#) (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-23); through His [Spoken Word](#), the prophets (Heb. 1:1); through His [Written Word](#), the Bible (Ps. 19:7-11); and, in the ultimate message, through His [Living Word](#), the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2, 14; Heb. 1:2).

E 4 The recipients: to the fathers ³

E 5 The spokesmen: in the prophets ⁴

E 6 The methodology: in many portions and in many ways,

D 2 The latter manner 1:2a

E 1 The time: {2} in these last days ⁵

E 2 The communication: has spoken

E 3 The recipients: to us

E 4 The spokesman: in His Messianic Son, ⁶

C 2 The Accomplishments of His Revelation through the Messianic Son 1:2b-3

D 1 He is God's appointed heir of all creation: whom He appointed heir of all

³ Heb. 1:1 - the fathers: Meaning, in this context, the forbears of the nation of [Israel](#) prior to the birth of the Messiah, and not solely the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I say that because “the fathers” the writer is speaking of had to be alive in order for “the prophets” to communicate with them. The first and greatest prophet would have been Moses. Other notable prophets were Elijah and Elisha. Other prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the “minor” prophets lived are also prophets the writer had in mind.

⁴ Heb. 1:1 - in the prophets: God spoke to [Israel](#) in the past by means of prophets. The prophets proclaimed, in the first instance, the oral, or spoken Word of God. Some, but not all, of those prophets, also wrote their messages down. Some of those messages have been incorporated into the written Word of God. See the preceding footnote for a mention of a few of the prophets.

⁵ Heb. 1:2 - in these last days: The writer includes the coming of the Messiah as inaugurating “the last days.”

⁶ Heb. 1:2 - has spoken to us in His Son: I fear that we Christians think of the “Father-Son” relationship between the First and Second members of the Godhead in a context divorced from its proper setting. It is not as though God, in eternity past, and without the aid of some consort, strangely gave birth, if even in a spiritual way, to a son. Increasingly I am concluding that references to Jesus as the “Son” of God must be viewed in a Messianic context.

God made a promise, later termed a covenant, with David that David’s son would build a Temple for God. Furthermore, God promised a “Father-Son” relationship with David’s descendant, Solomon (2 Sam. 7:14). But in Israeli thinking, and properly so, I might add, this Father-Son relationship extended on down to all of David’s sons who reigned as king over Israel. It is no accident that the NT refers repeatedly to Jesus as “the son of David” (Matt. 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42; Mark 10:47, 48; 12:35; Luke 3:31; 18:38, 39). Acknowledging Jesus as “Son of David” was tantamount to acknowledging Jesus as God’s Son by virtue of the “Father-Son” relationship God promised between Himself and the ultimate Messiah, the ultimate descendant of David. I believe that references to Jesus as God’s Son in the NT must be understood as implying that Jesus is the ultimate descendant of David. He is therefore the Ultimate Son of David, and by virtue of this relationship, He is the ultimate Son of God.

God’s message to us in His Son, the Messiah is His ultimate message, at least up to this point. Now it is true, we would not know about God’s Messianic Son apart from the written message about Him – the written Word of God. As magnificent as God’s written Word is, and as necessary as it is, His written Word is superseded by His Living Word – His Messianic Son. The title “Son” is *huios* ([5207](#)), used 24X in 21 verses in Hebrews. Not all of them, however, refer to Jesus. I will provide two lists – one in which Jesus is referred to as “Son,” and another in which “son” does not refer to Jesus. (1) Jesus, the Messiah, as “Son”: Heb. 1:2; (by implication) – Heb. 1:5, 5; Heb. 1:8. In Heb. 2:8, the original referent “son of man” was mankind in general. However Psalm 8 is seen as a Messianic psalm by the writer of Hebrews, and the author applies the phrase to Jesus. Heb. 3:6; 4:14; Heb. 5:5 (by extension); Heb. 5:8; 6:6; 7:3, 28; 10:29 (2) Ordinary mortals as “son”: Heb. 2:10; 7:5; 11:21, 22, 24; 12:5, 5; 6, 7, 7, 8.

things,⁷ 1:2b

- D 2 He was God's medium of creation: through whom also He made the world.⁸ 1:2c
- D 3 He is the brightness of God's glory: {3} And He is the radiance⁹ of His glory 1:3a
- D 4 He is the express image of God's person: and the exact representation¹⁰ of His nature,¹¹ 1:3b
- D 5 He is the sustainer of all by His power: and upholds all things by the word of His power.¹² 1:3c
- D 6 He successfully made purification for sins: When He had made purification of sins,¹³ 1:3d

⁷ Heb. 1:2 - whom He appointed heir of all things: As Messiah, ultimate Son of David, Jesus will inherit the nations and the ends of the earth as His inheritance (Ps. 2:8); as Creator, all things were created by Him and for Him (Col. 1:16). As believers who suffer, we are joint-heirs along with Messiah (Rom. 8:17).

⁸ Heb. 1:2 - through whom also He made the world: The Scriptures are clear that God created the earth (Gen. 1:1), that He did so in six solar days (Gen. 1:1-2:3) about six thousand years ago (Gen. 5:1-32; Gen. 11:10-32), and that the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the future Messiah, was the Agent through whom God created the world (John 1:1-3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

⁹ Heb. 1:3 - radiance: *apaugasma* (541), used only here in the NT. The word can refer to a "source" of light or a "reflection" of light. Probably here it is the former. The Messianic Son is the visible manifestation of the glory of the invisible God.

¹⁰ Heb. 1:3 - exact representation: These two words translate the single Greek word *charaktēr* (5481), used only here in the NT. Originally, this word means an engraver or engraving tool. The writer here uses it to indicate that the Messianic Son is the exact representation or precise reproduction of God's essence (see *Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*) (hereafter identified simply as *Friberg*).

¹¹ Heb. 1:3 - of His nature: "Nature" translates *hupostasis* (5287), which refers to "the objective aspect and underlying reality behind anything, with the specific meaning derived from the context; (1) as an undertaking *plan, project* (2C 9.4); as God's substantial nature *real being, essence* (HE 1.3); (3) as the objective reality that gives a firm guarantee and basis for confidence or assurance *substance, ground of hope, foundation* (HE 3.14; 11:1)" (*FALGNT*).

Theologians discuss the various complexities and implications of the "Hypostatic Union" inherent in Jesus. He is fully man, yet fully God. From His human side He can feel pain, grow physically weary, shed tears of sorrow. Yet from His Divine side He predicts the future, knows all things, can control a tempest at sea, and raise the dead.

¹² Heb. 1:3 - and upholds all things by the word of His power: The Messianic Son not only created the earth, He keeps it running and functioning. The word "upholds" is the *participle pherō* (5342), here used in the *present* tense (durative action in present time). Literally, the Messianic Son constantly is "bearing" or "carrying" all things. He is the "glue" that keeps our world with all its processes and systems, our Solar System, our Galaxy, and our Universe, from flying apart and disintegrating (Col. 1:17). One day He will withdraw His upholding power, and the entire universe will disintegrate with blinding heat and a deafening roar (2 Pet. 3:7-12).

¹³ Heb. 1:3 - When He had made purification for sin: The Messiah was anointed by God (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34) to be Prophet, Priest, and King. His purification for sin was obviously His Priestly Ministry. In the thinking of the writer of Hebrews, he is emphasizing Jesus' Priestly ministry. Unlike no other NT writer, this writer underscores Jesus' present ministry as being that of the Priest ministering after the order

D 7 Having successfully completed His work of purification for sins, He sat down in the place of ultimate honor – at the right hand of God: He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ¹⁴ 1:3e

B 2 The Superiority of the Messianic Son to Angels 1:4 - 2:18

C 1 His Better Position 1:4

D 1 Made better than angels: {4} having become as much better than the angels,¹⁵

D 2 His better name: as He has inherited a more excellent name ¹⁶ than they.

of [Melchizedek](#) (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17). Now [Melchizedek](#) was both priest and king of Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18-20). But the writer of Hebrews focused primarily on the *priestly* ministries of both [Melchizedek](#) and Jesus.

¹⁴ Heb. 1:3 - He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high: It is certain that Jesus sat down at God's right hand as the Anointed One, the Messiah. But the Messiah wears three hats – Prophet, Priest, and King. [Amillennialists](#) and [Progressive Dispensationalists](#) argue that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God as King upon [David's throne](#). I maintain that view is incorrect. He sat down, not as King, but as Priest, and, by definition, as King-in-Waiting. According to Psalm 110:1-2 Jesus is presently waiting until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet in Zion, upon Earth. Though the groundwork for their defeat has been laid at the cross and the empty tomb, Jesus' enemies are presently very much alive and well on Earth.

The fact that Jesus is sitting means that His work has been accomplished. What work has been accomplished? It is His *sacrificial* work as Priest. He made one sacrifice for all time and now, having completed that sacrificial offering of Himself, He has taken His seat at the right hand of God, waiting to take up His ministry on earth as the Anointed King (Heb. 10:12-14). He cannot presently be sitting on the [throne of David](#) when [Israel](#), the subjects of both David and Jesus, do not even acknowledge His legitimacy as King, and when the earth is overrun with Jesus' enemies. The position of [Progressive Dispensationalists](#) is that Jesus' reign as been inaugurated, but not fulfilled. I maintain that His *sacrificial* ministry as Priest, in which He offered up His body as the perfect sacrifice, has been completed. That is why He has taken His seat. His *intercessory* Priestly ministry for believers is, however, an ongoing process (Heb. 7:25). But His rule as King, although provided for by His death and resurrection, has not yet been inaugurated. Jesus was anointed to be King upon Earth, in Jerusalem. How can His rule as King have been inaugurated when the King Himself is absent from the earth?

¹⁵ Heb. 1:4 - better than the angels: From 1:4 - 2:18 the author will attempt to convince his readers that Jesus is better than (*kreittōn*, [2909](#)), or superior to the angels, who are much revered in Jewish thinking. "Angel" is a (non-) translation of the Greek noun *aggelos* ([32](#)), which means simply, "messenger." In the OT, "angel" translates the Hebrew noun *malak* ([4397](#)), which also means, "messenger." From the first book of the OT, God communicated with man by means of one of His messengers (Gen. 16:7-11). Angels have a prominent place in the NT as well (e.g., Matt. 1:20, 24). The writer's point is that the Messianic Son is superior to angels.

The writer will use "better" or "superior" (*kreittōn*, [2909](#)) 13 times in Hebrews – Heb. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6 (twice); 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24. The Messianic Son is better than the angels (1:4); Jesus, the Priest after the order of [Melchizedek](#), has brought in a better hope (7:19); Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant (7:22); Jesus, our high priest, is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted on better promises (8:6); the furnishings of the temple in heaven were necessarily purified by better sacrifices than the furnishings of the model tabernacle with its "copy-cat" furnishings on earth (9:23); the Hebrew Christians had endured the seizure of their earthly property, knowing that they had "a better possession and a lasting one" (10:34); the OT patriarchs, living as nomads without actually possessing the promised land, desired "a better country, that is a heavenly one" (11:16); heroes of faith chose torture, "not accepting release so that they might obtain a better resurrection" (11:35); God had provided something better for us (11:40); and, finally, Jesus is the mediator of a [new covenant](#), and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel" (12:24).

¹⁶ Heb. 1:4 - more excellent name: Angels are merely "messengers," while the person under consideration is designated as "Son," which I understand to be another designation of "the Messiah."

C 2 His Messianic Sonship: Statements made to the Messianic Son, but never to angels 1:5

D 1 Regarding Messianic Sonship: {5} For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? ¹⁷

D 2 Regarding Fatherhood: And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"? ¹⁸

C 3 His Deity 1:6

¹⁷ Heb. 1:5 - YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU: The writer here quotes from Psalm 2:7, where the anointed king tells of the decree of Yahweh. Psalm 2 was written to apply to any descendant of David to sit on the throne. But it would have its ultimate fulfillment in the ultimate Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, as proven by this quotation, applying it to Jesus.

In the first portion of that decree, Yahweh stated to the Messiah, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." Yahweh is operating on the basis of the promise that He made to King David in 2 Samuel 7:14, wherein He affirmed to David regarding his descendant, "I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to Me." That promise to David God issued as a decree to the ultimate Son of David, the Messiah, in Psalm 2:7. "Today I have begotten you" probably refers to the day of coronation for the merely mortal sons of David. But for the Ultimate Messiah, Jesus, it cannot be restricted to His coronation, for He has not yet been crowned. So at what point did God the Father "beget" Jesus as His Son as descendant of David?

The most likely occasion would have been immediately after Jesus' baptism. It was at that point two things happened. First, God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit. It was at that point that Jesus became the Christ, the Anointed One. Second, and not surprisingly, immediately thereafter the voice of God above was heard on earth below, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:13-17; cf. Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

But there was another occasion on which Jesus' sonship was boldly stated. Messiah Jesus (Rom. 1:1) was thus the Son of God (Rom. 1:3). He "was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:3-4).

The main point to be learned from Hebrews 1:5 is that Jesus' Sonship is attributable to His being the Messiah. He is the Son of God because He is the Son of David. That is a truth that, I believe, most Christians do not understand. Nevertheless, it is true. That this interpretation is a correct one is supported by the next quotation in the latter part of Heb. 1:5, in which the writer of Hebrews directly quotes 2 Samuel 7:14, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME."

¹⁸ Heb. 1:5 - I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME: The writer next quotes from 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Chronicles 17:13, which is part of the promise that Yahweh made to David, that his son (Solomon) would build a house for Yahweh, and that Yahweh would be a Father to him and Solomon a son to Yahweh. As the writer of Hebrews confirms, that promise to David of a Father-son relationship between God and Solomon did not merely apply to Solomon, but to any descendant of David to sit upon David's throne. And in particular it applies to the ultimate Anointed One, Jesus of Nazareth, who is yet to sit upon David's throne (Psalm 110:1-3, 5-7).

God promised to David, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16). This promise God later, through Ethan the Ezrahite, identified as a covenant: "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever And build up your throne to all generations." Selah (Ps. 89:3-4). The angel Gabriel, even later, confirmed to Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33, that her son, Jesus, was to be the ultimate fulfillment of the promise to and covenant with David:

³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

It can be concluded that God's Father-Son relationship with Jesus of Nazareth stems, I believe, from Jesus' being a descendant of David, and the One who is the ultimate Messiah, destined to sit upon David's throne forever.

D 1 The occasion: {6} And when He again brings the firstborn into the world,¹⁹

D 2 The command: Angels commanded to worship: He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."²⁰

C 4 His Appointment as Messiah 1:7-9

D 1 The subservience of the angels 1:7

E 1 Made winds: {7} And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,"²¹

¹⁹ Heb. 1:6 - And when He again brings the firstborn into the world: The NASB translation here is preferable to the KJV, NIV, or ESV. By "again" the writer was speaking of Christ's Second Coming. When that happens, the angels will worship Him.

By "firstborn" (*prōtotokon*, [4416](#)), the writer is emphasizing not "first in order," but "first in importance," as when Joseph received the privileges of the firstborn of Jacob even though he was not the first in order. Consistent with his assigning Jesus the title of Son of God by virtue of His being (ultimate) Son of David, the writer is emphasizing Jesus' importance as the ultimate Messiah, Son of David – He has been invested with all the rights and privileges of the "firstborn male". All the uses in the NT of *prōtotokon* include Luke 2:7 (Mary "gave birth to her **firstborn** son"); Rom. 8:9 (those whom God "foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the **firstborn** among many brethren"); Col. 1:15 (God's beloved Son [Col. 1:13] "is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation"); Col. 1:18 ("He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the **firstborn** from the dead"); Heb. 1:6 ("And when he again brings the **firstborn** into the world"); Heb. 11:28 ("By faith he [i.e. Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that he who destroyed the **firstborn** would not touch them"); Heb. 12:23 "²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,²³ to 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"); and Rev. 1:5 ("... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the **firstborn** of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth....").

The word "world" is *oikoumenê* ([3625](#)), meaning "the inhabited earth." It refers to the time in the future when God will, the second time, bring Jesus into the inhabited earth. The writer will use this word again in Heb. 2:5, "For He did not subject to angels the world (lit., "inhabited earth") to come, concerning which we are speaking." It is used 15 times in the NT. We derive our English word "ecumenical" from this Greek word, but it is usually used in an "inter-faith" connection, rather than in strictly an "inhabited earth" frame of reference.

²⁰ Heb. 1:6 - AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM: The writer quotes from the LXX version of Psalm 97:7. The MT (Masoretic Text – Hebrew) reads *elohim*, the plural name for God. NASB translates Ps. 97:7b, "Worship Him, all you gods." That is a valid translation, for God cannot be expected to worship Himself! The LXX translated *elohim* as "angels." It is not my purpose to defend the LXX translation. But I defend the NT writers' right to quote from the LXX. There are those who advocate the King James Version as the only valid translation in the world. Some of them insist that the KJV never quotes from the LXX, which they consider as heretical. Obviously that position is indefensible. Not only does the writer of Hebrews quote from the LXX, but he also changes the meaning of "HIM" from Yahweh to the Son, Jesus, for that is His whole purpose in quoting the psalm fragment – to demonstrate that the Son is superior to angels. I am unable to explain the writer's logic, but I defend his right to arrive at his selection of translation and his interpretation of the text.

Alternatively, some scholars believe the writer was quoting from the [LXX version of Deuteronomy 32:43](#), which reads, in part, "Rejoice, ye heavens, with him; and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people" The MT bears no resemblance to the LXX in the first part of the verse. The MT begins simply, "Rejoice, O nations, with His people;" omitting any reference to heavens rejoicing or angels worshipping. Once again, I am not in a position to defend the LXX translation of the MT. But I do defend the right of the NT writers to employ the LXX in their quotation of the word of God.

²¹ Heb. 1:7 - WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS: The writer quotes from Psalm 104:4. This psalm extols the virtues of God in His created order, the world, along with His superintendence in the Flood. The Greek word translated "WINDS" is *pneuma* ([4151](#)), which, in the plural, can be translated either "winds" or "spirits." Here "WINDS" is preferable because the whole Psalm deals with the created order, not the spiritual order.

- E 2 As ministers, flames of fire: AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."²²
- D 2 The royal, ethical reign of the Messianic Son: {8} But of the Son *He says*, 1:8-9b (Psalm 45:6, 7)
 - E 1 His eternal throne: "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,"²³ 1:8a
 - E 2 His scepter of righteousness: AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.²⁴ 1:8b
 - E 3 His love of righteousness: {9} "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS 1:9a
 - E 4 His hatred of evil: AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;²⁵ 1:9b
- D 3 His anointment (as the Messiah): THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU²⁶ 1:9c
 - E 1 With the oil of gladness: WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS

²² Heb. 1:7 - AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE: Once again, the writer quotes from Psalm 104:4. The word "MINISTERS" is *leitourgos* ([3011](#)), and refers here to angels. Its meaning is "a public minister, or servant of the state." It is used in this sense in a secular setting in Rom. 13:6. Paul refers to himself as a public servant of Jesus to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16). Paul called Epaphroditus a "public servant" to his own needs (Php. 2:25). In Heb. 8:2, the writer of Hebrews will speak of Jesus as being "a minister (public servant) in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." The point of the writer here in 1:7 is that God makes His public servants (angels) to be merely tangible manifestations in the physical world. The Messianic Son, however, reigns as God eternally over His kingdom! Obviously, the Messianic Son is vastly superior to angels!

²³ Heb. 1:8 - YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER: In Hebrews 1:8-9 the writer quotes from Psalm 45:6-7. This particular phrase is from Ps. 45:6. He quotes it in a proper context. The entire psalm is one of "[Praise to the King at His Wedding](#)." In this psalm, the sons of Korah address the Davidic king (Ps. 45:1). In verses 6-8 the topic is "The Rule of the King." The writers address the king as "O God." That is because the Davidic King is seen as the Theocratic King, ruling on God's behalf. The ultimate fulfillment, of course is the Ultimate Davidic King, Jesus.

²⁴ Heb. 1:8 - AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM: Here, the writer of Hebrews quotes the latter half of Ps. 45:6.

²⁵ Heb. 1:9 - YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS: The writer quotes from Ps. 45:7a.

²⁶ Heb. 1:9 - THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS: Strictly speaking, the writers of Psalm 45 see the Davidic King as anointed with olive oil (to be king) above any of his companions. In other words, he is elevated above his subjects, who vicariously partake of his kingdom. This is a reference to his human anointing, but, by implication, a reference also to his Divine anointing with the Holy Spirit. In the case of the ultimate Davidic King, Jesus, He has never yet been anointed with olive oil. That, I believe, is still coming. But He has been anointed by God with His Holy Spirit far above and beyond any of His associates, or any other Davidic King. This is evident, for example, in Isaiah 11:1-5; 61:1. Jesus, having been anointed by God with His Holy Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34), was able to perform amazing miracles of healing, deliver accurate, predictive teaching, and was able to discern what people were thinking. As Messiah, He served primarily as prophet during His earthly life and ministry. The writer of Hebrews will argue that Jesus is presently seated at the right hand of God, having completed His once-for-all sacrifice as priest. He will return as King to rule the world at some time in the future. The writer of Hebrews has already alluded to Messiah's Second Coming in Heb. 1:6.

E 2 Above His fellows: ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.²⁷

C 5 His Power over Creation 1:10-12

D 1 His creation of the universe in the beginning 1:10

E 1 {10} And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH,"²⁸E 2 AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;²⁹

D 2 His superiority over creation 1:11-12

E 1 The perishability of the creation: {11} THEY WILL PERISH, 1:11a

E 2 The endurance of Christ: BUT YOU REMAIN;³⁰ 1:11bE 3 The aging of creation: AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,³¹ 1:11c

²⁷ Heb. 1:9 - ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS: The word "companions" is the word *metochos* (3353). To the writer of Hebrews it refers to those who are citizens of the Messiah's kingdom. There can be no doubt of the genuineness of these subjects. In Heb. 3:1 the writer addresses his readers as "holy brethren, partakers (*metochos*) of a heavenly calling". In 3:14 they are "partakers (*metochos*) of Christ." In 6:4, he discusses those who "have been made partakers (*metochos*) of the Holy Spirit". In 12:8 he asserts that all Christians "have become partakers" (*metochos*) of discipline. It is most likely that, in each of these instances, the writer of Hebrews envisions genuine believers who participate in the kingdom of the Messiah. His point in Heb. 1:9 is that the Messiah has been anointed with the oil of joy, but by implication, the Holy Spirit Himself, more than all those who are partakers (*metochos*) with Him in His kingdom.

²⁸ Heb. 1:10 - YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH: The writer here, in Heb. 1:10-12, quotes from Psalm 102:25-27. His first point in this extended quotation is to prove from Scripture that Messiah is Creator. The word LORD referred, in Ps. 102:25 to Yahweh. Here it is *Kurie* (2962) "Lord," referring to Messiah. Before He became Messiah (which occurred at His baptism), this person of the Trinity laid the foundation of the earth, and "the heavens are the works of Your hands." Thus the Messiah is superior to angels. He is eternal, existing from the very beginning, and He is Creator of all that exists. The writer has already stated that God made the world (literally, "ages") through His Messianic Son (Heb. 1:2). See also Heb. 11:3 and 1 Cor. 2:7. See also Col. 1:15-17.

²⁹ Heb. 1:10 - AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS: In the latter portion of Heb. 1:10, the writer continues to quote from the latter half of Psalm 102:25. This is consistent with the view of Scripture elsewhere. Perhaps the most famous passage is Psalm 19, which declares, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." See also Gen. 1:6-7, 14-19.

³⁰ Heb. 1:11 - THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN: The second point the writer of Hebrews wishes to make is that all of creation is impermanent, unstable, and temporal, in contrast with the Messiah, who is permanent, unchanging, and eternal. Heb. 1:11 quotes Ps. 102:26. See also Isa. 51:6. The specific elements of the creation that will perish, according to Ps. 102:26, are the heavens and the framework in which they exist. The Apostle Peter describes the destruction that is the destiny of the heavens in graphic, explosive terms in 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12.

³¹ Heb. 1:11 - AND THEY WILL ALL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT: The writer continues to quote, in this line and the next, the last two lines of Ps. 102:26. It is the heavens that will one day wear out like a garment, and the Messiah will change them into new heavens just as one throws off an old garment and puts on a new. The dissolution of the old heavens is predicted in Isa. 34:4; 51:6; Matt. 24:35; 2 Pet. 3:10; and Rev. 20:10. The writer continues to contrast the changeableness of the created order in contrast with the unchangeableness of the Messiah.

- E 4 Christ's folding up creation as a garment: {12} AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; 1:12a
- E 5 The change of creation: LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.³² 1:12b
- E 6 The sameness of Christ: BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,³³ 1:12c
- E 7 The eternity of Christ: AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."³⁴ 1:12d
- C 6 His More Important Role: {13} But to which of the angels has He ever said,³⁵ (1:13a) 1:13-14
- D 1 The honor of completed work accorded the Messiah 1:13b
- E 1 Seated at God's right hand: "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,³⁶

³² Heb. 1:12 - LIKE A GARMENT THEY ALSO WILL BE CHANGED: The writer of Hebrews continues to quote Ps. 102:26. The "new garment" motif is consistent with the predictions of new heavens and new earth in Isa. 65:17 and 66:22. It is also consistent with the statements of the Apostle Peter, who wrote about the dissolution of this present universe and the creation of a new: "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13). The Apostle John also predicted new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21:1).

There are those who wish to argue for a continuity between the existing earth, for example, and New Earth. There may be some things that are the same, but other things will undoubtedly be different. I suspect, for example, that the city of New Jerusalem will be the capital city of the eternal State of [Israel](#) to be found on New Earth. That will not change. But there will be no sea (Rev. 21:1). Furthermore, the physical features of present earth are everywhere marred by God's global judgment of Noah's Flood. Why would pristine New Earth continue to bear the signs of a global catastrophe, replete with layers of sedimentary strata, fault lines, glacial scourings and tailings, and volcanic eruptions? That makes no sense to me. Will we be able to identify the site of Washington, D.C., for example? Will the present configuration of the continents be the same as today? I really doubt it, for the topography that we see today has been forever altered by the catastrophic upheaval of Noah's Flood.

The writer continues to contrast the changeableness of the created order in contrast with the unchangeableness of the Messiah.

³³ Heb. 1:12 - BUT YOU ARE THE SAME: The writer now quotes the first line of Ps. 102:27. In contrast with the changeableness of the created order, the Messiah remains the same, unchangeable. He will drive home this point in Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever."

³⁴ Heb. 1:12 - AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END: The writer quotes the second line of Ps. 102:27. In contrast with the temporal nature of the created order, the Messiah is eternal. The unspoken implication is that angels are part of the created order, and thus are temporal. Because the Messiah is eternal, He is superior to the angels.

³⁵ Heb. 1:13 - But to which of the angels has He ever said: That the writer all along, has had in mind the superiority of the Messiah in contrast with the angels, even in Heb. 1:10-12, is evident. In 1:13 he returns explicitly to the subject of angels. God never promised sovereign rule upon the earth to the angels as He has to the Messiah. The writer will proceed to quote from Ps. 110:1.

³⁶ Heb. 1:13 - SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND: The writer quotes from Ps. 110:1, breaking in on the second line. In the first line, Yahweh is speaking to David's Lord (*Adonay* [136](#)), or Messiah. Here is what God instructs the Messiah: "Sit at My right hand." Certainly there is shared authority with God, but that is not the point that either David was making in Psalm 110, or that the writer to the Hebrews was making in Heb. 1:13. The point that both were making was that the Messiah would have to wait for an extended period of time before assuming His role as King. The larger point that the writer of Hebrews was making was that, while God spoke in this fashion to the Messiah, He has never spoken in this fashion to any angels. The Messiah is in a class by Himself, and is superior to the angels.

E 2 Awaiting the subjection of His foes: UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"? ³⁷

D 2 The assignment of angels to active subservience 1:14

E 1 Ministering spirits: {14} Are they not all ministering spirits, ³⁸

E 2 Servants of the heirs of salvation: sent out to render service for the

Both Progressive Dispensationalists and Amillennialists err in asserting that the Messiah is presently sitting on David's throne. That is manifestly untrue. If Psalm 110 says anything, it says that there will be a delay for the Messiah's rule to begin. David's throne was upon earth, and Messiah's throne must be upon earth. Whatever the Messiah is doing in heaven right now, he is not reigning upon David's throne.

There is a close parallel between the experience of the Messiah and the experience of David. David was anointed to be king of [Israel](#) (that is, he became [Israel's](#) messiah) when he was sixteen or seventeen. There was a delay in his actually becoming king. He did not become king of Judah until approximately age 30. And he did not become king of all [Israel](#) and Judah until age 37. By the time he actually became king of the entire nation, he had been waiting more than half his life! By the same token, the ultimate Messiah has been waiting a long time to assume His rule as King here upon earth. He has been waiting almost 2,000 years!

³⁷ Heb. 1:13 - UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET: The writer of Hebrews continues to quote from Ps. 110:1. The Messiah's sitting at the right hand of God includes an extended length of time. But there is a termination to this waiting. He is to wait until His enemies have been made a footstool for His feet. The writer to the Hebrews does not go on in Psalm 110 because he did not need to. His point was that the Messiah had been promised rule after waiting. But that promise has never been issued to the angels.

But as long as we are on the subject of the Messiah's waiting for His rule, there is nothing preventing us from looking farther on in Psalm 110. It is transparent that David, the human author guided by the Spirit of God in the prophecy of Psalm 110, had in mind the rule of the Messiah here upon earth in the land of [Israel](#). What does it mean that the Messiah's enemies will be made a footstool for His feet? It cannot mean that He is reigning as the Son of David now, during the present Church Age. The Messiah's enemies have the upper hand in every country upon earth, including in the land the Messiah is to rule over. Right now Muslims have de facto control over the Temple Mount, and they are supported by the United Nations! Jewish rabbis cannot even utter their prayers upon the Temple Mount! Only Muslims can do so! The Jewish people are relegated to praying at the retaining wall of the Temple Mount! And even the Jewish people, as a whole, remain steadfast enemies of their Messiah. They are beloved enemies, but they are still enemies (Rom. 11:28).

Observe the text of Ps. 110:2. Here is what it will look like when Messiah's enemies have been made a footstool for His feet: "The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, 'Rule in the midst of Your enemies.'" We conclude with absolute confidence, then, that Messiah up in heaven in the Church Age cannot presently be exercising His role as Davidic King. He can only be doing that when He is seated upon His throne in Zion, Jerusalem, reigning as King over [Israel](#), and King over the world. That means vanquishing any foreigners, such as Palestinian or Arab Muslims who do not wish Him to be King. And it means vanquishing any [Israelis](#) who do not want Him to be King! That this is the correct interpretation of Psalm 110 is evident from the remainder of the psalm. With the exception of Ps. 110:4, *every verse in this Psalm has to do with the Messiah's conquest of His enemies here upon earth*. This passage cannot be spiritualized to mean a spiritual conquest up in heaven.

Psalm 110:4 gives us a clue as to what the Messiah is doing up in heaven while He is waiting to rule here upon earth. He is functioning, by virtue of the authority of Yahweh's oath, as eternal Priest after the order of [Melchizedek](#). Most Christians today are almost oblivious of the significance of Jesus' present priestly ministry after the order of [Melchizedek](#). But the writer of Hebrews was not. He will have much more to say about this ministry of Jesus (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17).

³⁸ Heb. 1:14 - Are they not all ministering spirits: The writer does not belittle angels. They are not the Messianic Son. They are not called to rule. They are ministering (*leitourgikos*, [3010](#) – used only here in the NT) spirits (*pneuma*, [4151](#)). *leitourgikos* means "relating to the performance of service, employed in ministering" (The New Testament Greek Lexicon). *pneuma* (breath or wind; or here spirit) refers to the fact that angels, literally, messengers, are spirits that do not possess a flesh and blood body as do humans. They, like God, are beings whose primary essence is spirit, not a body. Angels are serving spirits.

sake of those who will inherit salvation?³⁹

C 7 The Parenthetical First Warning: The danger of neglecting salvation through the Messianic Son 2:1-4

D 1 The admonition – obedience to things heard: {1} For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,⁴⁰ 2:1a

D 2 The danger – letting them slip: so that we do not drift away *from it*.⁴¹ 2:1b

D 3 The seriousness of neglecting salvation 2:2-4

E 1 The example of the angels 2:2

G 1 Their steadfast word: {2} For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable,⁴²

³⁹ Heb. 1:14 - sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation: Angels – messengers – are spirit beings a primary task of whom is to serve those humans who will inherit salvation. “Will inherit” is the future tense of the verb *klêronomeō* (2816). This verb is used four times in Hebrews. The writer has already used it in 1:4, where he stated that God’s Messianic Son has **inherited** a more excellent name than the angels. He uses it here in 1:14. He will use it in 6:12, where he desires that each one of his readers “will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience **inherit** the promises.” He will use it again in 12:17, where he will describe Esau, who, when he desired to **inherit** the blessing ... was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”

In 1:14, however, angels are ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who, without a doubt will, at some time in the future, inherit salvation. What is the salvation to which the writer refers? Zane Hodges, Hebrews (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Hebrews, p.), seeks to portray salvation (*sotêria*, 4991) as victory over physical enemies. This is a legitimate meaning in certain contexts (see for example, Zacharias’ meaning in Luke Luke 1:69, 71). But it does not exhaust the meaning, as Zacharias himself stated (Luke 1:77). Forgiveness of sins is another element of salvation, one which his own child, John the Baptist, would stress (Luke 1:76). Ultimate salvation, which includes peace, would be brought by “the Sunrise from on high” (Luke 1:78-79), i.e., the heaven-sent Messiah, a.k.a. Jesus of Nazareth.

Salvation can mean physical deliverance from a dangerous situation (Acts 7:25; 27:34; Php. 1:19; Heb. 11:7). Salvation can mean present salvation from sin, akin to forgiveness: Rom. 1:16; 10:10; 11:11; Eph. 1:13; Jude 1:3). Salvation can mean future salvation: Rom. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:8, 9; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 1:14; 5:9; 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9, 10). In the following instances, salvation probably refers to complete (i.e. future) salvation, although the context may be indeterminate: Heb. 2:3, 10; 6:9; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:15. In the book of Revelation, salvation seems to be complete salvation, coming from God in incremental stages: Rev. 7:10; 12:10; 19:1. As can be seen, most references to salvation in the book of Hebrews contemplate future salvation with all its implications. That would include the redemption of the soul, but it also includes the redemption of the believer’s body and the believers’ environment. In every case, salvation comes from the Jewish people, as Jesus said in John 4:22.

⁴⁰ Heb. 2:1 - For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard: The writer now, in 2:1-4, pauses for the first of five solemn warnings in his epistle. The other warnings occur in chapters 3-4; in 5:11-6:20; in 10:19-39; and in chapter 12. It is worth noting that the writer includes himself among those who must pay closer attention – “we must”. What was it to which he and his readers must pay closer attention? Why, the superiority of Christ. His readers, under duress from persecution for their previous stand in favor of Jesus as their Messiah, were in danger of reneging on their prior commitment.

⁴¹ Heb. 2:1 - so that we do not drift away *from it*: Drift away from what? The truth about the superiority of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.

⁴² Heb. 2:2 - For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable: The writer refers to the Law of Moses given on Mt. Sinai. There is no record in the Pentateuch that angels were involved in the dissemination of the Torah. However, God had evidently revealed to Paul that angels were involved (Gal.3:19). The writer to the Hebrews is also aware of this truth.

- G 2 The penalty to offenders: and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,⁴³
- E 2 The certain punishment of those who neglect salvation: {3} how will we escape if we neglect⁴⁴ so great a salvation?⁴⁵ 2:3a
- E 3 The greatness of the neglected salvation 2:3b
- G 1 Christ the initiator: After it was at the first spoken through the Lord,⁴⁶
- G 2 Confirmation by His hearers: it was confirmed to us by those who heard,⁴⁷
- G 3 God's confirmation of Christ's hearers: {4} God also testifying with them, 2:4

⁴³ Heb. 2:2 - and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty: Under the Mosaic Covenant infractions were punished. One calls to mind, for example, the stoning of pilfering Achan and his family in Joshua 7.

⁴⁴ Heb. 2:3 - how will we escape if we neglect: The presumption is that both the writer and the readers already possess this great salvation. The danger here is to assume that neglecting this great salvation means to lose it entirely. We know from other Scriptures that genuine believers in Jesus the Messiah will not lose their salvation. Passages such as the references to "eternal life" (e.g. John 3:15-16, 36); the inviolable bond between Jesus and His sheep (John 10:27-30); the unbreakable links between those whom God foreknew and those whom He glorified according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28-30); and the impossibility of anything separating believers from the love of God in Christ (Rom. 8:31-39) – all proclaim this immutable truth. Not every person who violated the Mosaic Covenant in the OT lost his salvation. King David springs to mind, for example (2 Sam. 11:1-12:15). David sinned grievously against the LORD, but he did not die. The LORD took away his sin (2 Sam. 12:13). Nevertheless, other sobering consequences afflicted David, among them, the loss of his infant son (2 Sam. 12:14). So also with believers in the Church Age. It is a mistake to conclude from the warning passages in Hebrews that believers can lose their salvation. But some grievous consequences can ensue if we neglect our salvation. More about that later.

⁴⁵ Heb. 2:3 - so great a salvation: "Salvation" (*sotêria*, [4991](#)) should here be interpreted in its broadest possible context. It includes not only forgiveness of sin and justification in this life, but reigning with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom and in the Eternal State. How we as believers live our Christian lives in this present age will have sobering consequences affecting our usefulness in all phases of eternity.

⁴⁶ Heb. 2:3 - at the first spoken to us through the Lord: The writer refers to the "so great a salvation" described in a number of different ways and metaphors by Jesus during His earthly ministry. For example, He told Nicodemus he must be born again of the Spirit or he could not even see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-8). He offered the woman of Samaria living water springing up into eternal life (John 4:10-14). After His feeding of the 5,000, Jesus stated, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst" (John 6:35). To his audience, Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). To Martha, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:25-26). To the crowds on the mountain, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). He said, "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). To the paralytic on the cot, Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5).

⁴⁷ Heb. 2:3 - by those who heard: i.e. the Apostles, primarily. They were eyewitnesses of Christ who heard His messages first-hand.

H 1 With signs: both by signs ⁴⁸

H 2 With wonders: and wonders ⁴⁹

H 3 With miracles: and by various miracles ⁵⁰

H 4 With gifts of the Holy Spirit: and by gifts of the Holy Spirit ⁵¹ according to His own will. ⁵²

C 8 His Role as Master of the World 2:5-8

D 1 The priority not given to angels: {5} For He did not subject to angels the world to come, ⁵³ concerning which we are speaking. 2:5

⁴⁸ Heb. 2:4 - signs: The plural of *semeion* ([4592](#)), meaning “miraculous signs.” *Semeion* indicates that the miracles the apostles performed were designed to *signify* something – to prove a point – that they were prophets from God, and that their messages were from God, and that they were authorized by the Messiah to speak on His behalf (2 Cor. 12:12). Jesus’ ministry had been authenticated by signs (John 20:30-31). The purposes of Jesus’ miraculous signs was to engender faith in His person as the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him, people might have life in His name. Similarly, Jesus gave authority to His apostles to perform miraculous signs so that their hearers might believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, (Acts 19:11-20) and experience forgiveness of their sins (Acts 13:38-39). The NT refers several times to the special ability to perform signs that were granted to the apostles to confirm their ministry (Acts 2:43; 5:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12).

⁴⁹ Heb. 2:4 - wonders: The Greek word *teras* ([5059](#)) refers to miracles that create awe and wonderment. The words “signs” (*semeion*, [4592](#)) and “wonders” (*teras*, [5059](#)) often appear together: Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; John 4:48; Acts 2:19, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12; Rom. 15:19. In Acts 6:8 the “wonders” are performed by Stephen; in Acts 8:6, 13 – by Philip. In 2 Thess. 2:9, the “man of lawlessness,” elsewhere known as the Antichrist, will be able to perform “power,” “signs” and “wonders” – of a lie!

⁵⁰ Heb. 2:4 - miracles: The Greek word *dunamis*, [1411](#), is used here. It refers, generally, to power, or powers. In the present context it refers to supernatural manifestations of power performed by humans. In several instances in the NT, signs (*semeion*, [4592](#)), wonders (*teras*, [5059](#)), and miracles (*dunamis*, [1411](#)) all appear together: Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; 2 Th. 2:9; Heb. 2:4. The writer’s point is that God confirmed the authenticity of the apostles’ reports about Jesus by their ability to perform signs, wonders, and miracles.

⁵¹ Heb. 2:4 - gifts of the Holy Spirit: The word “gifts” is the word *merismos* ([3311](#)), used only here and in Heb. 4:12 in the NT. It means a “distribution” or “dividing.” The Holy Spirit bestowed other miraculous abilities upon the apostles. Some of these included the ability to speak in languages they had never before learned (Acts 2:1-11); the ability to prophesy (i.e. function as prophets receiving messages directly from God) (Eph. 2:20); and the ability to discern truth and error (Acts 5:1-11; 8:14-24).

⁵² Heb. 2:4 - according to His own will: The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts (the capacity and authority to serve God in a special way, whether miraculous or otherwise) according to the will of God, not according to the will of individual Christians. See, for example, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, especially v. 11.

⁵³ Heb. 2:5 - For He did not subject the world to come: The writer continues to highlight the superiority of the Messianic Son over the angels. God has subjected the coming world (*oikoumenê*, [3625](#) – the inhabited earth) to the Messiah (Ps. 110:1-7). He has not done so for the angels. The writer quotes extensively from Psalm 8:4-6. This portion of the psalm teaches us that God made Man, as a class of beings, sovereign rulers over the earth and its animals (Gen. 1:26-28). The writer of Hebrews takes the phrase “the son of man” to refer to the Messiah. Since the Messiah is a man belonging to the class of Men, and, additionally, since He is “the Son of Man,” He has the supreme right to rule the earth. That prerogative was not given to angels. Therefore the Messiah is superior to the angels. The phrase, “the world to come,” applies both to the coming Millennial Earth (Zech. 14:9; Rev. 20:4-6) and to New Earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), to be created after the dissolution of the present Earth (2 Pet. 3:7-12; Rev. 20:11; 21:1).

D 2 The statement from Scripture: {6} But one has testified somewhere, saying, (2:6a) 2:6-8

E 1 The inconsequentiality of man 2:6b

G 1 Unworthy of God's mindfulness: "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM?"⁵⁴

G 2 Unworthy of God's visitation: OR THE SON OF MAN,⁵⁵ THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?

E 2 The position of the Messianic Son 2:7a

G 1 Temporarily made lower than angels: {7} "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS;"⁵⁶

G 2 Presently crowned with glory and honor: YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR,

E 3 The mastery of the Messianic Son 2:7b-8

G 1 The Messianic Son set over the creation: AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; 2:7b

G 2 All things subject to Him: {8} YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS

⁵⁴ Heb. 2:6 - WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM: The writer proceeds to quote Psalm 8:4-6.

⁵⁵ Heb. 2:6 - OR THE SON OF MAN: Quoting from Psalm 8:4 (8:5 in Heb.), the writer takes the phrase "Son of Man" to refer to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, Jesus frequently referred to himself as "Son of Man" (e.g., Matt. 8:20; 24:30; Mark 2:10, 28; Luke 5:24; 6:5; John 1:51; 3:13-14). Even if it be argued that Psalm 8:4-6 and Heb. 2:6-8 view man as a class of beings of whom Jesus is one, the writer of Hebrews made a Messianic application. We know this because, presently, man as a class does rule over the earth and the animals, albeit in an impaired sort of way. Yet the writer of Hebrews will make the argument that Jesus does not presently have all things in subjection under Himself, even though He belongs to the class of men (Heb. 2:8). Therefore we conclude that the writer of Hebrews made a Messianic application of this passage to Jesus. All things will be subjected under Jesus' feet when He, as Messiah, comes back to this earth to rule.

⁵⁶ Heb. 2:7 - YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS: The writer quotes from the LXX version of Psalm 8:5 (Hebrew = Ps. 8:6), which reads *aggelous* (32, literally, messengers, usually transliterated "angels"). In Psa. 8:6 the MT reads *elohim* (430), usually translated, "God", and rarely, "gods." But the LXX rendered it "angels." The KJV and NIV followed the LXX. So did the ESV, translating *elohim* as "the heavenly beings." The NASB is the superior translation, correctly translating *elohim* in Ps. 8:5 as "God." God created man lower in rank than Himself – creating man in His own likeness and image (Gen. 1:26-28). The writer of the book of Hebrews nonetheless follows the inferior translation *aggelous* (angels) of the LXX. We have to assume that is the reading God wanted here.

In defense of the LXX translation, note that even the NASB in Ps. 82:1 translates *elohim* as "rulers" and in 82:6 as "gods." And in Ps. 29:1, NASB translates *el* as "mighty" and not "Mighty." The point of the writer of Hebrews is that God made man lower than the angels. The Messiah, in His incarnation, adopted, for a time, that stance also. But also, in the view of the writer, the Messiah's rank lower than the angels has now changed because of His resurrection, ascension to heaven, and His having been seated at the right hand of God. See the discussion below in a subsequent footnote.

IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." ⁵⁷ (2:8a) 2:8

H 1 The absence of exceptions: For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him.

H 2 The delay – not yet are all things subject to Him: But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁵⁸

C 9 His Role as Savior of Humanity 2:9-18

D 1 His former humiliation 2:9a

E 1 His temporary rank – made lower than the angels: {9} But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, ⁵⁹

E 2 His tragic ignominy: because of the suffering of death ⁶⁰

D 2 His present crowned state 2:9b

E 1 Glorious: crowned with glory

⁵⁷ Heb. 2:8 - YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET: The quotation from Ps. 8:6 means that God has placed all of creation under the authority of man. Jesus, being one of the class of mankind, has had all things on the earth, without exception (Heb. 2:8b) placed under His jurisdiction.

⁵⁸ Heb. 2:8 - But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him: Whatever authority man has over nature has been sadly diluted and tarnished because of his enslavement and injury from sin. So his present ineffective authority is only a shadow of glorious, future authority. For different reasons, that diminished authority applies also to Jesus, the Son of Man, the Ultimate Man.

⁵⁹ Heb. 2:9 - Jesus: The writer of Hebrews arrives at his punch line with respect to Jesus as being the Ultimate Representative of the class of men. Jesus, because of His incarnation, “was made for a little while lower than the angels,” presently “crowned with glory and honor.” This refers to His present status, not upon Earth, His destiny, but up in heaven, at the right hand of God. This present glory is directly attributable to His having endured “the suffering of death.”

This is the first time the writer uses the name Jesus, *Iêsous* (2424), the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua, *Yehoshua* (3091), “Yahweh is Salvation.” The writer uses the name Jesus fourteen times, but only thirteen of them refer to Jesus the Christ: Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 4:8, 14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:10, 19; 12:2, 24; 13:8, 12, 20, 21. In some instances, as here in Heb. 2:9, the writer attaches no other titles to the name Jesus. In Heb. 3:1, he attaches the titles of “Apostle” and “High Priest.” In Heb. 4:8, the author actually has in mind the Joshua of the OT, who as commander of the *Israeli* army, led *Israel* in conquering the Promised Land. In Heb. 4:14 the author calls Jesus a “great High Priest” and “Son of God.” Jesus is identified as a high priest in Heb. 6:20. In Heb. 10:10, he associates the title “Christ” with the name “Jesus”; so also in Heb. 13:12, 21. In Heb. 13:20, Jesus is described as “our Lord.” Frequently, the writer attaches words which, while not really titles, are phrases descriptive of Jesus: In Heb. 2:9 He “was made for a little while lower than the angels,” now “crowned with glory and honor.” In Heb. 7:22 Jesus “has become the guarantee of a better covenant.” In Heb. 12:2, Jesus is “the author and perfecter of faith.” In Heb. 12:24 He is “the mediator of a new covenant.” In Heb. 13:20 He is “the great Shepherd of the sheep.”

⁶⁰ Heb. 2:9 - because of the suffering of death: One of the themes of Scripture is that God detests pride and highly values humility. Jesus, the Ultimate Man, previously existing “in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” and “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him” (Php. 2:6-8).

E 2 Honorable: and honor, ⁶¹

D 3 The gracious goal of God – experiencing death for all men

E 1 God's grace: so that by the grace of God

E 2 God's objective for Jesus: He might taste death for everyone. ⁶²

D 4 The aim of the humiliation 2:10

E 1 God's motive – appropriateness: {10} For it was fitting for Him,

G 1 All exists for Him: for whom are all things, ⁶³

G 2 All exists by Him: and through whom are all things, ⁶⁴

⁶¹ Heb. 2:9 - crowned with glory and honor: Here is the inspired view of the writer of Hebrews: Though Jesus, in His incarnation, was made for a little time lower than the angels, He is now, by virtue of His resurrection, His ascension to heaven, and His having been seated at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor. God's motivation for having crowned Him with glory and honor was as a reward for His having been willing to suffer the ignominy of death.

As great as Jesus' honor and glory is in the sight of God, and in the sight of all those in heaven, whether men or angels, His glory and honor here upon earth are sadly muted. He is presently blasphemed or ignored by most people upon earth, deceived as they are by Satan and his demonic hordes. Jesus' glory and honor here on earth await His triumphant return in power and glory to reign as King over all the Earth, having conquered all His enemies (Ps. 2:6-10; 110:1-2; Isa. 40:4-5; 52:7-10; 59:15-20; 60:1-22; Zech. 14:5-11; Matt. 19:28; 24:29-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-6; 21:1 - 22:5).

⁶² Heb. 2:9 - taste death for everyone: The writer's statement of Christ's death is consistent with the Penal Substitution theory of atonement – that Christ suffered death to pay the penalty for men's having broken God's laws. The writer's statement is also consistent with Christ's universal atonement – He died to pay for the sins of all men, not merely those of the elect (Limited Atonement, held by most in the Presbyterian / Reformed faith). For a good offsite defense of Penal Substitution, see <http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj20i.pdf>. The following Scriptures support Unlimited Atonement: Matt. 1:21; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.

It should be noted that, though the writer spoke of Christ "tasting death." The word is *geuomai* (1089). Christ did not merely sample death. He partook of it fully, and died completely. By the same token when, in Heb. 6:4-5, the writer speaks of those who have "tasted (*geuomai*) of the heavenly gift" and "tasted (*geuomai*) the good word of God and the powers of the age to come," he is saying that they fully experienced these things, not that they merely sampled them. It is highly unlikely that the author would use the same word one way when speaking of Jesus' actions, but a different way when speaking of the actions of the people in question in Hebrews 6:4-5.

⁶³ Heb. 2:10 - for whom are all things: This clause modifies "Him" in 2:10, which probably refers to God the Father. This is true (a) because He has "many sons" to bring "to glory" and (b) because He is the one who perfects Jesus, "the author of their salvation through sufferings" (2:10). Because of the oneness of God the Father and God the Messianic Son (see John 10:30) this statement by the writer of Hebrews does not contradict Paul's statement in Col. 1:16 that all things have been created for the benefit of the Messiah.

⁶⁴ Heb. 2:10 - through whom are all things: For the same reasons that the preceding phrase, "for whom are all things", refers to God the Father, so this phrase also refers to God the Father. This phrase is consistent with the opening words of Scripture, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). For the same reason, the unity of the Godhead, it is not inconsistent for other authors to state that the Messiah was the Executive Agent of creation. That is to say, the pre-incarnate Christ was the Agent through whom God created all things. This is stated clearly in John 1:3, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." It is also stated in Col. 1:16, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him."

- E 2 God's aim – glorification of many sons: in bringing many sons ⁶⁵ to glory, ⁶⁶
- E 3 God's means – perfection of the Author of their salvation through sufferings: to perfect the author ⁶⁷ of their salvation through sufferings. ⁶⁸
- D 5 The result of the humiliation – a new family 2:11-18
 - E 1 The relationship of the Messianic Son and the sons 2:11-13
 - G 1 The common origin of sanctifier and sanctified: from the one Father: {11} For both He who sanctifies ⁶⁹ and those who are sanctified ⁷⁰ are all from one *Father*; ⁷¹ 2:11a
 - G 2 The brotherhood predicted in Scripture 2:11b-13
 - H 1 The observation of the writer: for which reason He is not

⁶⁵ Heb. 2:10 - sons: The plural of the word *huios* ([5207](#), “sons”) no more excludes women than does the phrase “sons of [Israel](#)” used hundreds of times in the OT. Who are these sons? They include the redeemed who constitute the Church (*ekklesia*, [1577](#), “assembly”), the redeemed of [Israel](#), and redeemed Gentiles (*ethnos*, [1484](#), “nations”) who are part of neither. God’s plan is to have a huge family with many sons! (See, for example, Rev. 7:9-10.)

⁶⁶ Heb. 2:10 - to glory: The present earth is under the curse imposed on it as a consequence of Adam’s sin (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20, 22-23). Believers in Jesus await an unimaginable future glory ruling over a future glorious earth (Rom. 8:18–19, 21; Rev. 21:1 - 22:5). “Glory” (*doxa*, [1391](#)) is used seven times in Hebrews: 1:3; 2:7, 9, 10; 3:3; 9:5; 13:21. *Doxa* refers to a display of light (radiance, brilliance, splendor) as an external manifestation of essential power and majesty deserving of honor and glory (see [Friberg](#)).

⁶⁷ Heb. 2:10 - author: *archêgos* ([747](#)) is used but four times in the Greek NT: Acts 3:15; 5:31; Heb. 2:10; 12:2. It is translated by the NASB as “Prince” in Acts, and as “author” in Hebrews.

Strictly, it refers to “one who goes first on the path” hence “leader, prince, pioneer” (Heb. 2:10). Secondarily, it refers to “one who causes something to begin” – hence “originator, founder, initiator” (Heb. 12:2) ([Friberg](#)).

⁶⁸ Heb. 2:10 - sufferings: The Leader of our salvation (*sôtêria*, [4991](#)) was made perfect (*teleioô*, [5048](#)) through sufferings (*pathêma*, [3804](#)). It should be no surprise that His followers also will be perfected through sufferings.

⁶⁹ Heb. 2:11 - He who sanctifies: In the context, this probably refers to Jesus. Sanctifies is the [present](#) active [participle](#) of *hagiadzō* ([37](#)). The [present](#) tense indicates Jesus’ sanctifying of believers is an ongoing process. The entire process must include such things as foreknowing us, predestining us, calling us, justifying us by means of His sacrificial death and resurrection (Rom. 8:29-30), interceding for us (John 17:1-26; Heb. 7:25), and ultimately bringing us to glory (Rom. 8:30; Heb. 2:10).

⁷⁰ Heb. 2:11 - those who are sanctified: Better, “the ones who are being sanctified,” the [present](#) passive plural [participle](#) of *hagiadzō* ([37](#)). Again, the ones who are being sanctified are undergoing an ongoing process. What was stated in the previous footnote about the process is true also here. Moreover, the ones who are being sanctified are identical to the “many sons” of Heb. 2:10, where see the explanatory footnote on “sons.”

⁷¹ Heb. 2:11 - are all from one *Father*: The text states, simply, “are all from one.” Obviously, theology obtained elsewhere dictates that One must be God the Father, hence the italicized addition.

ashamed to call them brethren,⁷² 2:11b

H 2 The declaration to the brethren: {12} saying, 2:12 (Psalm 22:22)

J 1 “I will proclaim Your name to My brethren,⁷³

J 2 In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.”

H 3 The declaration of trust (Isaiah 8:17): {13} And again, “I will put My trust in Him.”⁷⁴ 2:13a

H 4 The Messianic Son and the God-given children (Isaiah 8:18): And again, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.”⁷⁵ 2:13b

E 2 The mechanics of establishing the new family 2:14-16

G 1 The children's participation in blood and flesh: {14} Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood,⁷⁶ 2:14a

⁷² Heb. 2:11 - for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren: The reason is that both Jesus (Heb. 2:9), the one sanctifying (Heb. 2:11) and the “many sons” (Heb. 2:10), those who are being sanctified (Heb. 2:11) are all from One (Heb. 2:11) – i.e., God, who is known as the Father (John 1:14, 18; 14:6; Rom. 1:7, etc.). In my opinion, the word “brethren” is an archaic expression of “brothers” (the plural of *adelphos*, 80). Why not translate it “brothers”? The NET Bible’s paraphrase “[brothers and sisters](#)” is indefensible, even though the editors try to defend it. There are no words for “and sisters” in the Greek text. We all know that women are included. There is no reason to corrupt the Biblical text to prove it.

⁷³ Heb. 2:12 - I will proclaim Your name to my brethren: In this line and the next, the author accurately quotes Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 is a psalm of David. I have entitled the psalm, “[The Suffering and Praise of the Anointed King](#).” Ps. 22:1-21 constitutes “The Suffering of the Anointed King.” Ps. 22:22-31 constitutes “The Praise of the Anointed King.” David, of course, refers to himself throughout the psalm. But it is a highly Messianic psalm. Particularly noteworthy in that regard are the following references: Ps. 22:1, 6-8, 12-18, 22. In Heb. 2:12, the writer applies David’s vow of praise at the tabernacle among fellow-worshippers to Christ’s praising God accompanied by the redeemed. This is presently being *partially* fulfilled up in heaven. It will be *partially* fulfilled in the [Millennial Temple](#) in Jerusalem. It will be *completely* fulfilled in [New Jerusalem](#), where, however, there is no temple structure.

⁷⁴ Heb. 2:13 - “I will put my trust in Him”: The writer of Hebrews here loosely quotes Isaiah 8:17, and in the next instance, from Isa. 8:18. In the context of Isaiah 8, the statements of Isa. 8:17-18 refer to Isaiah the prophet. But there are Messianic overtones in this passage. Of Yahweh of Troops (“the LORD of hosts” – Isa. 8:13) is said to be “a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over” (Isa. 8:14). This was interpreted by Paul (Rom. 9:32-33) and Peter (1 Pet. 2:8) to apply also to the Messiah. Similarly, though Isa. 8:17-18 refers to Isaiah, the writer to the Hebrews applies the statements also to the Messiah (Heb. 2:13). The point of Hebrews 2:13 is that the Messiah is characterized by constant trust in the Messiah. That same trait, evidently, is shared by His “brothers.”

⁷⁵ Heb. 2:13 - I and the children whom God has given Me: The author has just loosely quoted Isa. 8:17, applying it to the Messiah. He continued to quote from the next verse (Isa. 8:18a), also applying it to the Messiah. He is attempting to demonstrate that the Messiah has solidarity with His “brothers.” They both proceed from the same Father.

⁷⁶ Heb. 2:14 - since the children share in flesh and blood: Presumably, for stylistic purposes, the translators have changed the tense of the verb and reversed the Greek word order of the nouns. Neither change was necessary. The text actually reads, “Since, therefore, the children have shared in blood and flesh” The verb is the perfect tense

G 2 The Messianic Son's participation in human blood and flesh 2:14b-16

H 1 The statement of His participation: He Himself likewise also partook of the same,⁷⁷ 2:14b

H 2 The purposes of His participation

J 1 To disarm him who had power through death – Satan: that through death⁷⁸ He might render powerless⁷⁹ him who had the power of death,⁸⁰ that is, the devil,⁸¹ 2:14c

J 2 To deliver those in bondage to death 2:15

K1 The statement of their deliverance: {15} and might free those

(past action with results continuing in the present) of *koinōneō* (2841), used only here in Hebrews. The writer is stating the obvious – God’s children, the ones standing in need of redemption – are human, composed of blood (*haima*, 129) and flesh (*sarx*, 4561), which they inherited from their first parents, Adam and Eve.

⁷⁷ Heb. 2:14 - He Himself likewise also partook of the same: That is, the Messiah also became human, taking on Himself blood and flesh. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The next point of the author is that, becoming blood and flesh, the Messiah became mortal – able to die. This was a deliberate choice.

⁷⁸ Heb. 2:14 - that through death: The whole point of the Messiah becoming flesh and blood was so that He would become mortal. And not merely to become mortal, but actually to die. It was not a meaningless death, but a very purposeful one for which He was striving.

⁷⁹ Heb. 2:14 - He might render powerless: This is the *Aorist* subjunctive active of *katargeō* (2673). “[T]he term always denotes a nonphysical destruction by means of a superior force coming in to replace the force previously in effect, as, e.g. light destroys darkness ...” (*Friberg*). Its most frequent translations in the NASB are (1) some form of the verb “abolish” - 5X; (2) some form of the expression “do away (with)” - 6X; and (3) some form of the verb “nullify” - 5X. All the other translations are 2X or 1X. The basic meaning assigned by *Friberg* is “cause to be idle.”

Some key doctrinal uses in the NT include “we have been **released** from the Law” (Rom. 7:6); “gifts of prophecy” and “knowledge” “**will be done away**” (1 Cor. 13:8); “the Law” ... does not “**nullify the promise**” (Gal. 3:17); Jesus succeeded in “**abolishing** in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandment contained in ordinances” (Eph. 2:15); “the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and **bring to an end** by the appearance of His coming” “that lawless one” (2 Thess. 2:18); and finally, Jesus “**abolished** death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 2:10).

The point of the writer here in Heb. 2:14, the only occurrence of *katargeō* in the book, is that Jesus, through His death and resurrection, released from the power of death all those who place their faith in Him. Though, apart from those who will participate in the still future Rapture, all believers in Jesus die physically, of far greater import is that they will not have to participate in eternal “second death” (Rev. 20:6, 14-15).

⁸⁰ Heb. 2:14 - him who had the power of death: The devil succeeded in seducing Eve into disobeying God. Adam followed her example and earned death for all mankind (Rom. 5:14-18; 1 Cor. 15:22). Thus the devil held the power of death over mankind in his war against God for the souls of men.

⁸¹ Heb. 2:14 - the devil: The word is *diabolos* (1228), literally, “the overthrower”; according to *Friberg*, “the slanderer.” This word is used 37X in the Greek text. In 3 instances it is translated as “malicious gossips” in the NASB (1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3). In those instances, there is no article “the”. The rest of the time it is translated, “devil.” One other time it appears without the article – in John 6:70 where Jesus states bluntly that one of the twelve is a devil. With the article, it always refers to Satan.

- K2 The symptom of their bondage: who through fear of death
 - K3 The nature of their bondage: were subject to slavery⁸²
 - K4 The length of their bondage: all their lives.
 - H 3 The Messianic Son's participation in rescuing the human race underscored 2:16
 - J 1 His not aiding angels: {16} For assuredly He does not give help to angels,⁸³
 - J 2 His helping the seed of Abraham: but He gives help to the descendant⁸⁴ of Abraham.
- E 3 The benefit to the new family: The establishment of a merciful and faithful high priest 2:17-18
 - G 1 The necessity of His participation in their humanity: {17} Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, 2:17a
 - G 2 The goal of His participation in their humanity 2:17b
 - H 1 To excel as a high priest: so that He might become
 - J 1 a merciful
 - J 2 and faithful high priest⁸⁵

⁸² Heb. 2:15 - were subject to slavery: The slavery (*douleia*, [1397](#)) to which the writer of Hebrews refers here is evidently the slavery of being fearful of death. None of us humans is exempt from that slavery until he places his trust in Christ, the source of eternal life (John 3:16). Even for the Bible-believing follower of Christ, death remains the final enemy to be abolished (1 Cor. 16:26).

⁸³ Heb. 2:16 - He does not give help to angels: The mission of the Messiah upon earth was singular – He came to redeem humans, not angels. God has no redemption program for fallen angels.

⁸⁴ Heb. 2:16 - descendant of Abraham: Literally, the word is “seed,” (*sperma*, [4690](#)) appearing in the singular. This “may point to the Jewishness of the writer’s audience, but even Gentile Christians could claim to be the “seed of Abraham” in a spiritual sense (Gal. 3:29)” (Hodges, *Hebrews*, p. 785). The writer is apparently using *sperma* in a corporate sense, even though it appears in the singular.

⁸⁵ Heb. 2:17 - a merciful and faithful high priest: The two words “high priest” translate the single Greek word *archiereus* ([749](#)), which appears 122X in the NT and 17X in Hebrews. This is its first occurrence, and marks the first time in the document that the writer refers to Jesus as a high priest. It will not be the last time. Here are his uses of *archiereus*: Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:20; 7:26, 27, 28; 8:1, 3; 9:7, 11, 25; 13:11. The “stand-alone” word *hiereus* ([2409](#)) means simply, “priest.” The prefix *archē* has to do with being “from the beginning,” hence, “main,” “most important,” hence, “ruling” priest. When *archiereus* appears in the plural, it refers to the “principal” or “most important” priests ([Friberg](#)). This high priest, being perfect, became a merciful and faithful high priest because He had become human, and thus able to identify with the race of men. His mercy and faithfulness is proven in His willingness, as God-come-in-the-flesh, to die for human sins.

J 3 in things pertaining to God,

H 2 To provide propitiation: to make propitiation ⁸⁶ for the sins of the people.

G 3 The benefit of His participation in their humanity 2:18

H 1 His experience of temptation through suffering: {18} For since He Himself was tempted ⁸⁷ in that which He has suffered, ⁸⁸

H 2 His ability to aid those tempted: He is able to come to the aid ⁸⁹ of those who are tempted. ⁹⁰

B 3 The Superiority of the Messianic Son to Moses 3:1-6

C 1 His Ability to Withstand Scrutiny 3:1

⁸⁶ Heb. 2:17 - to make propitiation: This is the [present](#) tense accusative Infinitive of *hilaskomai* (2433), meaning, to “(1) *show kindness and compassion* toward one who does not deserve it, *have mercy on, pardon, forgive* (Luke 18:13); (2) *bring about reconciliation, make acceptable to, provide for forgiveness*, with focus on the means of reconciliation” ([Friberg](#)). The verb is used only twice – in Luke 13:13 and here in Heb. 2:17. A related noun is *hilastêrion* (2435), again used only twice. It is translated “propitiation” in Rom. 3:25 and as “mercy seat” in Heb. 9:5. Another related noun, used also twice, in 1 John 2:2; 4:10, is *hilasmos* (2434), translated “propitiation” in both instances. In both instances, Jesus is said to be the legal satisfaction for human sins. His sacrifice is sufficiently valuable to pay for the sins of the entire world (1 John 2:2), not merely for the sins of those who would place their faith in Him. Thus, the Calvinist doctrine of “[Limited Atonement](#),” that Jesus died only for the sins of the elect, is seen to be invalid. Since the verb here in Heb. 2:17 appears in the [present](#) tense, Jesus’ propitiation is not seen to be limited to His single act of sacrifice. Rather, He continually appears before the Divine Bar arguing that defendants who have placed their faith in Him be acquitted whenever “the accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 2:10) brings charges against them. He has paid their just death penalty. There is no grounds for further charges (Rom. 8:33-34).

⁸⁷ Heb. 2:18 - He Himself was tempted: “tempted” is the [Aorist](#) passive [participle](#) of *peiradzō* (3985). This verb can mean either to *try* (or test) or to *tempt* (to solicit another to commit evil). The context must determine. The verb appears here in the [Aorist](#), meaning it was an event at a point of time. The verb is passive, meaning some outside force was at work. From God’s viewpoint, He tested Jesus at His trial / scourging / crucifixion. He tested Jesus to demonstrate that He could not fail the test. Satan was at work, and He was tempting Jesus to give in to the human pain and suffering and bypass the cross and God’s will. He was unsuccessful.

⁸⁸ Heb. 2:18 - in that which He has suffered: These words define the parameters of the test / temptation of which the writer has just spoken. It was primarily the suffering of the cross that the writer had in mind.

⁸⁹ Heb. 2:18 - to come to the aid: These words translate the [Aorist](#) active infinitive of *boêtheō* (997), to aid, or help. Its 8 occurrences in the NT are as follows: Matt. 15:25; Mark 9:22, 24; Acts 16:9; 21:28; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 2:18; Rev. 12:16.

⁹⁰ Heb. 2:18 - those who are tempted: “those who are tempted” translates the [present](#) passive [Participle](#) of, once again, *peiradzō* (3985). The [present](#) tense here indicates that believers are continually being tempted. It is a perpetual fact of life here on this present earth. Once again, God is at work, testing believers to demonstrate that they will be faithful. At the same time Satan is always at work hoping to tempt the believer into succumbing to sin. God has promised that no believer will be tempted / tried *peiradzō* (3985) beyond what he is able to bear. Rather He will, along with the temptation / trial (*peirasmos*, [3986](#)) “provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

The point of the writer here is that since Jesus successfully passed all the tests thrown at Him, and since He is a merciful and faithful high priest, He is able to come to the aid of those who are being tested / tried.

D 1 The scrutiny commanded the readers

E 1 Their position: {1} Therefore, holy brethren,

E 2 Their participation: partakers of a heavenly calling, ⁹¹E 3 Their command: consider Jesus, ⁹²

D 2 The object of scrutiny (Jesus)

E 1 The Apostle: the Apostle ⁹³E 2 The High Priest: and High Priest ⁹⁴ of our confession; ⁹⁵

C 2 His Faithfulness in Comparison to Moses 3:2

D 1 To His sender: {2} He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, ⁹⁶

⁹¹ Heb. 3:1 - partakers of a heavenly calling: The word “partakers” is *metochos* (3353). In the NASB it is translated as “companions” 1X; “partakers” 4X; and “partners” 1X. Notice that the writer addresses them as “holy brothers” as well as “partakers of a heavenly calling.” There can be no doubt that the term “partakers” conveys the idea that these Hebrew Christians were full-blown participants of a “heavenly calling.” In other words they are Christians. He will be just as specific in 3:14, where he will write, “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end” In view of the usage of *metochos* by the writer to the Hebrews, to take the position that the “partakers of the Holy Spirit” in Heb. 6:4 were “professing” but not “possessing” Christians is not well-supported by the evidence. Here are the uses of *metochos* in the NT: Luke 5:7; Heb. 1:9; 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8.

⁹² Heb. 3:1 - consider Jesus: “Consider” is the 2nd person *Aorist* plural Imperative of *katanoēō* (2657). It means here “to consider closely,” “to give careful consideration” (in this context, to Jesus). It is used only twice in this book, in Heb. 3:1; 10:24. The author wishes his readers to give careful consideration to Jesus. This is now the second of fourteen times the name of Jesus appears in Hebrews. The first was in Heb. 2:9. The next will be in Heb. 4:8.

⁹³ Heb. 3:1 - the Apostle: It is interesting that the writer identified Jesus as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.” The word “apostle” is *apostolos* (652), “sent one”. Obviously Jesus was not one of the original twelve, but He certainly was sent (*apostellō*, 649) by God (John 10:36; 1 John 4:14). The truth is that Jesus is far and away the MOST IMPORTANT Sent One.

⁹⁴ Heb. 3:1 - High Priest: *archiereus* (749). This is the author’s second use of this term with reference to Jesus. See the note at Heb. 2:17 for further discussion. God sent (*apostellō*, 649) Jesus to be Prophet, Priest, and King. In Hebrews, the author’s emphasis is upon Jesus as sent by God to be Priest.

⁹⁵ Heb. 3:1 - confession: The word is *homologia* (3671) used only six times in the NT, half of them in Hebrews. Literally, it means “same speech.” It refers to “an agreement, confession” (*New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*). Here, Jesus is said to be “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.” In Heb. 4:14, the writer would exhort his readers “let us hold fast our confession.” Again, in Heb. 10:23, he pleaded, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Obviously, the writer was concerned that, under duress, these Hebrews would forsake their confession of faith in Jesus. The writer, and, apparently, his readers, had previously made a confession of faith in Jesus as the One Sent by God (their Apostle) and as the Ultimate High Priest, who alone could grant them permanent access to God.

⁹⁶ Heb. 3:2 - He was faithful to Him who appointed Him: God sent Jesus to be, among other things, a Prophet and High Priest. Jesus faithfully performed His duties as Prophet while here upon earth. He faithfully communicated only that, and all that which His Father ordained Him to speak (John 8:28, 38; 12:49-50; 14:10). As High Priest, Jesus offered Himself up as the perfect Sacrifice for sin (John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 15:13; 1 John 3:16; 4:14).

D 2 The comparison to Moses: as Moses also was in all His house.⁹⁷

C 3 His Glory Greater than Moses' 3:3-4

D 1 The Builder greater than the house 3:3

E 1 The statement: {3} For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses,⁹⁸

E 2 The illustration: by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.⁹⁹

D 2 The natural comparison 3:4

E 1 Men build houses: {4} For every house is built by someone,

E 2 God built all: but the builder of all things is God.

C 4 His Greater Position 3:5-6

D 1 Moses' status 3:5

E 1 Faithful *in* all his house: {5} Now Moses was faithful in all His house

E 2 A servant: as a servant,¹⁰⁰

E 3 A sign of subsequent things: for a testimony of those things which

⁹⁷ Heb. 3:2 - as Moses was in all His house: The author's point is that Jesus was as faithful to God in all God's house as Moses had been faithful to God in all God's house (*oikos*, 3624). He was referring to God's support of Moses (Num. 12:7) after Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses because he had married a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1). They verbalized their resentment by insisting that God had spoken through them as well as through Moses (Num. 12:2). Yahweh heard their resentment (Num. 12:2) and his anger burned against the brother and sister (Num. 12:9). Yahweh told the trio that He normally spoke to a prophet in a vision or dream (Num. 12:6), but that, since Moses was faithful in all His household (*bayith*, 1004) (Num. 12:7), He spoke openly to Moses, "mouth to mouth", and He even permitted Moses to see "the form of the LORD." They should have been afraid to speak against Moses (Num. 12:8).

Both *bayith* and *oikos* mean "house" and "household." Moses' faithfulness in all God's house may refer both to the [tabernacle](#) that God instructed Moses to build and, as well, to the [household of God](#), the [Israelis](#), whom God had redeemed from bondage in Egypt.

This is the first time Moses' name has appeared in Hebrews. The author will maintain that, just as Jesus, the Messianic Son, was superior to angels, revered in Jewish thinking, so also Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest, is greater than Moses, who, along with Abraham, was the most venerated Hebrew.

⁹⁸ Heb. 3:3 - For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses: Here is the author's point – Jesus has a more glorious position than even Moses.

⁹⁹ Heb. 3:3 - the builder of the house has more honor than the house: Implicit here is that Jesus, in His pre-incarnate role was the Builder of God's house inasmuch as He was the Creator of all – the physical universe and the different entities in the universe – angels and man himself (John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). This is a powerful testimony of the Deity of Jesus.

¹⁰⁰ Heb. 3:5 - as a servant: Moses was faithful *in* all God's house as a mere *servant*, (Heb. 3:5), but the Messiah, Christ, was faithful *over* God's house as a Messianic *Son* (Heb. 3:6).

were to be spoken later;

D 2 The Messianic Son's status 3:6

E 1 His faithfulness as a Messianic Son *over* His own house: {6} but Christ ¹⁰¹ *was faithful* as a Son over His house ¹⁰²

E 2 The nature of His house

G 1 The identification of the house(hold): — whose house we are, ¹⁰³

G 2 The pre-requisite of the house(hold)

H 1 Retention of confidence: if ¹⁰⁴ we hold fast ¹⁰⁵ our confidence ¹⁰⁶

H 2 Retention of rejoicing of the hope: and the boast of our

¹⁰¹ Heb. 3:6 - Christ: This is the first appearance of the Greek title *christos* (5547) in the book of Hebrews. It is used twelve times in the book – in Heb. 3:6, 14; 5:5; 6:1; 9:11, 14, 24, 28; 10:10; 11:26; 13:8, 21. *Christos* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah (*mashiach*, 4899). Both mean “anointed one.” From OT history we learn that priests were anointed with oil (see, for example, Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22); kings were anointed (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:10; 1 Kings 19:15-16); and prophets were sometimes anointed (1 Kings 19:16). The emphasis in Hebrews is that Jesus was anointed to serve as priest. Half the time, in the book of Hebrews the title “Christ” refers to His High Priestly ministry (Heb. 5:5; 9:11, 14, 24, 28; 10:10). That is, in fact, how He is presently serving. Contrary to what most of Christendom believes, He is not presently reigning as King on the throne of David, for David’s throne is on earth, not heaven. As one might expect, the title “Christ” is used frequently in the NT. Two of Paul’s letters are virtually tied with the most uses – 65X in Romans, and 64X in 1 Corinthians. The next three are also Pauline – 47X in 2 Corinthians, 46X in Ephesians, and 38X in Galatians. Thus, Paul is the pre-eminent NT writer about the Christ.

¹⁰² Heb. 3:6 - as a Son over His house: The superiority of Jesus, the Messiah, over Moses is indicated by the fact that Moses was a mere *servant in* God’s house, while Jesus the Christ was the Messianic *Son over* God’s house.

¹⁰³ Heb. 3:6 - whose house we are: “We” is “we believers in Christ.” “House” (*oikos*, 3624) here obviously means “household,” not merely a structure in which people live. We believers constitute Christ’s household.

¹⁰⁴ Heb. 3:6 - if: “If” is the word *ean* (1437). It could be translated here, “if, indeed” Followed by a verb (hold fast, *katechō*, 2722) appearing in the subjunctive mode (as is the case here), *ean* begins a third class conditional statement. From the viewpoint of the writer, he is uncertain as to whether his readers will or will not hold fast.

¹⁰⁵ Heb. 3:6 - we hold fast: This is the first person plural *Aorist* subjunctive of *katechō* (2722), which means here to “*hold fast, keep in possession, possess*,” or, perhaps, in a more figurative sense, “*hold in memory, keep in mind, continue believing*” (Friberg). The *Aorist* tense does not suggest a continual, ongoing “holding fast.” Rather it looks as the totality of his audience’s lives (as believers in Christ) as holding fast their confidence and the boast of their hope. At this point in his letter, the writer is uncertain as to whether or not his readers will hold fast their confidence. What he is saying is that his readers constitute the household of Christ *if* they fold fast. Notice that the writer includes himself in the group he is addressing – “we.”

¹⁰⁶ Heb. 3:6 - our confidence: Literally, it reads “the confidence,” which translates *tên parrêsian* (3954), which refers to “an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear.” In speech, it is reflected in *boldness, plainness, outspokenness* (e.g. Acts 2:29); in relation to God, it is reflected in *confidence, boldness, joyful sense of freedom* (e.g. Heb. 10:35) (Friberg).

hope¹⁰⁷

H 3 Retention to the end: firm until the end.¹⁰⁸

B 4 The Parenthetical Second Warning: The Danger of Failing to Enter God's Rest through Trusting in Jesus Christ 3:7 - 4:13

C 1 The Historical Example: [Israel's](#) failure to enter God's rest through faith 3:7-19

D 1 The Holy Spirit's reaction in Scripture to [Israel's](#) failure to enter God's rest 3:7-11

E 1 The heart-hardening process 3:7-8a

G 1 The contemplated hearing: {7} Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, 3:7¹⁰⁹

G 2 The command to avoid hard-heartedness: {8} DO NOT

¹⁰⁷ Heb. 3:6 - the boast of our hope: "boast" is the word *kauchêma* (2745). It refers to that of which one is proud and is able to boast about (see [Friberg](#)). This boast is not a boasting about self accomplishment here – rather it is an open boasting about the hope (*elpis*, 1680) which Christians possess. The author is specific – he uses the article "the" in front of each noun – "if *the* boldness and *the* boast of *the* hope we hold fast" (translation mine, emphasis mine).

The hope Christians possess is simple, yet complex. It includes the assurance of sins forgiven, of death overcome, of fellowship with God and Christ and with other believers completed, yet growing, of a fabulous environment – New Jerusalem and New Earth, of nature restored to paradise, of being able complete the mandate successfully to rule New Earth and the animals contained therein the way God intended from the beginning, of a perpetual Kingdom in which all rule underneath God and His Messiah absent any evil or evil people, or death, or sadness, or disease, or pain. The author brings up the word hope (*elpis*, 1680) five times in his treatise – Heb. 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23. In each instance except in Heb. 7:19, hope is an outlook in which the author urges his readers to *persist*.

The writer's point about hope in Heb. 3:6 is that we believers are to hold fast the boast of the hope – we ought to boast about the hope we have and we ought to be vocal about it and we ought to persist in it. In fact, if we are truly part of the household of Christ, we *must* do so!

¹⁰⁸ Heb. 3:6 - firm until the end: Undoubtedly the authors felt their translation was implied, and thus justified. The truth remains, however, that none of these four words appear in the Greek text. They are evidently employed to reinforce the meaning of the verb *katechō* (2722), "hold fast." But the phrase added on at the end is redundant. If we "hold fast" something, of necessity we hold it fast to the end. The phrase does not appear in Greek, hence it should not appear in English, either.

Though done so for stylistic purposes in English, the NASB word order does not coincide with the Greek word order. Here is a literal translation of Heb. 3:6, adhering to the Greek word order: "Christ, moreover, as son over the household of Him – whose household we are – if the boldness and the boast of the hope we hold fast."

¹⁰⁹ Heb. 3:7 - TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE: As the writer quotes from the latter half of Psalm 95:7, he uses the third class condition of "if" – "if you hear His voice – perhaps you will, and perhaps you will not" – the condition of ambivalence. God the Holy Spirit, speaking through the human author of Psalm 95, warned the [Israelis](#) to take heed to God's voice. In the Book of Hebrews, God the Spirit, using the author's pen, warns believers to take heed to God's voice. Psalm 95:7b-11 constitutes "The Warning Against the Disobedience of Hard-Heartedness," to be found in the author's [Annotated Expanded Outline of Psalm 95](#). The writer of Hebrews quotes most, but not all of Psalm 95:7b-11. He omits, for example, any reference to Meribah and Massah (Ps. 95:8); and he alters the clause, "I loathed that generation" (Ps. 95:10a) to "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION" (Heb. 3:10a).

HARDEN YOUR HEARTS 3:8a ¹¹⁰E 2 The example of [Israel](#) in the desert 3:8b-9G 1 A time of provocation: AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, ¹¹¹
3:8b

G 2 A time of temptation 3:8c-9a

H 1 AS IN THE DAY OF ¹¹² TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,
3:8cH 2 {9} WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY
TESTING *Me*, ¹¹³ 3:9aG 3 God's wondrous demonstrations: AND SAW MY WORKS FOR
FORTY YEARS. ¹¹⁴ 3:9b

¹¹⁰ Heb. 3:8 - DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS: The writer quotes the first part of Ps. 95:8. Hardening one's heart is the antithesis of listening to another's voice.

We adults have all seen hardening of the heart in a couple going through divorce. Though the couple may have had problems before, they were still willing to listen to one another. But when one of them files for divorce, we all know that he or she has developed a hard heart, and is no longer willing to listen to the other. Jesus' best answer to the question of divorce was, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19:6). When pressed for an answer as to why Moses had given instructions about divorce (Matt. 19:7, alluding to Deut. 24:1-4), Jesus quickly replied, "Because of your hardness of heart ..." (Matt. 19:8).

While not a Bible scholar, I am a serious Bible student. When I determine that a particular commentator holds to views that I cannot agree with (such as his holding to [Amillennialism](#) whereas I hold firmly to [Dispensational Premillennialism](#)), I reject that author. In effect, I do not trust him, at least in prophetic passages, and I develop a "hard heart" toward him. If you trust someone, you have a soft heart toward him. If you distrust someone, you have a hard heart toward him. In the present context (of Heb. 3:7b-11), as well as in the past context (of Ps. 95:7b-11), hard-heartedness goes hand-in-hand with not listening to God's voice – the tangible byproduct of not trusting God.

¹¹¹ Heb. 3:8 - AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME: Literally, "as in the provocation" (*parapikrasmos*, [3894](#)), used only here and in Heb. 3:15 in the NT. *Parapikrasmos* probably means "rebellion, revolt, hardheartedness" ([Friberg](#)). From this point on through the rest of Heb. 3:8, there is no *precise* parallel in Psalm 95. The writer of Hebrews is adapting the incident at "Meribah" and "Massah" (cited in Ex. 17:7; Deut. 33:8; Psalm 95:8) to apply to the whole forty years of wilderness wandering, of which Psalm 95:10 and Hebrews 3:9 also speak.

¹¹² Heb. 3:8 - AS IN THE DAY OF: This phrase does find its parallel in the second line of Psalm 95:8.

¹¹³ Heb. 3:9 - WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*: This clause is a loose quotation of Psalm 95:9a.

¹¹⁴ Heb. 3:9 - AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS: Here the writer of Hebrews quotes from the last clause of Ps. 95:9 and the first phrase of Ps. 95:10 ("for forty years"). The unidentified author of Psalm 95 (whom the author of Hebrews will later identify as David [Heb. 4:7]) had focused in (in Ps. 95:8) on the incident described in Ex. 17:1-7. There, [Israel](#) camped at Rephidim in the wilderness of Sin, where there was no water to drink (Ex. 17:1). The people "quarreled with Moses," and Moses accused them of testing the LORD (Ex. 17:2). Yahweh instructed Moses to strike the rock at Horeb, and water would issue forth (Ex. 17:5-6). Moses named the place "Massah" ("test") and "Meribah" ("quarrel") because the people quarreled and tested the LORD (Ex. 17:7).

The writer of Hebrews omitted any reference to Massah and Meribah, and instead referred to the entire forty years of wilderness wandering that was triggered specifically by the tragedy of unbelief described in Num. 13:1-14:38. When the people heard the majority report of the ten spies who concluded that [Israel](#) would be powerless to defeat the residents of Canaan, they sided with the ten spies and refused to begin the battle to conquer the land they had been promised. God determined that all of the older generation except Caleb and Joshua would die off during the

E 3 The Spirit's response 3:10-11

G 1 His anger: {10} "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION,"¹¹⁵ 3:10

H 1 Because of their erring hearts: AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART,'¹¹⁶

H 2 Because of their disobedience: AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS';¹¹⁷

G 2 His judgment 3:11

H 1 An oath of wrath: {11} AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,¹¹⁸

H 2 [Israel](#) not to gain God's rest: 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"¹¹⁹

D 2 The application to the readers 3:12-14

E 1 The evil of unbelief 3:12

G 1 The command to beware a single evil, unbelieving heart: {12} Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart¹²⁰

next forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Only the younger generation would be able to enter the “rest” of the promised land. In effect, the writer of Hebrews telescoped two events, (1) the incident at Meribah and Massah, and (2) the incident at Kadesh-Barnea, into one event with similar outcomes – forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

¹¹⁵ 3:10 - THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Ps. 95:10, “For forty years I loathed *that* generation.”

¹¹⁶ 3:10 - THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Psa. 95:10.

¹¹⁷ 3:10 - AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Psa. 95:10.

¹¹⁸ 3:11 - AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Psa. 95:11. The form of the oath Yahweh swore was “as I live” (Num. 14:21, 28).

¹¹⁹ Heb. 3:11 - THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Psa. 95:11. In the context of the sons of [Israel](#), the content of the oath Yahweh swore prevented the older, faithless generation (except Caleb and Joshua) from entering the “rest” of possessing the promised land of Canaan (Num. 14:20-23, 26-30; Deut. 1:34-35; Ps. 95:8-11; Heb. 4:3, 5). The unbelieving older generation would wander as nomads for forty years without having any fixed address, or any place they could settle down in and call “home.” They would enter no “rest.” The big question is, “How would the author of Hebrews apply this ‘rest’ concept to the Christian sons of [Israel](#) among the Diaspora in the first century A.D.?” I will argue that the writer of Hebrews envisioned a strikingly parallel application to his (predominantly Jewish) Christian readers. They would have no significant role of serving Messiah in the promised Millennial Kingdom (cf. Luke 19:11-26).

¹²⁰ Heb. 3:12 - an evil, unbelieving heart: A heart is evil (*ponēros*, [4190](#)) because it is unbelieving (*apistia*, [570](#)). This is evidently what characterized the first generation of [Israelis](#). Here, the writer spoke of an “evil ... heart.” In his only other use of *ponēros* he spoke of an “evil conscience” (Heb. 10:22). In his only other use of *apistia* the writer will state in Heb. 3:19 that the first generation of [Israelis](#) “were not able to enter [the Promised Land] because of

G 2 The accompanying falling away from God: that falls away from the living God.¹²¹

E 2 The necessity of mutual reminder 3:13

G 1 Daily: {13} But encourage one another day after day,¹²² as long as it is *still* called "Today,"

G 2 Due to sin's deceptive hardening: so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

E 3 The Christian meant for better things 3:14

G 1 Partakers of Christ: {14} For we have become partakers of Christ,¹²³

G 2 The condition – unending confidence: if¹²⁴ we hold fast the

unbelief.”

¹²¹ Heb. 3:12 - that falls away from the living God: The words “falls away” translate the second [aorist](#) active Infinitive of *aphistēmi* (868), used only here in Hebrews. The second [aorist](#) active is used only intransitively. It means here to “desert” or “forsake” (so [Net Bible](#)). Note that the writer describes his readers as “brothers” (*adelphos*, 80). This is something Christians can do.

¹²² Heb. 3:13 - But encourage one another day after day: The verb “encourage” is the 2nd person plural [present](#) tense Imperative of *parakaleō* (3870). The writer is commanding his readers to continually be urging or imploring or exhorting one another. The ongoing time factor is re-emphasized by the words “day after day.” This command illustrates dramatically the need for us believers constantly to be motivating one another to trust God and maintain our confession of faith in Jesus Christ. This would be especially true in situations in which one’s very survival were linked to renouncing any relationship with Jesus. Recently [Somali al-Shabaab Muslim terrorists](#) struck Mpeketoni in Kenya, [slaughtering Christians and non-Somali nationals](#). There would be a strong temptation for Christians to renounce their Christianity and convert to Islam.

¹²³ Heb. 3:14 - For we have become partakers of Christ: “Partakers” is *metochos* (3353), used already in Heb. 1:9; 3:1. (See further discussions at the notes on Heb. 1:9; 3:1.) It is also used here in Heb. 3:14. It will be used again in Heb. 6:4; 12:8. The word *metochos* means that the writer and the readers are sharers in or participants in the Christ – the Messiah. (Note the kingdom implications of the article “the” used by the author in conjunction with “Christ” – *tou christou*.) As Zane Hodges (*TBKC*, p. 787, commenting on Heb. 3:14) stated, this sharing in the kingdom aspect of Christ’s reign is something that Jesus Himself verbalized in Rev. 2:26-27:

²⁶ ~He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;

“We have become” is the perfect tense of *ginomai* (1096). It refers to a condition begun in the past and continuing to the present time.

¹²⁴ Heb. 3:14 - if: The word is *eanper*, “if, indeed,” which is followed by the subjunctive mood, [aorist](#) tense of *katechō* (2722), “hold fast,” (used Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:23). *Eanper* followed by the subjunctive is a third class condition. The writer is uncertain as to whether his readers will or will not “hold fast.” Just as the participation of the first generation [Israelis](#) in the rest of the Promised Land of Canaan was conditioned upon their faith, so the participation of subsequent believers in a meaningful way in the future Millennial Kingdom, headquartered in the Promised Land of [Israel](#), is conditioned upon faith demonstrated by obedience. This is what Jesus was trying to teach His followers about the Kingdom in Luke 19:11-27. Ability to serve greatly in the future kingdom is conditioned upon faithful service in the present age.

Salvation is not the issue. Usefulness is. If salvation is the issue here for the recipients of the letter to the

beginning of our assurance firm until the end,¹²⁵

D 3 The author's analysis of the sin 3:15-19

E 1 The reiteration of the Scripture 3:15

G 1 The requisite to hearing God: {15} while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,"¹²⁶

G 2 The unhardened heart: DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS,¹²⁷

G 3 The example of [Israel](#): AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."¹²⁸

Hebrews, then salvation was also the issue in the first generation of [Israelis](#). If the writer of Hebrews was concerned that his readers could lose their salvation, then a consistent interpretation would require that all the [Israelis](#) of the first generation, save Joshua and Caleb, lost their salvation because they did not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. That is an untenable conclusion. It seems, in that instance, that loss of salvation would even include Moses, who also was barred from entering the Promised Land. That prospect alone would be unthinkable to any serious exegete.

¹²⁵ Heb. 3:14 - if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end: Assurance is *hupostasis* ([5287](#)), used only 5X in the NT: 2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17; Heb. 1:3; 3:14; 11:1. *Hupostasis* is the underlying reality behind anything ([Friberg](#)). So in Heb. 1:3, the Messianic Son is the exact representation of God's "nature" (*hupostasis*). In Heb. 11:1, faith is the "assurance" (*hupostasis*) of things hoped for. The readers of the letter to the Hebrews were originally filled with assurance (*hupostasis*) about who Jesus was and is. They needed to retain that assurance until it reached the stage of completion (*telos*, [5056](#)) – "the end" (Heb. 3:14).

¹²⁶ Heb. 3:15 - while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE": Once again quoting from the last part of Psalm 95:7, the writer is intent upon reinforcing the *present necessity* of his readers' holding fast the beginning of their assurance firm until the end (Heb. 3:14). There are opportunities for service that are only available at certain times. If we do not hold fast the beginning of our assurance consistently, we will ultimately miss opportunities for serving God. Once an opportunity closes, it is not recoverable. Great consistency in faith and obedience is necessary to fulfill our potential in our Christian lives. The issue here is not salvation. The issue is opportunity for greatness in service.

¹²⁷ Heb. 3:15 - DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS: Once again, the writer quoted the first words of Psalm 95:8. A heart that refuses to trust God has become a hard heart. "Do not harden" is the negative *me* + the [Aorist](#) Subjunctive 2nd Person Plural, Active Voice of *sklêrunô* ([4645](#)), used as an Imperative. *Sklêrunô* is used in the literal sense as a medical term to refer to that which becomes thickened or hardened. For example, in English, sclerosis of the liver is hardening of the liver.

In the NT *sklêrunô* is used but six times, and only in the metaphorical, spiritual sense. It is used in reference to Jewish synagogue members becoming **hardened** and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way (of Jesus) (Acts 19:9); of the fact that, though God extends mercy to whomsoever He wishes, He nonetheless "**hardens** whom He desires" (Rom 9:18). In Heb. 3:13, the readers are to comfort one another daily so that not a single one of them would be **hardened** by the deceitfulness of sin. Three times in Hebrews it is used in reference to the command, quoting Psalm 95:8, that the readers were not to **harden** their hearts (Heb. 3:8, 15; 4:7) (emphasis mine). The use of the imperative signifies that this is a volitional matter – the readers can choose whether or not they wish to harden their hearts by not trusting God. The use of the active voice suggests that readers actively harden their own hearts, instead of having their hearts hardened by some external force. The use of the [Aorist](#) tense suggests that readers reach a moment of "critical mass" in their lives when they must, at a point in time, resist hardening their hearts. Perhaps persecution from Jewish acquaintances or officials was causing these Jewish Christians to whom the writer was writing to contemplate jettisoning their faith in Jesus as their Messiah. To do so would amount to a deliberate choice to harden their own hearts. Repeatedly, the writer exhorts his readers *not to do so!*

¹²⁸ Heb. 3:15 - AS WHEN THE PROVOKED ME: NASB footnote: "Lit in the rebellion." JTB: Literally, "as in the provocation" (*parapikrasmos*, [3894](#)), used only here and in Heb. 3:8 in the NT. See the footnote on this phrase in Heb. 3:8.

E 2 The sin of [Israel](#) 3:16G 1 The provocation of some: {16} For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? ¹²⁹G 2 The refraining of some: Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses? ¹³⁰

E 3 The objects of God's anger 3:17

G 1 They who had sinned: {17} And with whom was He angry for forty years?

G 2 Their resultant deaths: Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

E 4 The objects of God's oath 3:18

G 1 The sentence of not entering His rest: {18} And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest,

G 2 Those who believed not: but to those who were disobedient? ¹³¹

E 5 The final conclusion 3:19

G 1 The fact of the exclusion from rest: {19} *So* we see that they were not able to enter ¹³²

¹²⁹ Heb. 3:16 - For who provoked *Him* when they had heard?: The word “provoked” is the verb *parapikrainō* (3893), the verbal counterpart to the noun *parapikrasmos* (3894), used only in Heb. 3:8, 15. *Parapikrainō* is used only here in the entire NT. In an absolute and intransitive sense, it means to *rebel*, to *be disobedient*, or to be *recalcitrant*. According to [Friberg](#), this is its probable meaning here in Heb. 3:16. Again, according to [Friberg](#), possibly it is used here in a transitive sense, to *provoke* or *make angry*. Using [Friberg's](#) probably meaning, literally, the text reads, “For who of those having heard, rebelled?” The writer answers his question in the next clause.

¹³⁰ Heb. 3:16 - did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?: Literally, “– but not all of the ones exiting out of Egypt through Moses?” It is amazing, but true, that the entire first generation of [Israelis](#) redeemed from Egypt by Moses failed to exercise faith at a critical point in time. With the exception of Caleb and Joshua, every one of them was disqualified from entry into the Promised Land. The writer of Hebrews is not saying they lost their salvation. He is saying they were disqualified from the “rest” of Canaan (Heb. 3:18; 4:1). They forfeited God’s best plan for their lives, and they forfeited the ability to serve God in His kingdom, *in the land*. They did so because they did not trust God sufficiently. Their failure to trust God and their consequent exclusion from entry into the land is described in Numbers 13:1-14:45.

¹³¹ Heb. 3:18 - disobedient: The word is the plural [Aorist participle](#) of *apeitheō* (544), to disobey. Literally, “the ones having disobeyed.” The meaning is very close to “disbelieve.” To disbelieve is to disobey. The writer will use this word again in Hebrews 11:31 to describe the people of Jericho, who, unlike Rahab, did not believe in the God of [Israel](#), and thus disobeyed and consequently perished.

¹³² Heb. 3:19 - they were not able to enter: “To enter” is the [Aorist Infinitive](#) of *eiserchomai* (1525). At a point in time, namely, the incident at Kadesh-Barnea, the entire first generation of Exodus [Israelis](#) were unable to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. The reason? As the next phrase points out – because of their unbelief. The writer uses this word a surprising 15X in Hebrews. Eight of those occurrences have to do with the present topic of entering the land of Canaan or entering the rest of God (Heb. 3:11, 18, 19; 4:1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11). Other references center mostly, but not entirely, upon the work of Christ or the work of a priest (Heb. 6:19, 20; 9:12, 24, 25; 10:5).

G 2 The exclusion due to unbelief: because of unbelief. ¹³³

C 2 The Urging of the Readers to Enter the Rest of God 4:1-13

D 1 The challenge to fear 4:1-2

E 1 The exhortation to fear: {1} Therefore, let us fear if, 4:1a

E 2 The fact of the promise of rest: while a promise remains of entering His rest, ¹³⁴ 4:1bE 3 The possibility of failing to realize the promise: any one of you may seem to have come short of it. ¹³⁵ 4:1c

¹³³ Heb. 3:19 - because of unbelief: "Unbelief" is *apistia* (570), the absence of faith (*pistis*, 4102). *Apistia* is used in Hebrews only in Heb. 3:12, 19. Disobedience can always be traced to unbelief. We disobey God or some human because we don't trust that person or we don't believe we will be better off if we obey than if we disobey. In either case, we fail to value what God or that person says.

¹³⁴ Heb. 4:1 - while a promise remains of entering His rest: A proper understanding of the word "rest" (*katapausis*, 2663) is essential to a proper interpretation of the letter to the Hebrews. According to Constable, there are five views of the "rest" in Hebrews: (1) Heaven. (2) Present rest in (enjoyment of) our riches in Christ. (3) Future (eschatological) enjoyment of all that God wants us to enjoy (i.e. our full inheritance). (4) Some particular blessing in the eschatological future. (5) A peaceful life now as Christians. Constable chooses view # 3 as the best view. I agree with him, but would combine views # 3 and # 4 as the best alternative. The comments of the late Zane Hodges (*TBKC*, p. 787) are worth noting here. (I have edited Hodges' explanation only to fill out incomplete Scripture references and to add linked Strong's number):

The writer's concept of "rest" must not be separated from its Old Testament roots. The Septuagint includes notable passages where the word for rest (*katapausis*, 2663), in connection with Israel's possession of the land, is clearly paralleled with the word for inheritance (*klēronomia*, 2817). Moses showed clearly (Deut. 3:18-20; 12:9-11) that for Israel their rest was their inheritance. In the same way it is natural to suppose that the term "rest" for the writer of Hebrews was a functional equivalent for a Christian's inheritance. That Christians are "heirs" he has already affirmed (Heb. 1:14) and will shortly do so again (Heb. 6:12, 17; cf. 9:15). How exactly he understood their relationship to this inheritance will unfold as his argument proceeds. But the inheritance itself can hardly be divorced from his presentation of Messiah's kingdom and His "partners" share in that. If this needed explicit confirmation, it could be found in Heb. 12:28.

Here is another explanation of the NT believer's promised rest, as presented by Tom Constable:

The writer used the term "rest" as Moses did, as an equivalent to entering into all the inheritance that God promised His people (Deut. 3:18-20; 12:9-11; cf. Heb. 1:14; 3:11, 18; 4:3-5, 10-11; 6:12, 17). For the Christian, this inheritance is everything that God desires to bestow on us when we see Him.[163] It is an eschatological rest, not a present rest. We enter into our rest after we cease from our labors in this life. We then enter into our "Sabbath rest," the rest that follows a full period of work (i.e., a lifetime; cf. vv. 9-11). I believe this is the correct view.

"Entering His rest" is not a journey for the slothful, lackadaisical, or the faint-hearted. As the writer himself intimates, that journey is a life-long marathon (Heb. 12:1), one in which one's eyes must be fixed on Jesus (Heb. 12:2). This marathon is one in which there is a danger of growing weary and losing heart (Heb. 12:3). It includes resisting all evil to the point of shedding blood (Heb. 12:4). It will require great diligence, faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Those who practice these things will never stumble, and an "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

¹³⁵ Heb. 4:1 - any one of you may seem to have come short of it: The writer was concerned that *not a single one of his readers* would miss God's rest.

E 4 [Israel's](#) response to the good news 4:2

- G 1 The hearers' access to good news: {2} For indeed we have had good news ¹³⁶ preached to us,
- G 2 The similar situation: just as they also;
- G 3 No profit realized by the [Israelis](#) in Moses' day: but the word they heard did not profit them,
- G 4 The causal lack of faith: because it was not united by faith ¹³⁷ in those who heard.

D 2 [Israel's](#) exclusion from the rest allows the inclusion of the believing readers 4:3-10

- E 1 Those who believe have entered that rest: {3} For we who have believed enter ¹³⁸ that rest, 4:3a
- E 2 [Israel](#) did not enter 4:3b-5
 - G 1 God's oath of wrath 4:3b
 - H 1 [Israel](#) could not enter: just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," ¹³⁹
 - H 2 Entrance refused despite God's finished creation work: although His works were finished from the foundation of

¹³⁶ Heb. 4:2 - good news: "What is the "good news" that both the Israelites and the original readers of this epistle had heard preached to them? It was probably the news about their inheritance and the possibility of entering into their "rest." This seems clear from the context. This is not a reference to the gospel message." ([Constable](#))

¹³⁷ 4:2 - because it was not united by faith (in those who heard): Faith (*pistis*, [4102](#)) is the single-most essential requirement for gaining God's approval (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 20-22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23; Heb. 11:6). The most glaring fault of the first-generation [Israelis](#), when asked at Kadesh-Barnea to conquer the Canaanite population, was an absence of faith (Num. 13:25-33; 14:1-10). They refused to believe that God could help them conquer the inhabitants of Canaan, and they rebelled against God and Moses.

¹³⁸ 4:3 - enter: The [Present](#) tense, plural indicative of *eiserchomai*, [1525](#). "We ones having believed" ([Aorist Participle](#), first person plural of *pisteuō*, [4100](#)) presently are entering into rest. But it is a process that will not be completed until Jesus says, "Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:7).

¹³⁹ 4:3 - THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST: The writer quotes Ps. 95:11. The first generation of [Israelis](#), confronted with the task of conquering Canaan, failed to trust God. They rejected the notion that He would faithfully help them conquer the land of Canaan. So God swore in His wrath that they would not enter His rest (Num. 14:20-23, 26-30; Deut. 1:34-35; Ps. 95:8-11; Heb. 3:11). By that He meant the rest of living in conquered land, the Land that God had promised to Abram and to His descendants. The entire first generation of the sons of [Israel](#), with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, were barred from entering the Promised Land. Instead of resting in Canaan with God's blessing and provision, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years until all of that generation had died off. Their corpses littered the wilderness. They had failed to enter God's rest.

the world.¹⁴⁰

G 2 God's sabbath rest: {4} For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh *day*: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";¹⁴¹ 4:4

G 3 The reiteration of refusal: {5} and again in this *passage*, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."¹⁴² 4:5

E 3 The argument from logic 4:6-8

G 1 The rest is to be entered by *someone*: {6} Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it,¹⁴³ 4:6a

G 2 The historical [Israeli](#) failure due to unbelief: and those who formerly had good news preached to them¹⁴⁴ failed to enter because of disobedience,¹⁴⁵ 4:6b

G 3 The latter failure 4:7-8

H 1 David's repetition of the command to cease the heart-hardening 4:7

J 1 God's issuing of another opportunity to enter His rest: {7} He again fixes a certain day, "Today,"

¹⁴⁰ Hebrews 4:3 - His works were finished from the foundation of the world: As the next verse reveals, the writer is suggesting that, from the very time of God's completion of creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4), He rested, and He had planned a similar rest for His people. That rest included the rest of Jewish people participating in God's kingdom in [Israel](#), but it also included a rest for participating in Christ's Millennial and Eternal kingdom for both [Israelis](#) and Gentiles.

¹⁴¹ Heb. 4:4 - AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS: The writer quotes Gen. 2:2, establishing God's "Sabbath Rest." He will refer to this "Sabbath Rest" available to the readers of His day (Heb. 4:9).

¹⁴² Heb. 4:5 - THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST: Once again, a quotation from Ps. 95:11.

¹⁴³ Heb. 4:6 - since it remains for some to enter it: Since the first generation of [Israelis](#) failed to enter the "Sabbath Rest" of participating in God's kingdom in the Promised Land of Canaan, the way is left open for others to inherit that rest.

¹⁴⁴ Heb. 4:6 - those who formerly had good news preached to them: The writer refers to the first generation of [Israelis](#), the "Exodus / Sinai" generation. The "good news" was not the gospel Paul preached (1 Cor. 15:1-8), but in many respects it bore similarities to the "gospel of the kingdom" proclaimed by Jesus (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 16:16) and by Philip (Acts 8:12). Had they believed God, the "Exodus / Sinai" generation would have been able to participate meaningfully in God's kingdom in the Promised Land of Canaan. The phrase "had good news preached to them" translates the single [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) *euaggelizō* (2097). It is used only twice in this letter – in Heb. 4:2, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Heb. 4:6 - failed to enter because of disobedience: "Disobedience" is *apeitheia* (543), appearing 6X in the NT, and always translated "disobedience" in the NASB. It appears 2X in Hebrews at Heb. 4:6, 11. Elsewhere, in Rom. 11:30, 32; Eph. 2:2; 5:6. The first generation of [Israelis](#) failed to believe God could help them conquer Canaan, and they refused to enter into battle (Num. 14) following the twelve spies' mixed reports (Num. 13). Failure to obey is connected with failure to believe.

saying through David ¹⁴⁶ after so long a time just as has been said before,

J 2 The statement of the opportunity: "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." ¹⁴⁷

H 2 The deduction that, if Joshua had given them rest, David wouldn't have spoken of another day 4:8

J 1 The failure of Joshua: {8} For if Joshua had given them rest, ¹⁴⁸

J 2 The reality of another day: He would not have spoken of another day after that. 4:8

E 4 The conclusion 4:9-10

¹⁴⁶ Heb. 4:7 - through David: It is interesting that, though there is no superscription indicating Davidic authorship of Psalm 97, the writer of Hebrews ascribes Davidic authorship to Psalm 97. The ultimate author of all Scripture, as the writer indicates, is God.

¹⁴⁷ Heb. 4:7 - TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS: The writer quotes a portion of Psalm 95:7-8.

¹⁴⁸ Heb. 4:8 - if Joshua had given them rest: We are forced to conclude that the author of Hebrews defines "rest" as more than [Israel](#) merely dwelling in the Promised Land. And he is not alone. David, in Psalm 95:6-7b has just exhorted the people of Israel, who reside in the land of Israel, "Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand..." David must have anticipated that some of the people of Israel, even at that juncture, possessed *hard hearts* and *would not listen* to Yahweh. We can see this in that David continued, his next breath, in Psa. 95:7c-8a, "Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah," etc. So for David, [Israelis](#) living in the Promised Land of Canaan, even at almost the greatest extent of [Israeli](#) sovereignty over the surrounding nations, could never be enough if not *all* of the peoples' hearts were in tune with God! Frankly, that cannot possibly happen until Jesus, the Jewish King, returns to reign over the nation, and there is a national revival, and there is national salvation under the terms of the [New Covenant](#) (Isa. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:27-37). By national salvation, I mean that every Jewish person will be a believer in Jesus as his Messiah and Jewish people will possess the complete land of Israel at its greatest promised extent. The OT Scriptures predict national repentance and revival (Zech. 12:10-13:1) with all the rebels removed forever from the land (Ezek. 20:33-38). Paul anticipates that time when *all Israel* will be saved (Rom. 11:25-27). In other words, the day when Israel permanently and irrevocably enters the promised rest will not occur until the Millennial Kingdom initially, and ultimately, until the Eternal State, in New Jerusalem, associated with New Earth (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

That having been said, the author is writing to Hebrew Christians of the first century. Like their OT counterparts, these were also connected with the nation of Israel as Messianic Jews. Unlike their OT counterparts, they were also a part of the Church. So how does that play out in the Millennial Kingdom and upon New Earth?

Though the parable given was a Jewish parable, I believe it also has application for the Gentile Christians. Jesus gave His parable of the royal heir with ten slaves (Luke 19:11-27) as an illustration of the fact that His kingdom rule was going to be delayed. He would need to go to a distant country (Heaven) in order to receive His kingdom. When He received His kingdom, He would return to rule. Meanwhile, He assigned His slaves to invest on His behalf during His absence. Each slave was rewarded, according to His faithfulness, with the corresponding role of assisting the King in ruling His empire. The more faithful the investment during the King's absence, the greater the responsibility in ruling would be assigned during the Kingdom. I believe that entering the Sabbath Rest of God means living my life in such faithfulness to the King that I will be able to assist Him greatly in His Kingdom. That applies not only to His Kingdom during the Thousand Years upon this present decaying Earth. It also applies to my ability to serve Him throughout eternity during His Eternal Co-Regency with His Father upon New Earth.

- G 1 There is a rest for God's people: {9} So there remains a Sabbath rest ¹⁴⁹ for the people of God. 4:9
- G 2 The state of those in the rest 4:10
 - H 1 Cessation from work: {10} For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works,
 - H 2 The precedent of God: as God did from His.
- D 3 The challenge to the readers 4:11-13
 - E 1 The urge to enter the rest 4:11
 - G 1 The necessity of urgent effort: {11} Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, ¹⁵⁰
 - G 2 The prevention of failing through unbelief: so that no one will fall, ¹⁵¹ through *following* the same example of disobedience. ¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Heb. 4:9 - Sabbath rest: These two words translate the single Greek *sabbatismos* (4520), used only here in the NT. It is obviously related to the word "Sabbath" (*sabbaton*, 4521), "seventh," which refers to the hallowed seventh day of the week, in which *Israelis* were forbidden to perform any manner of work (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:16-17). The Sabbath was to be both a commemoration of God's resting on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3) and a perpetual sign of the relation of the nation of Israel to God (Ex. 31:12-17). But the context of Hebrews 4:9 does not center on the keeping of the Sabbath so much as it does upon entering an exalted status of rest. God finished His work of creation and rested on the Sabbath day (Gen. 1:1-2:3). Similarly God's people are exhorted to enter that status of Sabbath rest in which they cease from all self-effort. If the Messianic Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8), surely He is Lord also of the Sabbath rest (Heb. 4:9). The Sabbath Rest of which the writer of Hebrews speaks must certainly mean the time when Messiah is Lord of all – i.e., the Millennial Kingdom initially, followed by the Eternal State headquartered in New Jerusalem, capital city of New Earth.

¹⁵⁰ Heb. 4:11 - let us be diligent to enter that rest: "Let us be diligent" is the hortatory *aurist* plural subjunctive of *spoudadzō* (4704). Its most basic meaning is to "make haste," and connotes urgency of effort. (We derive our English verb "to speed" from this word.) Since the writer of Hebrews is urging maximum effort and urgency, we must conclude the "rest" of which he is speaking is not "salvation rest". We believers enter that rest the moment we trust in Jesus. The urgency of which the writer speaks is required of us believers all our mortal lives. We must urgently exert effort all through our lives to serve the Messiah faithfully, preparing for His coming Kingdom. We will only enter that rest when we participate with Him in His kingdom (initially His Millennial Kingdom and ultimately His co-regency from New Jerusalem over New Earth). In that glorified air, we will cease from our own efforts and be empowered solely by His effort through His Spirit. But faithfulness in this life will predetermine usefulness in the next life (Luke 19:11-27). That is why we can never quit serving the King in this life! All of our Christian lives must be an urgent commitment to serving the King! Joseph C. Dillow, quoted by *Constable*, states it this way:

We enter into rest only when we persevere in faith to the end of life. When we do this, we will obtain a share in the inheritance, the millennial land of Canaan, and will rule with Christ as one of His *metochoi* [partners] there. Rest is not just the land itself; it also includes the state or condition of 'finished work,' of final perseverance, into which the faithful Christian will enter. God has not set aside His promises to Israel. The promise of the inheritance, the land, is eternally valid, and those Christians who remain faithful to their Lord to the end of life will share in that inheritance along with the Old Testament saints.

¹⁵¹ Heb. 4:11 - so that no one will fall: The word "fall" is the *aurist* subjunctive 3S of the verb *piptō* (4098). The writer has already used this verb in Heb. 3:17, where he spoke, tellingly, of the first generation of *Israelis* who disbelieved God and sinned, and whose bodies *fell* in the wilderness! He will use it again when he states that it was on account of the faith of the second generation of *Israelis* that the walls of Jericho *fell* when the people encircled the city for seven days (Heb. 11:30)! In Heb. 4:11 he writes so that not one of the Christians who read his tome will *fall*

E 2 God's knowledge of man's true inner state 4:12-13

G 1 The all-discerning Word 4:12

H 1 It's living, dynamic nature: {12} For the word of God is living¹⁵³

H 2 Its power: and active

H 3 Its sharpness: and sharper than any two-edged sword,

J 1 Divider of soul and spirit: and piercing as far as the division of soul¹⁵⁴ and spirit,¹⁵⁵

from the position of inheriting all the blessings of Christ's millennial and eternal kingdom, just as the first generation did not participate in the blessings of entry into and living in Canaan. He is not talking about losing one's salvation. He is talking about losing one's usefulness and service in the Kingdom.

¹⁵² Heb. 4:11 - through *following* the same example of disobedience: "Disobedience" is *apeitheia* ([543](#)), which the writer already used in Heb. 4:6. It means disobedience to the Divine will. The first generation of *Israelis* disobeyed by not trusting that God would help them conquer Canaan (Num. 13-14). The writer warns his readers not to follow their bad example (*hupodeigma*, [5262](#)), used in Hebrews only here and later in Heb. 8:5; 9:23 (where it is translated, respectively, "copy," and "copies").

¹⁵³ Heb. 4:12 - For the word of God is living: The reason all believers should be diligent to enter the Millennial Rest of Christ's Kingdom is that God's Word does not consist merely of lifeless words printed in a document or a book. God's Word (*logos*, [3056](#)) is alive (*zaō*, [2198](#)), active (*energēs*, [1756](#)), and sharper (*tomos*, [5114](#)) than the inanimate quality of human existence as opposed to its physical quality. In this case it is typically translated as "soul." The NASB translates *psuchē* as "soul" or "souls" 47X. Examples include Matt. 10:28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; 3 John 1:2; Rev. 20:4. Here in Heb. 4:12, the writer may be distinguishing between actions performed in this life merely for the purpose of natural existence (*psuchē*) as opposed to actions performed for a spiritual (*pneuma*, [4151](#)) purpose. The point is that God's Word can distinguish the difference. In Heb. 4:12, the writer contrasts two distinguishable parts of the immaterial part of man (soul and spirit) with two distinguishable part of the material part of man (joints and marrow).

¹⁵⁴ Heb. 4:12 - soul: The noun is *psuchē* ([5590](#)). We derive our English word "psyche" or "psychology" from *psuchē*. According to [Friberg](#), the term is a "many-sided word with the meaning derived from the context." (1) It can refer to one's physical existence. In this case it is typically translated "life." Examples include Matt. 6:25; Acts 20:24; Rom. 11:3; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 16:3. NASB translates *psuchē* as "life" or "lives" 43X. (2) It can refer to the inanimate quality of human existence as opposed to its physical quality. In this case it is typically translated as "soul." The NASB translates *psuchē* as "soul" or "souls" 47X. Examples include Matt. 10:28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; 3 John 1:2; Rev. 20:4. Here in Heb. 4:12, the writer may be distinguishing between actions performed in this life merely for the purpose of natural existence (*psuchē*) as opposed to actions performed for a spiritual (*pneuma*, [4151](#)) purpose. The point is that God's Word can distinguish the difference. In Heb. 4:12, the writer contrasts two distinguishable parts of the immaterial part of man (soul and spirit) with two distinguishable part of the material part of man (joints and marrow).

Theologians have argued whether man is dichotomous (consisting only of material and immaterial qualities) – body and soul/spirit; or whether his existence is trichotomous (consisting of body, soul, and spirit). I, for one, refuse to argue with the writer of Hebrews. He insists that God's Word is able to distinguish between soul and spirit. Therefore, man is trichotomous, consisting of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). The spirit is how man can commune with God. The soul is how man communicates with himself and with others. The body is how man's soul and spirit exist in the created world.

¹⁵⁵ Heb. 4:12 - spirit: The noun is *pneuma* ([4151](#)). The word can mean either "breath/wind" or "spirit". In Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, He used both meanings in one sentence (John 3:8)! English uses of the Greek *pneuma* are weighted towards "wind" or "air." Diseased lungs are called "pneumonia." Tools operating on compressed air are called "pneumatic" tools. A few NT passages mean "air": for example, 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 11:11; 13:15. But in NT usage, translations are heavily weighted toward the word "spirit." Most frequently, *pneuma* refers to the Holy Spirit (*pneuma* is often accompanied by the word "Holy", *hagios*, [40](#)) (Matt. 1:18; Acts 1:2; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 2:4, etc.). Less frequently, it refers to the human spirit (e.g., Matt. 5:3; 26:41; Luke 1:47; 8:55; John 4:24; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30; Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:11; Php. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; 12:23; James 2:26; 1 Pet. 3:4).

J 2 Divider of joints and marrow: of both joints and marrow,¹⁵⁶

J 3 Its discernment of the heart's thoughts and intents: and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.¹⁵⁷

G 2 The omniscient God 4:13

H 1 The transparency of all creatures before Him: {13} And there is no creature hidden from His sight,¹⁵⁸

H 2 His viewing of all things: but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.¹⁵⁹

B 5 The Superiority of the Messianic Son to Aaron 4:14 - 10:18

C 1 The More Accessible High Priest 4:14-16

D 1 The basis for the appeal 4:14a

E 1 The present possession of the writer and his readers: {14} Therefore, since we have

E 2 The elevated status of that which they possess – a great high priest

Occasionally the meaning is “unclean spirit” sometimes known as “demons” (Matt. 10:1; Acts 8:7; Rev. 16:13-14).

In the book of Hebrews, the uses are varied. In Heb. 1:7, *pneuma* is “winds” – God makes His messengers (“angels”) “winds” and “a flame of fire.” In Heb. 1:14, God’s messengers (angels) are ministering “*spirits*.” In Heb. 12:9, God is called “the Father of *spirits*.” In Heb. 4:12 and Heb. 12:23, the author referred to the human “*spirit*” and human “*spirits*.” All the other references are to the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15). The author also refers to the Holy Spirit as “the eternal *Spirit*” (Heb. 9:14) and “the *Spirit* of grace” (Heb. 10:29).

In Heb. 4:11-12, the point is the readers must hasten to enter the rest of Christ’s kingdom because God’s Word is able distinguish between merely human efforts made by one’s soul (*psuchē*, [5590](#)) and by efforts made by one’s human spirit (*pneuma*, [4151](#)), but assisted by God.

¹⁵⁶ Heb. 4:12 - joints and marrow: Just as joints (*harmos*, [719](#)) and marrow (*muelos*, [3452](#)) in the human body can be distinguished, so the Word of God is able to distinguish between soul (*psuchē*, [5590](#)) and spirit (*pneuma*, [4151](#)) in the human condition.

¹⁵⁷ Heb. 4:12 - and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart: Here is the crux of the matter. God’s Word is able to evaluate our thoughts and our motives. We cannot fool God. We must, therefore, exert effort, make haste (Heb. 4:11) to enter Christ’s Millennial and Kingdom rest (Luke 19:11-27).

¹⁵⁸ Heb. 4:13 - no creature hidden from his sight: This continues the thought of Heb. 4:11-12 – we need to be diligent to enter Christ’s kingdom rest because the Word (*logos*, [3056](#)) of God scrutinizes every action, attitude, and motive of ours. No one can hide from God’s Word!

¹⁵⁹ Heb. 4:13 - with whom we have to do: There is a play on words here that is not evident in the English translation. We need to be diligent to enter God’s rest (Heb. 4:11) because God’s word (*logos*, [3056](#)) is very discerning (Heb. 4:12), and all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him, literally, “with whom we have the word (*logos*, [3056](#)).”

- G 1 His elevated stature: a great high priest ¹⁶⁰
- G 2 His elevated situation: who has passed through the heavens, ¹⁶¹
- G 3 His elevated pedigree: Jesus the Son of God, ¹⁶²
- D 2 The essence of the writer's appeal: let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁶³ 4:14b
- D 3 The reasons for the writer's appeal 4:15
- E 1 Our high priest's experience of humanity: {15} For we do not have a high priest ¹⁶⁴ who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, ¹⁶⁵
- E 2 Our high priest's experience with resistance to temptation

¹⁶⁰ Heb. 4:14 - a great high priest: "High priest" translates the single word *archierus* (749). This is now the third time in Hebrews the writer has identified Jesus as "high priest." Earlier, he did so in Heb. 2:17 and 3:1. Here are his references to Jesus as "high priest" in the remainder of the book: Heb. 4:14, 15; 5:5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1, 3; 9:11. It is apparent that the writer of Hebrews considers Jesus' present role, since His ascension to heaven, as being primarily that of Priest, as opposed to Prophet or King. Jesus is an unusual Priest, however, inasmuch as He is Priest after the order of *Melchizedek*, who was a King/Priest. So it is not surprising that this Priest, Jesus, presently sits on a throne (Heb. 4:16). But this is the throne of God (Heb. 1:8; 8:1; 12:2), not the throne of David (Luke 1:32). Jesus has begun His Messianic Priesthood, but He has not yet begun His Messianic Kingdom. That awaits His return to earth, the realm in which David reigned (Psa. 110:1-2).

¹⁶¹ Heb. 4:14 - passed through the heavens: This refers to Jesus' ascension into heaven (Luke 24:50-51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-10; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 6:19-20; 8:1-2; 9:24).

¹⁶² Heb. 4:14 - Jesus the Son of God: It can be argued that Jesus' Sonship is directly linked, not to His pre-existing, pre-incarnate status (after all, He is called the eternal Word (*logos*, 3056) of God in John 1:1, 14), but to His Messianic (Anointed) status. God publicly identified Jesus as His beloved Son immediately *after* His *anointment* with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-34). This is in keeping with God's promise to David concerning his seed, "I will be a Father to him and he will be a son to Me" (2 Sam. 7:14). After Jesus' baptism God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus became God's ultimate Anointed One (Messiah; Christ). He was anointed to be the Ultimate Prophet, Ultimate Priest, and Ultimate King. In Hebrews 4:14, it is Jesus' ascension to heaven as the Great High Priest that is in view. It is as Anointed Priest, descendant of David, that He is called "Jesus the Son of God."

¹⁶³ Heb. 4:14 - let us hold fast our confession: "confession" is *homologia*, 3671. The writer has already used this word in 3:1, referring to "Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession". Here in 4:14, he exhorts his readers to "hold fast our confession." He will do so again in 10:23, in connection with another "warning" passage. There he will say, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering" Clearly the writer is concerned lest his readers renege on their confession of faith in Jesus.

¹⁶⁴ Heb. 4:15 - high priest: The writer again refers to Jesus as "high priest" (*archierus*, 749).

¹⁶⁵ Heb. 4:15 - who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses: Though Jesus is fully God, He is also fully man. As such, He is able to sympathize (*sumpatheō*, 4834 – used only here and in Heb. 10:34 in the NT) fully with our human frailties (weaknesses, *astheneia*, 769). The context dictates the meaning of *astheneia*. Often it refers to literal human sickness (Luke 5:15; 8:2; 13:11-12; John 5:5; 11:4; Acts 28:9; Gal. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:23). At other times it refers to moral ineptitude (Rom. 6:19). At yet other times, as here, it refers to human frailty (Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 11:30; 12:5, 9-10; 13:4; Heb. 4:15; 5:2; 7:28; 11:34). Jesus was subject to the same conditions as we: He grew weary (John 4:6), sleepy (Mark 4:38), hungry (Matt. 21:18; Luke 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28), angry (Mark 3:5), grieved (Mark 3:5), and frustrated (Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8-11). So He is the perfect high priest, able to balance the standards of perfect God with the frailties of mortal man.

G 1 His undergoing all types of temptation: but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*,¹⁶⁶

G 2 His exemption from a sin nature: *yet* without sin.¹⁶⁷

D 4 The conclusion of the writer's appeal: {16} Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace,¹⁶⁸ 4:16

E 1 To find mercy: so that we may receive mercy

¹⁶⁶ Heb. 4:15 - but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*: Literally, "but One having been tempted in all things with similarity" "One having been tempted" is the perfect passive [participle](#) of *peiradzō* (3985). Satan tempted (Matt. 4:1, 3; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2) Jesus to sin against God, but without success. The scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees repeatedly tempted/tested Jesus to trap Him in His words (Matt. 16:1; 19:3; 22:18; 22:35; Mark 8:11; 10:2; 12:15; Luke 11:16; John 8:6), but were unsuccessful. *Peiradzō* is not always negative. Jesus tested Philip to see what He would do (John 6:5-6); the newly converted Saul tested to see if he could associate with the Jerusalem disciples, but they were afraid of him (Acts 9:26); Paul and Silas tested to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not permit them to do so (Acts 16:7); God tested Abraham (Heb. 11:17). But when God or Jesus *peiradzō* someone, they are never soliciting them to do evil (James 1:13, 14). God and Jesus *peiradzō* us in order to build up our faith, not destroy it and cause us to sin. We have already encountered this concept being tempted (*peiradzō*) in that which He suffered. Thus He is able to give aid to those who are tempted (Heb. 2:18). *Peiradzō* is used in Hebrews in Heb. 2:18; 3:9; 4:15; 11:17, 37.

¹⁶⁷ Heb. 4:15 - without sin: The writer is careful to protect the pristine, sinless humanity of Jesus. Though He was tempted in every aspect, never once was He found guilty of sin (*hamartia*, 266). Jesus never committed an act of sin. Furthermore, he inherited no sin nature from Adam. How was this prevented? My best guess is that God implanted an uncontaminated embryo in Mary's womb. If Jesus (and His ancestors) were on earth today, and He would permit us to run a DNA test on Him, I believe we could genetically demonstrate that he is a descendant of Mary and of King David, of Abraham and Adam, but not of Joseph, His surrogate father.

It is my belief that Jesus *did not* sin because He *could not* sin. (Theologians call the possibility of Jesus' sinning *posse peccare*; the impossibility of sinning, *posse non peccare*.) Satan tempted Jesus to induce Him to fail. God permitted Satan to tempt Jesus to demonstrate that He *could not* fail. His incapacity to sin does not invalidate the reality of Jesus' temptations. What other man could have gone forty days without eating, and not given in to Satan's temptation to turn stones into bread (Matt 4:1-4)? Jesus is God come in the flesh (John 1:1, 14, 18). If we say that Jesus could have sinned, we also must say that it is possible for God to sin. The Scriptures speak otherwise (2 Tim. 2:13; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

¹⁶⁸ Heb. 4:16 - let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace: The writer makes his application. Since we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, let us draw near to the throne of grace. "Draw near" translates the [present](#) tense subjunctive mood of *proserchomai* (4334). It is a "hortatory subjunctive," exhorting or urging readers constantly to be drawing near to the throne. The writer uses this word in Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 10:22; 11:16; 12:18, 22.

Not only are we to approach the throne continually, we are to do so with "confidence" (*parrêsia*, 3954) "an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear" ([Friberg](#)). The writer uses this word in Heb. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35. It is an attitude that the victorious believer must exude (Heb. 3:6; 10:35).

We are continually, freely to approach the throne (*thronos*, 2362) of grace. The writer uses *thronos* 4X – Heb. 1:18; 4:16; 8:1; 12:2. This single throne is large enough to seat two – Jesus, and "the Majesty in the heavens," God Himself (Heb. 8:1; 12:2; Rev. 3:21; 4:2-3). Apparently they two will sit jointly throughout eternity on the throne in New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1, 3). We call this a Co-Regency.

The throne on which Jesus now sits is a throne of grace (*charis*, 5485), God's kindness and helpfulness toward us needy believers. God has done and will continue to do everything He can to assist us believers in our oft-times wearying journey through life. He is kindly-disposed towards us.

I should here mention that, in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is seated on the throne not as king, but as priest. That is consistent with its being termed a "throne of grace." Remember that Jesus, like [Melchizedek](#), is a King-Priest. In the present age He is emphasizing his priestly (Ps. 110:4), not His royal ministry. The latter emphasis awaits His return to earth (Psalm 2:4-12; 110:1-3, 5-7).

E 2 To find grace during need: and find grace ¹⁶⁹ to help in time of need.

C 2 The Better Priest in Essence 5:1-10

D 1 The problem of sin for an *ordinary* priest 5:1-3

E 1 His human role 5:1-2a

G 1 Chosen from among men: {1} For every high priest taken from among men ¹⁷⁰ 5:1a

G 2 Ordained for men in Godly things: is appointed ¹⁷¹ on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, 5:1b-2:a

H 1 To offer for sins: in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; ¹⁷² 5:1b

H 2 To have compassion: {2} he can deal gently ¹⁷³ with 5:2a

J 1 On the ignorant: the ignorant

J 2 And the misguided: and misguided,

E 2 His human weakness 5:2b-3

G 1 His own weakness: since he himself also is beset with weakness; ¹⁷⁴ 5:2b

¹⁶⁹ Heb. 4:16 - mercy ... grace: in order that we might receive mercy (*eleos*, [1656](#)), used only here in Hebrews; “and might find grace (*charis*, [5485](#)) (that leads to) support at a favorable time” (author’s translation). This is what we are looking for from our great high priest.

¹⁷⁰ Heb. 5:1 - every high priest taken from among men: In Heb. 5:1-4, the author outlines what is true of every high priest, including Jesus Christ. There is one exception, however. High Priest Jesus offered no sacrifice for His own sins (Heb. 5:3), for He was sinless (Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 3:5).

¹⁷¹ Heb. 5:1 - is appointed: *kathistēmi* ([2525](#)), used 3X in Hebrews (Heb. 5:1; 7:28; 8:3). (There is evidently a textual problem in Heb. 2:7.) The writer will state that Aaron was appointed by God (Heb. 5:4); so also the Messiah (Heb. 5:5-6).

¹⁷² Heb. 5:1 - to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Jesus offered no sacrifice for His own sin. But He certainly offered the ultimate and complete sacrifice for sin for all time – His own perfect life’s blood (Heb. 9:11-14).

¹⁷³ Heb. 5:2 - deal gently: The word is *metriopatheō* ([3356](#)), to “exercise moderation toward someone in emotions and passions” ([Friberg](#)), used only here in the NT. The writer here stipulates that ordinary high priests are able to do so. He has already stated that High Priest Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way just as we are (Heb. 4:14-15).

¹⁷⁴ Heb. 5:2 - beset with weakness: more literally, “surrounded” ([present](#) passive of *perikeimai*, [4029](#)) (used in Heb. 5:2; 12:1) “with weakness” (*astheneia*, [769](#)). We have already seen this word in Heb. 4:15, where we discussed the way in which Jesus was able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Here he, and all high priests are said to be “surrounded by” or “subject to” or “beset with” weakness. Jesus’ weakness lay in the frailties and limitations of unfallen, not fallen man. The writer will use the word *astheneia* again in Heb. 7:28.

- G 2 His obligation to offer sin offerings for the people: {3} and because of it he is obligated to offer *sacrifices* for sins, as for the people, 5:3a
- G 3 His need to offer sin offerings for himself as well: so also for himself.¹⁷⁵ 5:3b
- D 2 His legal appointment 5:4-6
 - E 1 The nature of the appointment to priesthood 5:4a
 - G 1 Never an appointment by oneself: {4} And no one takes the honor to himself,¹⁷⁶
 - G 2 Always an appointment by God: but *receives it* when he is called by God,
 - E 2 Aaron's legal appointment: even as Aaron was.¹⁷⁷ 5:4b
 - E 3 The nature of Christ's appointment 5:5-7
 - G 1 No self-exaltation through self-appointment to priesthood: {5} So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest,¹⁷⁸ 5:5a
 - G 2 His appointment by God: but He who said to Him, 5:5b
 - G 3 Scriptural evidence 5:5c-6

¹⁷⁵ Heb. 5:3 - so also for himself: This is what ordinary high priests must do. Aaron was required to offer a bull as a sin offering for himself and his household (Lev. 16:6). Jesus, who had no sin (Heb. 4:15), but who rather is "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted in the heavens" (Heb. 7:26), did not and "... does not need daily to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because He did this once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:27).

¹⁷⁶ Heb. 5:4 - no one takes the honor to himself: No legitimate priest appoints himself to be priest. God called Aaron and his sons to be priests (Exod. 4:12-16; 28:1). So Jesus did not take the honor of priesthood for Himself. Rather, God appointed Him eternally as priest after the [Melchizedek](#) order (Ps. 110:4). The writer of Hebrews will introduce this thought in Heb. 5:6, and will explain it in Heb. 6:20-7:28. Examples of illegitimate priests include Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:1-40); and the son of Micah and a Levite named Jonathan, son of Gershom (Judges 17-18).

¹⁷⁷ Heb. 5:4 - even as Aaron was: God appointed Aaron as priest in Exod. 28:1. He was never termed "high priest." That designation emerged in Lev. 21:10; Num. 35:25, 28; Josh. 20:6. It is to be understood from the context of Exod. 28-29 that Aaron, the father, was the main priest, while his sons served as priests under him. The writer will shortly explain (in Heb. 5:5-6) that God will decree on Christ's coronation day that He had begotten Him as His (Messianic) Son (Psa. 2:7); and that God has already sworn with an oath that Messiah is a priest forever according to the order of [Melchizedek](#) (Psa. 110:4).

¹⁷⁸ Heb. 5:5 - Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest: The writer's argument is that the Messiah prophesied in the OT did not appoint Himself high priest. Rather He was appointed by God. Momentarily, he will document his statement from Psalm 110:4. Of course the writer's undergirding logic is that, since Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, He is also the eternal High Priest (Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20) after the order of [Melchizedek](#), whom he will shortly introduce (Heb. 5:5-6).

- H 1 Christ a begotten (Messianic) Son of God: "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; ¹⁷⁹ 5:5c
- H 2 Christ a God-appointed priest: {6} just as He says also in another *passage*, ¹⁸⁰ 5:6
- J 1 His eternal appointment: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER" ¹⁸¹
- J 2 His appointment after the order of [Melchizedek](#): ACCORDING TO THE ORDER ¹⁸² OF

¹⁷⁹ Heb. 5:5 - YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU: The writer quotes from Psalm 2:7, not to prove that Jesus is a High Priest, but to start with a given in Christian thought in his day, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of David who will one day conquer the world as King of the nations. What he here adds to that "given" is that Jesus the Messiah is the same person about whom it is said that He is Priest forever after the order of [Melchizedek](#) (Psalm 110:4). Again, it should be noted that Jesus' "Sonship" in relation to God is not an eternal sonship, but a human sonship based on His being the anointed King in the line of David, and thus the One who will rule the world. According to Psalm 2:7, the day on which God "begot" the Messianic Son was not in eternity past, nor was it at His human birth. Rather, it was at the moment when he was anointed by men with olive oil to be King of Israel. At the same time, God would anoint the Davidic King with His Spirit. In the providence of God, even though man has not anointed Jesus, God has done so. God anointed Jesus with His Spirit immediately after His baptism. It was at that moment that Jesus became the Messiah (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34). And, not coincidentally, it was precisely at that moment that God publicly identified Jesus as His beloved Son. For the messiahs (with a small "m"), the sons of David who became king, the moment of conferred sonship was the moment they were publicly anointed king and crowned at the commencement of their reign. The day of sonship coincided with the day of coronation. So with Jesus, the time is coming, I firmly believe, when, after He returns to earth, an appropriate official (likely a legitimate Jewish priest) will anoint Jesus to be King over Israel. He will reign on Mt. Zion in modern day Jerusalem. On Jesus' coronation day, God will affirm, if not publicly and audibly, at least in heaven, "You are My Son: Today (on Your Coronation Day) I have begotten You!" The point of the writer of Hebrews will be that the Messiah/King is also the Messiah/Priest. Like [Melchizedek](#) of old, Jesus is destined to fulfill two offices at the same time – the joint offices of King and Priest! The writer of Hebrews will have a great deal more to say about [Melchizedek](#) in Heb. 6:20-7:17.

¹⁸⁰ Heb. 5:6 - another passage: I.e., Psalm 110:4. Psalm 110 is a psalm of David. It is a Messianic Psalm. The term "Messiah" means "Anointed One." David was anointed to be King, but obviously this psalm is about the Ultimate Anointed One – Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was Anointed by God with His Spirit immediately following His baptism (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-34). Man has not yet anointed Jesus with oil, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, but that, I believe, will one day come to pass. It is significant that Jesus did not begin any ministry until after He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit. Jesus' ministry during his lifetime on earth was primarily that of Prophet. He serves now in Heaven primarily as Priest. When He returns He will serve primarily as King. Psalm 110:1-3, 5-7 speaks of Jesus as the Anointed King. Psalm 110:4 speaks of Jesus as the Anointed Priest.

¹⁸¹ YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER: The author is quoting Psalm 110:4. The Greek language here is economical – literally, "You priest into the age according to the class of [Melchizedek](#)," "Age" is *aiōn* (165). The author used this word in Heb. 1:2, 8; 5:6; 6:5, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; Heb. 9:26; 11:3; 13:8, 21. He used it twice in Heb. 1:8; 13:21 for a total of 15 X. Following Jesus' baptism, God anointed Him with His Spirit (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-34) to be Priest (as well as Prophet and King). He began serving as Prophet almost immediately. Inasmuch as He was challenging men to come closer to God, He was also, in a sense, serving as Priest. But the culmination of His service as Priest was when He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice (Heb. 9:25-28, 28). Having ascended to heaven, He is seated at the right hand of God, where He functions, not yet as King, but as Priest. In this office He will serve in perpetuity, for He ever lives to make intercession for those who draw near to God through Him (Heb. 7:25; 9:24).

¹⁸² Heb. 5:6 - ORDER: The word is *taxis* (5010), and means, roughly, "category" or "classification." We derive our English "[taxonomy](#)" from *taxis*. It is used in Luke 1:8; 1 Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 11, 17. So the Messiah was appointed priest forever according to the classification or category of [Melchizedek](#) (rather than according to the classification or category of Aaron).

MELCHIZEDEK." ¹⁸³

D 3 His humanized perfection 5:7-9

E 1 The nature of His humanity 5:7

G 1 His incarnate state: {7} In the days of His flesh,

G 2 His resort to prayer: He offered up both prayers and supplications

H 1 With strong human pleadings: with loud crying and tears¹⁸⁴

H 2 To God, His potential Savior: to the One able to save Him from death,

H 3 His prayers heard: and He was heard because of His piety.

E 2 His obedience in His humanity 5:8

G 1 Despite His position as Messianic Son: {8} Although He was a Son,¹⁸⁵G 2 Gained through suffering: He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Heb. 5:6 - MELCHIZEDEK: For the first time in the book of Hebrews, the writer identifies [Melchizedek \(3198\)](#) by name. His name appears eight times in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17). The writer will have a great deal more to say about [Melchizedek](#) beginning in Heb. 7:1-17. See the footnotes there. Suffice it to say here that the references to [Melchizedek](#) in the OT stem entirely from Gen. 14:18-20 and from Psalm 110:4. It is fascinating that the writer of Hebrews develops a whole doctrine of Jesus' priestly ministry based on a mere four verses from the OT!

¹⁸⁴ Heb. 5:7 - with loud crying and tears: This level of emotion in the life of Jesus is rarely described. An exception is in John 11:35, where it is stated that Jesus wept because of the death of His friend Lazarus. But there are hints elsewhere. In Matt. 26:36-38 we read that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus "began to be grieved and distressed." In fact Jesus said, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death." No doubt there are other times when He prayed "with loud crying and tears."

¹⁸⁵ Heb. 5:8 - Son: There are repeated references in the book of Hebrews to Jesus being the Son *huios* ([5207](#)) of God. The word *huios* ([5207](#)) appears 24X in Hebrews. Most, but not all, are references to Jesus, the Messiah. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would become the mother of the Messiah, He stated that her son would "be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32). In the next breath he stated, "and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). The term "Son" in the NT has Messianic associations.

¹⁸⁶ Heb. 5:8 - He learned obedience from the things which He suffered: It is amazing that the Messianic Son of God, perfect and complete as He was in all things, possessing no sin nature, and never having sinned, nonetheless encountered something which enabled Him to learn. He learned ([Aorist](#) tense of *manthanō*, [3129](#)) – from things which He suffered ([Aorist](#) tense of *paschō*, [3958](#)) – "the obedience" (*hupakoē*, [5218](#), obedience submission, compliance – used only here in Hebrews). If Jesus, who was completely God, yet as a man learned obedience through the things He suffered, how much more will we frail humans learn, through the things which we suffer – compliance and obedience? I wish there were another way, but suffering appears to be the best way to learn obedience. Jesus' obedience included submitting to death, even death on the cross (Php. 2:8). *Paschō* is used 4X in this letter – Heb. 2:18; 5:8; 9:26; 13:12. As translated in the NASB, it always has a negative (i.e. difficult) connotation. Suffering is always hard.

E 3 The result of His perfection 5:9

G 1 The fact of perfection: {9} And having been made perfect,¹⁸⁷

G 2 The source of eternal salvation

H 1 The condition of obedience: He became to all those who obey¹⁸⁸ HimH 2 The eternal result: the source of eternal salvation,¹⁸⁹

D 4 His priesthood reasserted 5:10

E 1 His appointment by God: 10 being designated by God as a high priest¹⁹⁰E 2 His participation in the order of [Melchizedek](#): according to the order of Melchizedek.¹⁹¹

C 3 The Parenthetical Warning to the Readers: Press on toward maturity in Christ!

¹⁸⁷ Heb. 5:9 - having been made perfect: This translates the [Aorist](#) passive [participle](#) of *teleioō* (5048), which has the idea here of God having brought something (in this case, Jesus) to His goal – Jesus “having been completed” or “having been brought to His maximum potential” in the plan of God. This word is used more in Hebrews (9X) than in any other book. It refers to Christ in Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:28. It refers to the impotence of the Law in making anything or any worshiper perfect or complete in Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1. Jesus, by His one offering, brought to perfection or completion all who are sanctified (Heb. 10:14). There exist in heaven today the spirits of righteous people having been perfected (Heb. 12:23). But the ultimate perfection of all believers of all ages awaits a further era (Heb. 11:40).

It is instructive that God brought Jesus to perfection by means of the sufferings which Jesus obediently endured (Heb. 5:8). Similarly, for all those who obey Jesus, He is the source of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9)!

¹⁸⁸ Heb. 5:9 - those who obey: The [present participle](#) of *hupakouō* (5219). The writer is talking about those who habitually or continually obey or listen to Jesus.

¹⁸⁹ Heb. 5:9 - eternal salvation: These two words translate, in the Greek word order, “salvation” (*sōtēria*, 4991) – “eternal” or, more literally, “ageless” (*aiōnios*, 166).

This is the fourth of seven occurrences of “salvation” in Hebrews. They occur in Heb. 1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; 11:7. Of these, the last, Heb. 11:7, refers to the physical salvation of Noah and his family. The rest have to do with one aspect or another of eternal salvation.

This is the first of six occurrences of “eternal” in the book of Hebrews. The writer refers to eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9); eternal judgment (Heb. 6:2); eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12); the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14); the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15); and the eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20)

¹⁹⁰ Heb. 5:10 - being designated by God as a high priest: “Being designated” translates *prosagoreuō* (4316), from the preposition *pros*, “to” and from the verb *agoreuō*, “to speak in the assembly”. God has officially and publicly designated Jesus as “High Priest.” “High priest” translates *archiereus* (749). We have seen this designation for Jesus in Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:1, 5. Now we see it in Heb. 5:10. We will encounter it again in Heb. 6:20; 7:26, 27, 28; 8:1, 3; 9:7, 11, 25; 13:11. We do not need a human priest to enable us to have fellowship with God. And we need no human mediator like Mary to do so. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus, the Messiah.

¹⁹¹ Heb. 5:10 - Melchizedek: This is the second time Melchizedek appears in the book of Hebrews. He was first mentioned by name in Heb. 5:6 in a quotation of Psalm 110:4. His name appears eight times in the book of Hebrews, the only NT book in which he is mentioned. The remaining instances are in Heb. 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17. We will learn much more about enigmatic Melchizedek beginning in Heb. 7:1.

5:11 - 6:20

D 1 The expose' of the readers' immaturity 5:11-14

E 1 The writer's desire 5:11

G 1 The communication of more concerning [Melchizedek](#): {11}
Concerning him we have much to say,¹⁹²

G 2 The difficulty of the communication: and *it is* hard to explain,

G 3 The dull perceptivity of the readers: since you have become dull of hearing.¹⁹³

E 2 The condition of the readers 5:12

G 1 Their potential of teaching: {12} For though by this time you ought to be teachers,

G 2 Their need of being taught basics: you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God,

G 3 Their comparison to an infant: and you have come to need milk and not solid food.¹⁹⁴

H 1 The traits of a "milk-drinker" 5:13

J 1 Unskilled in the word: {13} For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness,¹⁹⁵

J 2 A baby: for he is an infant.¹⁹⁶

H 2 The traits of a "meat-eater" 5:14

¹⁹² Heb. 5:11 - we have much to say: The writer will make good on his "tease" beginning in Heb. 7:1.

¹⁹³ Heb. 5:11 - you have become dull of hearing: Though there are some difficult truths to be made about Melchizedek, the problem is not really the complexity of the subject, but the insensitivity of his readers.

¹⁹⁴ Heb. 5:12 - you ... need milk and not solid food: The writer is accusing of his readers of remaining in the "baby stage" of their Christian lives. They need to grow up. Evidently their preoccupation with the persecutions they were undergoing was stifling their ability to digest God's Word. Doubt about one's standing with God undermines one's ability to learn deeper truths and keep growing (Heb. 3:12; 4:1, 11; 10:32-36, 39; 12:1-4; 13:3).

¹⁹⁵ Heb. 5:13 - not accustomed to the word of righteousness: Understanding God's Word is not something that happens by itself. On the one hand God must illuminate our understanding. On the other hand, we Christians need to dedicate ourselves to growing and advancing in spiritual maturity. Lazy Christians will not grow much.

¹⁹⁶ Heb. 5:13 - infant: The word is *nēpios* ([3516](#)), meaning an infant or small child, or, since the word has adjectival qualities, and it is used of an adult, better, he is "infantile" or "childish."

- J 1 Great experience: {14} But solid food is for the mature,¹⁹⁷ who because of practice
- J 2 A discerner of good and evil: have their senses trained to discern good and evil.
- D 2 The danger lest the readers fail to progress to maturity 6:1-8
 - E 1 The purpose of the author 6:1-3
 - G 1 To leave the basics about Christ: {1} Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ,¹⁹⁸ 6:1a
 - G 2 To go on to maturity: let us press on to maturity, 6:1b
 - G 3 Foundational doctrines not to be dealt with: not laying again a foundation 6:1c-2
 - H 1 God-ward 6:1d
 - J 1 Repentance: of repentance from dead works
 - J 2 Faith: and of faith toward God,
 - H 2 Man-ward 6:2a
 - J 1 Baptisms: {2} of instruction about washings¹⁹⁹
 - J 2 Laying on of hands: and laying on of hands,
 - H 3 Eschatological 6:2b
 - J 1 Resurrection: and the resurrection of the dead
 - J 2 Judgment: and eternal judgment.

¹⁹⁷ Heb. 5:14 - mature: The word is the adjective *teleios* (5046), used only here and in Heb. 9:11 in Hebrews. In this context it carries the idea of “full development as opposed to immaturity” (*Friberg*). Solid food from the word of God is only for the fully developed Christian, not the immature Christian. Despite his readers’ deficiencies, the writer is determined to talk about Melchizedek anyway. This he will do at length beginning in Heb. 7:1.

¹⁹⁸ Heb. 6:1 - elementary teaching about the Christ: In the terms of the writer’s communication thus far, the elementary teaching about the Messiah would include His superiority (1) to angels (1:4-2:18), (2) to Moses (3:1-6), and to Aaron (4:14-5:10).

¹⁹⁹ Heb. 6:2 - washings: “The Greek word translated “washings” is *baptismos* that refers to Jewish ceremonial washings whenever it occurs in the New Testament (Mark 7:4, 8; Heb. 9:10). A different Greek word (*baptisma*) describes Christian baptism. This means the writer here referred not to baptism but to spiritual cleansing” (Thomas Constable, Notes on Hebrews, 2013 Ed. <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#185t>).

Baptismos (909) is used only in Mark 7:4; Heb. 6:2; and Heb. 9:10. *Baptisma* (908) is used in Matt. 3:7; 21:25; Mark 1:4; 10:38, 39; 11:30; Luke 1:3; 7:29; 12:50; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3, 4; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21.

G 4 The pre-requisite of God's will: {3} And this we will do, if God permits. 6:3

E 2 The danger declared 6:4-6 ²⁰⁰

G 1 The description of a certain category of people 6:4-5

H 1 Once enlightened: {4} For in the case of those ²⁰¹ who

²⁰⁰ Heb. 6:4-6 title - The danger declared: Thomas Constable (*Notes on Hebrews*, 2013 Ed.) (<http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p834>), gives an excellent summary of the different views of this passage. I include here his summary, along with his footnotes. Following his quotation I document his examples under the appropriate footnotes he provided, along with an introductory tag in brackets [] for each note:

The writer pointed out the consequences of not pressing on to maturity to motivate his readers to pursue spiritual growth diligently (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5; 3:8).

Christians have interpreted this passage in many different ways. Some believe that those who fall away (v. 6) are believers who lose their salvation.[188] Others hold that those who fall away are people who have professed to be believers but really are not.[189] Still others take the whole situation as hypothetical. They believe that if a Christian could lose his salvation, which he cannot, it would be impossible for him to be saved again.[190] Another view is that only Hebrew Christians living before the destruction of the temple could commit this sin, whatever it is. The view that I believe harmonizes best with the writer's emphasis is that those who fall away are believers who turn away from God's truth and embrace error (i.e., apostates). The majority of scholars view these people as genuine believers.[191]

188: [Believers who lose their salvation] E.g., Westcott, pp. 148-53; Moffatt, pp. 76-82; I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God*; and other Arminian writers.

189: [Professing, but not genuine believers] E.g. Bruce, pp. 118-25; Philip E. Hughes, pp. 206-24; Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, pp. 298-320; E. Schuyler English, *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 160-68; Homer A. Kent Jr., *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 107-15; R. Kent Hughes, 1:156-57; and *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1315. [JTB: To Constable's list, I would add here John MacArthur, *Hebrews*, 142-145.]

190: [Hypothetical view] E.g., Guthrie, pp. 140-46; Thomas Hewett, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 106-11; Thomas, pp. 72-75; Kenneth S. Wuest, "Hebrews Six in the Greek New Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 119:473 (January 1962):45-53; Wiersbe, 2:297; and *The Ryrie Study Bible: New Testament. King James Version*, p. 404.

191: [Christians who apostatize] Marshall, p. 142. [JTB: Constable himself holds to this view. However, he does not believe these apostate Christians lose their salvation, but that they are unable to repent and, presumably, unable to return to fellowship. Zane Hodges (Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 794), writes, "a warning is given of the danger of a Christian moving from a position of true faith and life to the extent of becoming disqualified for further service (1 Cor. 9:27) and for inheriting millennial glory."]

²⁰¹ Heb. 6:4 - those: The writer, in 6:1-3, has used first person plural (we/us) pronouns – "let us press on to maturity" (6:1); "this we will do" (6:3). In 6:4-6 he abruptly changes his manner of speaking. He speaks, literally, of "the ones having been enlightened" (6:4); and that the people thus envisioned, literally, "are again crucifying to themselves (third person pronoun) the Son of God" (6:6). In so doing the writer seems to dissociate himself and his readers from the people in 6:4-6. This is consistent with his exhortation and belief in 6:1-3 that he and his readers will press on to maturity. It is also consistent with his statement in 6:9, "But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way."

These facts are not necessarily to be construed, however, as proof that the people whom the writer describes in 6:4-6 are not Christians. The vocabulary seems to indicate that they are. He takes the stance that his readers are not among those kind of Christians. Nevertheless, the readers must be warned, and that is why he writes as he does.

have once been enlightened²⁰²

H 2 Tasters of the heavenly gift: and have tasted²⁰³ of the heavenly gift²⁰⁴

H 3 Partakers of the Holy Ghost: and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,²⁰⁵

²⁰² Heb. 6:4 - once been enlightened: The [aorist](#) passive [participle](#) of *phôtidzô* (5461), “having been enlightened” at a point in time. I believe that the writer is stating that those about whom he is writing in Heb. 6:4-6 had been enlightened with the gospel of Christ and had responded affirmatively to that enlightenment. Zane Hodges agrees. He states, “This is a natural way to refer to the conversion experience (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-6). The writer’s only other use of the verb “enlightened,” is Hebrews 10:32, where the reference to true Christian experience can hardly be doubted” (Zane Hodges, Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Vol. II, p. 794).

Elsewhere, Jesus used the [present](#) subjunctive form of the verb in Luke 11:36, comparing someone with healthy, perceptive spiritual vision to one who might be **illuminated** with the rays of a lamp. John (John 1:9) spoke of Jesus as the true light, who, by His coming into the world, **illuminates** every man (JTB paraphrase). That illumination, it might be pointed out, makes every man responsible, but does not save every man. 1 Cor. 4:5 seems to speak of a time of coming judgment when “the Lord comes who will both **bring to light** the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts” In Eph. 1:18, Paul prays that the eyes of the Ephesians’ heart might be **enlightened** so they would know certain spiritual truths. In Eph. 3:9 Paul stated that one of his responsibilities was “**to bring to light** what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God” In 2 Tim. 1:10, Paul spoke of the appearing of Jesus, who abolished death and **brought** life and immortality **to light** through the gospel” The three occurrences in Revelation seem to refer to physical light (from an angel) **illuminating** the earth (Rev. 18:1) and the city of New Jerusalem as being **illuminated** by the glory of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). The two occurrences in Hebrews – “those **who have once been enlightened**” (Heb. 6:4) and (Heb. 10:32) “But remember the former days, when, after **being enlightened**, you endured a great conflict of sufferings” are the most critical, however. It is most likely the same writer will use the same word in the same way.

It is difficult to make the case, from the passages outside of Hebrews, that “being enlightened” always means one has been saved. In John 1:9, for example, it can hardly be argued that Jesus’ enlightening every man saves every man. Clearly it does not mean that. And many other passages are not discussing salvation at all. But in the two Hebrews passages, the writer seems to use the word in the same way. And in both cases, it seems more likely he is using the “enlightenment” to refer to an appropriate response to the message of salvation than that he is not. However, it is difficult to be dogmatic. Yet, the writer, in both warning passages, certainly takes the position that the readers are genuinely saved people, and that they will heed his warnings (Heb. 6:9; 10:39). That view is supported by the fact that, in 6:1-3, the writer uses the first person plural (“we”) in his discussion, while in the warning passage (6:4-6), he changes to third person (“those, them”).

²⁰³ Heb. 6:4 - tasted: A translation of the [aorist](#) [participle](#) of *geuomai* (1089), lit., “having tasted.” John MacArthur argues that the people envisioned in 6:4 tasted, or sampled the heavenly gift, but did not truly partake of it. He writes (*Hebrews*, p. 143):

This great gift, however, was not received. It was not feasted on, but only tasted, sampled. It was not accepted or lived, only examined. That stands in contrast with Jesus’ work on our behalf. Having tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9), He went on to drink it all.

The difficulty is that the Scriptural example he gives, Heb. 2:9, does not support his conclusion. In Heb. 2:9, Jesus’ tasting (*geuomai*) of death was not just a sampling. It was a full-blown participation. Jesus didn’t merely sample death. He partook of it fully. Why would the Biblical author employ a different meaning for tasting in 6:4 than he did in 2:9? For a brief examination of all the uses of *geuomai* (1089), see http://www.wordexplain.com/Word_Study_geuomai_taste.html.

²⁰⁴ Heb. 6:4 - of the heavenly gift: John MacArthur believes the heavenly gift is salvation (*Hebrews*, p. 143). I have no reason to dispute his interpretation.

²⁰⁵ Heb. 6:4 - and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit: What does it mean to have been made a partaker (*metochos*, 3353) of the Holy Spirit? Does the terminology indicate that the people in question were genuinely believers in Jesus, and thus partakers of the Holy Spirit? Or does the terminology fall short of salvation? Were they possessors of the Holy Spirit, or were they merely onlookers who witnessed His power and appeared to be saved, but were really only masquerading as Christians?

H 4 Tasters

J 1 Of the Word of God: {5} and have tasted the good word of God²⁰⁶

J 2 Of future powers: and the powers of the age to come,²⁰⁷

Proponents of the view that the people envisioned in Heb. 6:4-6 were not believers point out that the phrase in question, “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” is atypical when compared to other designations about Christians having the Holy Spirit. For example, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit “living in” (*oikeō*, 3611) a believer (Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16; see also 2 Tim. 1:14 – *enoikeō*, 1774); he speaks of believers having been “sealed” (*sphragidzō*, 4972) with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30); he speaks of Christians having been baptized (*baptidzō*, 907) by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13); he speaks of the Holy Spirit as having been given as a pledge (*arrabōn*, 728) of our inheritance (2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14). So the argument goes that, since the writer to the Hebrews failed to use any of these Pauline designations, he cannot have meant that the people in question in Heb. 6:4-6 were believers. But that, it seems to me, is an argument from silence. It would be far more instructive to look at how the word partakers” (*metochos*, 3353) is used in the New Testament.

In the NT “partaker” (*metochos*, 3353) is used but six times – five of those times in the book of Hebrews. (1) In Luke 5:7 it means “partners”, i.e. fellow-fishermen in another boat. One is either a partner in a commercial venture or not. (2) In Heb. 1:9, the Messianic King will experience even greater joy than His companions (supporters). These are individuals who will partake of the King’s reign here upon earth. No argument can be made that these companions are not genuine believers in the King – sharers with Him in His mission and values. (3) In Heb. 3:1, the writer of Hebrews addresses his readers as “holy brothers,” “sharers” (partakers) of a heavenly calling.” There is no indication that these sharers were not really Christians. The description, “holy brothers,” demands that they were. (4) In Heb. 3:14, the writer addresses his readers as “partakers of Christ.” That partaking of Christ is conditioned upon their holding fast “the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.” Once again, there is no evidence that the writer envisioned someone who was not really a Christian. (5) In Heb. 6:4, based upon the evidence we have, a partaker of the Holy Spirit is someone who is a believer, who genuinely partakes of the ministry of the Spirit. (6) In Heb. 12:8 the writer asserts that all of them have become partakers of discipline. There is no indication that this was a shallow, non-genuine participation in discipline.

To sum up the matter, the most likely meaning of *metochos* (3353) in Heb. 6:4 is that the people envisioned were genuine partakers of the Holy Spirit. They were fully believers in Christ, and as such, fully partook of, or possessed the Holy Spirit. Every other use of this adjective in the NT suggests a genuine and full participant / partaker in the other person’s activity or ministry, whether on a human level (the fishermen in Luke 5:7; fatherly discipline in Heb. 12:8) or on a human /Divine level (partaking in Christ or the Holy Spirit) (Heb. 1:9; 3:1,14; 6:4).

²⁰⁶ Heb. 6:5 - have tasted the good word of God: Once again, the word for “tasted” is the plural [aorist participle](#) of *geuomai* (1089), “they having tasted” (at a point in time). MacArthur opines that the people addressed had sampled the word of God, but had not eaten (*Hebrews*, p. 145). But the same objection can be raised. How could the tasting of the good word (*hrēma*, 4487) of God in 6:5 and the tasting of the heavenly gift (of salvation) in 6:4 be qualitatively different than Jesus’ tasting of death for everyone in 2:9? If Jesus did not merely sample death, but actually took part of it in 2:9, why should not the people addressed in Heb. 6:4-6 have actually partaken of the gift of salvation in 6:4 and have actually partaken of the good word of God in 6:5? For an examination of all the uses of *geuomai* (1089) in the NT, see http://www.wordexplain.com/Word_Study_geuomai_taste.html.

²⁰⁷ Heb. 6:5 - have tasted of the powers of the age to come: The word “powers” (*dunamis*, 1411), appears here in the plural. Of the 119 uses in the Greek NT, it appears in the plural 26 times. Of these 26, 3 refer to the powers of the heavens being shaken in connection with or immediately following the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:26); and 2 seem to refer to supernatural powers, like angels, whether good or evil (Rom. 8:38; 1 Pet. 3:22). The other uses all indicate miracles being done. Of this remainder, 4 times “powers” is linked with other miraculous words, such as “signs” and “wonders” (Acts 2:22; 8:13; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4).

So the people in question in Heb. 6:4-6 had experienced miraculous powers. It does not mean they had performed them. But they were beneficiaries of these powers, just as it is stated in Heb. 2:4. In 2:3-4 the writer refers to “so great a salvation” that was initially “spoken through the Lord,” then “confirmed to us by those who heard,” (2:3) “God also testifying with them, both by signs (*sēmeion*, 4593) and wonders (*teras*, 5059) and by various miracles (*dunamis*, 1411) and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will” (2:4).

“Having tasted” of these miraculous powers is not meant to serve as an indicator of their having merely sampled the powers without swallowing them. The tasting is just as real and participatory as Christ’s having tasted death for

- G 2 The subsequent condition of those in this category: {6} and *then* have fallen away,²⁰⁸ 6:6a
- G 3 The statement of impossibility: it is impossible to renew them again to repentance,²⁰⁹ 6:6b

everyone (Heb. 2:9).

The writer's reference to the powers of "the age to come" suggests that, just as Jesus' First Coming marked a miraculous era, so His Second Coming will mark one also. Christ's Millennial Kingdom will evidently be characterized by miracles.

²⁰⁸ Heb. 6:6 - and then have fallen away: better, "and having fallen away".... The writer has already listed five characteristics of the people under consideration in Heb. 6:4-6. Now he adds a sixth – they have fallen away (the [aorist participle](#) of *parapiptô* (3895), used only here in the NT. Far from being a hypothetical "falling away", this is one of the six characteristics that describe these people.

It is impossible to gain a full understanding of *parapiptô* from other NT uses, for this is the only appearance. It's lexical meaning is "literally, *fall beside or aside, go astray, become lost*; figuratively in the NT of abandoning a former relationship *turn away, commit apostasy* (HE 6:6)" ([Friberg](#) Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament).

Nevertheless, the writer has already introduced this concept under different words. In Heb. 2:1 he stated, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*." ("Drift away" = *pararreô*, 3901) "to flow by, hence *slip away*" (used only here). Observe that the writer included himself in this warning. In Heb. 3:12 he admonished, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God." ("Falls away" = *aphistêmi*, 868). Observe that the writer was talking to believers, "brethren." In Heb. 4:1 he worried, "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it." ("Come short of it" translates *hustereô*, 5302.) In Heb. 4:11 he exhorted his readers, "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience." ("Fall" = *piptô*, 4098). Again, he includes himself in the warning.

So what did the writer have in mind here? First, I believe he was addressing Christians. Second, I believe he was addressing a largely Jewish audience. "Under repeated pressures from their unbelieving fellow Jews they were tempted to give up their Christian profession and to return to their ancestral faith." (Zane Hodges, Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Vol. 2, 779.)

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know that this cannot mean that they are in danger of losing their salvation. The very concept of "eternal life" (John 3:16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:40; 17:3; Acts 13:48; Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 John 5:11, 13) precludes that. So also do the clear statements of Jesus (John 10:24-30) and Paul (Rom. 8:26-39). Zane Hodges (Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 795) writes,

Naturally the words "fall away" cannot refer to the loss of eternal life which, as the Gospel of John makes perfectly clear, is the inalienable possession of those who trust Christ for it. But the writer evidently has in mind defection from the faith, that is, apostasy, withdrawal from their Christian profession (cf. Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:23-25, 35-39).

So what was it the writer of Hebrews feared? He feared that some Christians would revert to Judaism, or in some way deny their confession of faith (Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23). In so doing they would become disqualified for service (1 Cor. 9:27), many of their works would be burned up so that they would suffer great loss (1 Cor. 3:11-15), and, like the slave who declined to invest his mina, would be deprived of serving the King in a meaningful way during His coming Kingdom (Luke 19:20-26; cf. Rev. 2:25-27).

²⁰⁹ Heb. 6:6 - it is impossible to renew them again to repentance: Thomas Constable *Notes on Hebrews*, states, "To what is it impossible for an apostate to be renewed? The writer said it is repentance, not forgiveness or salvation." <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p834>

"God has pledged Himself to pardon all who truly repent, but Scripture and experience alike suggest that it is possible for human beings to arrive at a state of heart and life where they can no longer repent" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 124).

"... the author does recognize the possibility that one may have regressed so far that it is impossible to again make progress toward maturity. He therefore states in verses 4-6 that it may be impossible to renew certain believers so that they can progress toward maturity" (J. D. Pentecost, *A Faith That Endures*, pp. 105-106.)

In other words, a Christian's development can be retarded to the point at which he drifts beyond the point of no return. In that case his standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ would be a traumatic event. He would see his works go up in flames, yet he himself would be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

- H 1 Due to their re-crucifixion of Christ: since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God²¹⁰
 - H 2 Due to their shaming Him: and put Him to open shame.
 - E 3 The analogy from nature 6:7-8
 - G 1 Fruitful earth 6:7
 - H 1 Absorbing rain: {7} For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it
 - H 2 Bearing good herbs: and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled,
 - H 3 Blessed of God: receives a blessing from God;
 - G 2 Unfruitful earth 6:8
 - H 1 Bears thorns and briers: {8} but if it yields thorns and thistles,
 - H 2 Rejected: it is worthless
 - H 3 Nearly cursed: and close to being cursed,
 - H 4 Whose end is burning: and it ends up being burned.²¹¹
 - D 3 The persuasion of the readers toward maturity 6:9-20
 - E 1 The writer's desire for the readers' maturity 6:9-12
 - G 1 His conviction of a better end for them: {9} But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you,²¹² (6:9a) 6:9-10
 - H 1 Bearing the fruits of salvation: and things that accompany

²¹⁰ Heb. 6:6 - since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God: The writer views the act of falling away after having participated as a Christian in various aspects of the Christian experience as reneging on an earlier profession of faith in Christ ([Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23](#)). This he labels a “recrucifying” of Christ. He also terms it putting Christ “to open shame.”

²¹¹ Heb. 6:8 - it ends up being burned: It is a mistake to assume this “burning” is to be equated with burning in Hades (86) ([Luke 16:22-24](#)), hell (*geenna*, 1067) ([Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47-48; Luke 12:5](#)), or the lake of fire ([Rev. 20:15](#)). It more likely refers to the holiness of God burning off the dross of unworthy works at the Judgment Seat of Christ ([1 Cor. 3:11-15](#)). I used to live in the Flint Hills of Kansas, a superb cattle-grazing region. Frequently in the spring, ranchers burn off the pastures – not to destroy them – but to destroy the thistles and weeds and permit the bluestem grass to grow unimpeded.

²¹² Heb. 6:9 - But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you: Though he spoke in such a dire fashion, the writer was convinced that his readers were not among those who would apostatize and renege on their confession of faith in Jesus.

salvation,²¹³ 6:9b

H 2 Despite his present speech: though we are speaking in this way.

H 3 God is not unjust to forget: {10} For God is not unjust so as to forget 6:10

J 1 Their work: your work²¹⁴

J 2 Their love: and the love which you have shown toward His name,

J 3 Their ministry to the saints: in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

G 2 His desire for their diligence 6:11-12

H 1 To the realization of their hope in the end 6:11

J 1 The writer's desire for their diligence: {11} And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence²¹⁵

J 2 The writer's goal for them: so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,²¹⁶ 6:11

H 2 Avoiding sloth: {12} so that you will not be sluggish, 6:12

H 3 Followers of others: but imitators of those

J 1 Who had faith and patience: who through faith and patience²¹⁷

²¹³ Heb. 6:9 - things that accompany salvation: The writer takes the stance that his exhortations will lead them to a lifestyle and outlook appropriate to the [salvation](#) (*sōtēria*, [4991](#)) they already possess. The writer uses this word in Heb. 1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; 11:7.

²¹⁴ Heb. 6:10 - your work: The writer sees the good works they have already performed as a sign of their salvation (cf. John 14:15; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:24; 5:3).

²¹⁵ Heb. 6:11 - we desire that each one of you show the same diligence: The writer desires that each of his readers show the same diligence in serving the Messiah, despite temptations to forsake their Christian walk, that they had previously exhibited.

²¹⁶ Heb. 6:11 - so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end: In the Christian life there is a need for persevering to the end. Calvinists call this "the perseverance of the saints." Being a good Christian is hard work. Persistence and determination, even under duress, are required. But the [Eternal Security](#) of the believer is never in question.

²¹⁷ Heb. 6:12 - faith and patience: These are two virtues that are absolutely critical in completing the marathon of the Christian life. Each one of us, like the Hebrews, will be tempted, under duress, to forsake our allegiance to Jesus, the Messiah. We must continually trust Him, exhibiting faith (*pistis*, [4102](#)) along with patience (*makrothumia*, [3115](#)).

J 2 Who are obtaining the promises: inherit the promises.²¹⁸

E 2 His urging the readers to rely on God's inviolable commitment to help them 6:13-20

G 1 The example of Abraham 6:13-16

H 1 God's promise to Abraham: {13} For when God made the promise to Abraham,²¹⁹ 6:13a

H 2 God's greatest oath – swearing by Himself: since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,²²⁰ 6:13b-14

J 1 Blessing I will bless: {14} saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU"²²¹ 6:14a

J 2 Multiplying I will multiply: AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."²²² 6:14b

H 3 Abraham's realization of the promise 6:15

Friberg defines *makrothumia* “as a state of emotional quietness in the face of unfavorable circumstances.” He refers to *makrothumia* in Heb. 6:12 “as patience under trial *endurance, steadfastness*.”

The writer refers to *pistis* (faith, [4102](#)) an amazing 32 times in 31 verses in his letter, the vast majority of them appearing in Heb. 11. Heb. 6:12 marks the only appearance of *makrothumia* ([3115](#)), patience, in the entire letter.

²¹⁸ Heb. 6:12 - inherit the promises: “inherit” is the [present](#) tense [participle](#) of *klêronomeō* ([2816](#)). It identifies generally those believers who are in the process of receiving all the benefits promised to those who love God. In the context of the book of Hebrews, those benefits are connected with participating fully with Christ in His Kingdom, which has not yet begun.

²¹⁹ Heb. 6:13 - the promise to Abraham: The context indicates that the particular promise the writer of Hebrews had in mind was God’s promise to Abraham recorded in Gen. 22:17-18. The promise included (1) that Yahweh would greatly bless Abraham; (2) that He would greatly multiply Abraham’s seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand upon the seashore; (3) that Abraham’s seed would possess the gate of his enemies; (4) and that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The last of the four components is fulfilled, at least partially, in the Church of Christ. The other three are not.

²²⁰ Heb. 6:13 - He swore by Himself: God’s swearing an oath is recorded in Gen. 22:16. The whole context is Gen. 22:15-18. In this context, because Abraham obediently proceeded to sacrifice his son Isaac, the angel of the LORD stopped him (Gen. 22:11-12), provided an alternative ram for sacrifice (Gen. 22:13-14), and swore an oath to Abraham (Gen. 22:15-16) that Yahweh would bless him and multiply his seed, that his seed would be victorious over his enemies (Gen. 22:17), and that in Abraham’s seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18).

²²¹ Heb. 6:14 - I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU: The writer is quoting Gen. 22:17, which reads, more literally, “Truly, blessing, I will bless you” The verb *barak* ([1288](#)) is doubled for emphasis. It appears first as a [Piel](#) Infinitive absolute, and second, as a [Piel](#) Imperfect. “Blessing” is included in the theme of Genesis – “[Blessed Beginnings](#).” The word appears more frequently here than in any other OT book except the book of Psalms.

²²² Heb. 6:14 - AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU: The writer continues his quote of Gen. 22:17, which reads, more literally, “...and multiplying, I will multiply your seed” The verb *rabah* ([7235](#)) appears first as a [Hifil](#) Infinitive absolute and second, as a [Hifil](#) Imperfect. The meaning here is that Yahweh emphatically promised Abraham He would cause his seed (offspring) to become very numerous.

- J 1 {15} And so, having patiently waited,
- J 2 he obtained the promise.²²³
- H 4 The nature of oath-making 6:16
 - J 1 Always by the greater: {16} For men swear by one greater *than themselves*,
 - J 2 The finality of an oath for confirmation: and with them an oath *given* as confirmation is an end of every dispute.
- G 2 God's oath as it applies to the readers 6:17-18c
 - H 1 His desire – to show His immutability: {17} In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise²²⁴ the unchangeableness of His purpose,²²⁵ 6:17
 - H 2 His method – confirmation by oath: interposed with an oath,²²⁶
 - H 3 His goal: Our possession of a strong consolation 6:18
 - J 1 The sureness of the consolation
 - K1 The promise by two immutable things: {18} so

²²³ Heb. 6:15 - he obtained the promise: I.e., “having patiently waited” through the trial of offering up his only son of promise, Abraham received the promise of God through the angel of the Lord as specified in Gen. 22:15-18. The promise thus given to Abraham was not substantially different than that first given by God as recorded in Gen. 12:1-3, and amplified in Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 18-21; 17:1-8, 15-21. The possible exception is the specific statement that Abraham’s seed (singular) would possess the gate of his (singular) enemies (Gen. 22:17). I take this to mean, first of all, that believing Israel will one day so dominate her enemies (or former enemies) that Israel will control access in and out of those countries. There will be complete peace in the land. This will take place, first, during the Millennium and, second, during the Eternal State. Second, I take the angel’s statement in Gen. 22:17 to mean also that Abraham’s singular seed, the Messiah, will possess the gates of His enemies (Gal. 3:16). This fulfillment aligns substantially with the prototypical promise of the Messiah as recorded in Gen. 3:15, and as alluded to in John 12:31; 16:11.

²²⁴ Heb. 6:17 - the heirs of the promise: The original heirs of the promise were Abraham and Isaac, and later, Jacob and his descendants. If my supposition is correct that the readers of this letter were also Jewish Christians, they, too, would be heirs of the promise. But the writer makes an application (in Heb. 6:18) to “we who have taken refuge.” Though his audience may have been strictly Jewish, there is a broader application even to us Gentiles. For part of the promise to Abraham was that in his “seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 22:18).

²²⁵ Heb. 6:17 - the unchangeableness of His purpose: God promised Abraham certain blessings to His physical seed. That can never be changed, despite the determined efforts of Replacement Theology. But God’s promise to Abraham also included from the very beginning that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. So we believing Gentiles are also beneficiaries of the unchangeableness of God’s purpose. As Paul stated, “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29).

²²⁶ Heb. 6:17 - interposed with an oath: Referring to Gen. 22:16 – “‘By Myself I have sworn,’ declares the LORD”

that by two unchangeable things ²²⁷

K2 The impossibility of God's lying: in which it is impossible for God to lie, ²²⁸

J 2 The recipients of the consolation – those appropriating the hope

K1 Preservation: we who have taken refuge ²²⁹

K2 Inspiration: would have strong encouragement

K3 Appropriation: to take hold of the hope set before us. ²³⁰

G 3 The hope provided by the oath 6:19-20

H 1 The possession of the hope: {19} This hope we have 6:19a

H 2 The description of the hope 6:19b

J 1 Foundational: as an anchor of the soul, ²³¹

J 2 Reliable: a *hope* both sure and steadfast

J 3 Access-granting: and one which enters within the

²²⁷ Heb. 6:18 - two unchangeable things: I.e., God's promise and God's oath.

²²⁸ Heb. 6:18 - in which it is impossible for God to lie: God, because of His fixed character, cannot possibly falsify the truth. This truth is stated in Num. 23:19 and Tit. 1:2. By way of contrast, the devil is the father of deceit (John 8:44). It is inevitable that he will lie.

Theologians debate whether Jesus was able not to sin, or unable to sin. I maintain the latter. Jesus has the same character as God. If it is possible for Jesus to sin, it is possible for God to sin. The Scriptures state otherwise.

²²⁹ Heb. 6:18 - we who have taken refuge: The writer includes both himself and his readers in this statement. Both have taken refuge in the prospect of inheriting the promises, reinforced with an oath, that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their physical descendants (Gen. 22:15-17). We today who are among the nations (Gentiles), and not Jewish, can also take refuge in the portion of the promises that deal with Gentiles – “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 22:18).

²³⁰ Heb. 6:18 - to take hold of the hope set before us: To “take hold of” (the [Aorist](#) Infinitive of *kratéo*, [2902](#)) is used twice in this letter – Heb. 4:14; 6:18. It means to follow “a doctrine, creedal confession, or course of life,” and can be translated, “hold fast to, keep hold of, continue firmly in” ([Friebert](#)). The [Aorist](#) tense implies the necessity of taking decisive action. The readers are challenged to appropriate this hope for themselves. “The hope set before us” means the hope of participating fully in Messiah's kingdom. We believing Gentiles will participate in Messiah's kingdom as the “Bride” of Christ; believing [Israelis](#) as the loyal, privileged subjects of His kingdom (e.g., Isa. 60:1-22).

²³¹ Heb. 6:19 - This hope we have as an anchor of the soul: The hope of participating fully in the Messiah's kingdom provides an anchor (*ánkura*, [45](#)), i.e. a ship anchor (Acts 27:29, 30, 40) for one's soul (*psuché*, [5590](#)), one's innermost being. This hope is both sure (*asphalēs*, [804](#)) and steadfast (*bébaios*, [949](#)). The latter adjective is used more often in Hebrews than in any other NT book: Heb. 2:2; 3:6, 14; 6:19; 9:17).

veil,²³²

H 3 Christ's entrance within the veil: {20} where Jesus has entered²³³ 6:20

J 1 As a forerunner: as a forerunner for us,²³⁴

J 2 Made a high priest: having become a high priest²³⁵

K1 Eternally: forever²³⁶

K2 According to a new and effective protocol: according to the order of Melchizedek.²³⁷

²³² Heb. 6:19 - which enters within the veil: "Veil" is *katapétasma* (2665). This veil refers to the heavy fabric which separated the "Holy" place from the "Holy of Holies" in the earthly tabernacle / temple (Heb. 9:3). When Jesus died, God tore the veil separating the two (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). This signified that he who places his faith in the crucified, risen Christ, can have bold access into the very presence of God (Heb. 4:16). There is a sense in which the writer of Hebrews views the "heavens" as the veil through which Christ passed into the very presence of God (Heb. 4:14; 7:26). But there is another sense in which the writer acknowledges that there is a true sanctuary (*hágion*, 39) or tabernacle (*skēnē*, 4633) up in heaven, one which God, not man built (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:11; cf. Rev. 15:5).

²³³ Heb. 6:20 - where Jesus has entered: Under the Mosaic Covenant, only the high priest was to enter beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle / Temple (Lev. 16:1-34). He was to do this only once a year on the Day of Atonement. He was to offer a bull for a sin offering for himself and his household and a goat for a sin offering for the people. He was to sprinkle the blood from the bull and, subsequently, the blood from the goat on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. Thus he was to make an atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people. He was to offer incense which was to shroud the mercy seat, protecting himself from the presence of the LORD so that he would not die. The sins of the people would be transmitted to the live scapegoat, which would be led off into the wilderness. Presumably it would eventually fall prey there to a predator. This ceremony was to be repeated year after year, indicating that the sacrifices atoned for (covered), but did not actually pay for or remove any sins.

By contrast, Jesus, under the New Covenant, has entered directly through the veil into the very presence of God Himself up in heaven within the true temple. He only had to do so once, and, unlike the earthly high priest, He remained there! His sacrifice actually paid for our sins and effectively removed the guilt from our sins! Praise be to God!

²³⁴ Heb. 6:20 - as a forerunner for us: "Forerunner" is *prodromos* (4274), used only here in the NT. It speaks "of one who goes on ahead to prepare the way" (*Friberg*). Jesus, as our great high priest, entered the very presence of God, paving the way for us so that we could follow Him there directly into God's presence! The once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus was supremely effective!

²³⁵ Heb. 6:20 - high priest: *archiereus* (749), meaning "high priest" or "chief priest." In the plural, it generally is translated "chief priests," meaning "the most important priests." This plural reference to "the main priests" ("the chief priests") is the predominant usage in the gospels. Generally, the singular usage refers to the "high priest." Usage indicates the meaning in a particular passage. *archiereus* is used only in the Gospels, Acts, and Hebrews. It is used 25X in Matthew, 22X in Mark, 15X in Luke, 21X in John, 22X in Acts, and 17X in Hebrews, for a total of 122X. Jesus has become high priest eternally after the order of Melchizedek.

²³⁶ Heb. 6:20 - forever: The Greek text is "into the ages" (*eis ton aiōna*, 165). There will never be a time when Jesus is not High Priest. More than any other book in the NT, Hebrews presents Jesus as "Priest" and "High Priest." That is Jesus' present capacity. He waits to serve as King when He returns to Earth.

²³⁷ Heb. 6:20 - according to the order of Melchizedek: This is now the third time the writer states that Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. In Heb. 5:6 he was quoting Psalm 110:4. In Heb. 5:10 and now in Heb. 6:20 he alludes to Psalm 110:4, referring to Jesus as having become a high priest (*archiereús*, 749) into the ages (*eis ton aiōna*, 165) according to the order or classification (*táxis*, 5010) of Melchizedek. Beginning in the next verse,

C 4 The Participant in a Better Priesthood 7:1 - 8:6

D 1 The greatness of [Melchizedek](#), precursor of the better priesthood 7:1-3E 1 His titles: {1} For this Melchizedek, ²³⁸ 7:1aG 1 King: king ²³⁹ of Salem, ²⁴⁰G 2 Priest: priest of the Most High God, ²⁴¹

E 2 His encounter with Abraham 7:1b-2a

G 1 The historical background: who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings ²⁴² 7:1b

Heb. 7:1, the writer will draw some extensive parallels between Jesus and [Melchizedek](#).

²³⁸ Heb. 7:1 - Melchizedek: This is the fourth time the writer mentions [Melchizedek](#). The preceding three times were in Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20. As early as Heb. 5:11-14, he had desired to say more about [Melchizedek](#), but had declined because his readers were “dull of hearing” (Heb. 5:11)

²³⁹ Heb. 7:1 - king: Now the writer begins to exegete Gen. 14:18-20. It is to be noted first of all that [Melchizedek](#) was a king (*basileús*, [935](#)). The writer will soon note that [Melchizedek](#) was also a priest. The writer will make the point that [Melchizedek](#) was both a king and a priest. The passages about [Melchizedek](#) emphasize his priestly role. Most Scriptures about Jesus that use the term “Christ” emphasize His kingly role. Our most basic understanding of Jesus as the Christ (God’s ultimate Anointed One) is that He is a King. Unfortunately, I fear, most Christians forget or ignore that aspect of Jesus. We want to see Him as a Savior, as a Need-Supplier, but, too often, we do not view Him as our King. We must think of Jesus as our King. Kings are meant to be obeyed. Kings are not about an election. We can vote as to whether or not we join His kingdom, but once we have done so, obedience is mandatory. We do not subsequently vote about whether or not we will obey the King. We WILL obey Him or our well-being is in jeopardy. However, the emphasis in the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is the great High Priest. In my understanding, Jesus is presently serving up in heaven as our High Priest. He is not serving as King. He is a King-Designate, but a King without portfolio, as the British political system terms it. His portfolio is necessarily on earth, for that is the place where David was king. Jesus serves as High Priest (Ps. 110:4) at the right hand of the Father (Ps. 110:1), awaiting the time when Yahweh will make Messiah’s enemies a footstool for His feet, instructing Him to rule from Zion in the midst of His enemies (Ps. 110:2-3, 5-7).

²⁴⁰ Heb. 7:1 - king of Salem: [Melchizedek](#) is identified in Gen. 14:18 as “king of Salem.” [Friberg](#), et al, treat “Salem” as an indeclinable noun, the “name of a city, probably the ancient name for Jerusalem (cf. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 1.10.2 180; Psalm 76:2); interpreted as meaning *peace* in Heb. 7:2.” The name “Salem” occurs only twice in the entire NT – in Heb. 7:1, 2. In Heb. 7:2, the writer explains that “Salem” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shālôm* ([7965](#)). In the NASB, the most basic translation of “shalom” is “peace;” less frequently, “welfare” or even “safety.” But in Heb. 7:1, “Salem” is another name for “Jerusalem” (see Psalm 76:2 – Psa. 76:3 in Hebrew).

²⁴¹ Heb. 7:1 - priest of the Most High God: The writer continues to quote from Gen. 14:18, here, verbatim. The two words “Most High” translate the single Grk. word (*hypsistos*, [5310](#)) (used only here in Hebrews). It, in turn translates the Heb. *‘elyōn* ([5945](#)), usually translated “Most High” when referring to God (Gen. 14:18, 19, 20, 22). Here, the writer’s point, consistent with that of Moses, is that [Melchizedek](#) was a priest (Grk. *hiereús*, [2409](#)) (Heb. *kôhên*, [3548](#)), as well as a king. Just so, the writer of Hebrews will argue, Jesus is both a king and a priest. He is king in that He is a son of David. But He can only be priest after the order, or classification of [Melchizedek](#).

²⁴² Heb. 7:1 - returning from the slaughter of the kings: The writer is referring to the historical narrative of Gen. 14:1-17. Abram’s incredible success in recovering his nephew Lot and the people of Sodom from the barbaric invaders from the North and East is a fulfillment of God’s earlier promise to bless Abram and to curse those who cursed him (Gen. 12:1-3).

G 2 The blessing by [Melchizedek](#): and blessed him,²⁴³

G 3 The tithe of Abraham: {2} to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part²⁴⁴ of all *the spoils*, 7:2a

E 3 His name: was first of all, by the translation *of his name*, 7:2b

G 1 King of righteousness: king of righteousness,²⁴⁵

G 2 King of Salem (peace): and then also king of Salem,²⁴⁶ which is king of peace.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Heb. 7:1- and blessed him: The writer refers here to [Melchizedek's](#) having blessed Abram as follows: "Blessed be Abram of God (*Ēl*, [410](#)) Most High (*Elyōn*, [5945](#)), Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God (*Ēl*, [410](#)) Most High (*Elyōn*, [5945](#)), Who has delivered your enemies into your hands" (Gen. 14:19-20). The writer will make the point, self-evident to him, that the lesser person (Abram) was blessed by the greater person ([Melchizedek](#)) (Heb. 7:7). The writer will attach theological significance to this fact.

We have no idea how he knew or even if he knew, but [Melchizedek](#) was obviously in tune with God's plan for Abram. This blessing is but an extension of God's earlier promise to Abram that He would bless him (Gen. 12:2), and that he who cursed Abram, God would curse (Gen. 12:3). The [eschatological](#) fulfillment of this blessing of [Melchizedek](#), consistent with God's original promise to bless Abraham and his descendants, is recorded in such passages as Isaiah 60:1-22. That blessing will doubtless be fulfilled in the future despite all the denials of the advocates of [Replacement Theology](#).

²⁴⁴ Heb. 7:2 - to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part: The writer refers back to the historical incident of Genesis 14:20. After returning from rescuing Lot and all the captives and plunder from Sodom (and, presumably, Gomorrah – Gen. 14:11-12), Abram was met by King/Priest [Melchizedek](#) (Gen. 14:18). Since Abram somehow knew that [Melchizedek](#) was a priest of the Most High God, he tithed (gave a tenth) of all the plunder he had captured in battle to [Melchizedek](#). In so doing he was acknowledging that God had aided him and blessed him in this most unusual and difficult battle. For Abram, a gift to [Melchizedek](#) was a gift of thanks to God. Long before tithing became a dictate of the Law of Moses, Abram tithed to God. The writer of Hebrews will make a significant theological point of this historical event in Heb. 7:4-10, 11-28.

²⁴⁵ Heb. 7:2 - king of righteousness: [Melchizedek's](#) name, in Hebrew, is *malkîy-tsedeq* ([4442](#)). Literally, the first member of the hyphenated name means "My King." The second member means "Righteous." Together, the members mean, "My King Is Righteous." Referring to the name [Melchizedek](#), the writer of Hebrews states, "First being translated, 'King' (*basileús*, [935](#)) 'of Righteousness' (*dikaíosunē*, [1343](#)). [Melchizedek](#) is, of course, a prophetic picture of the Ultimate "King of Righteousness" or "My King is Righteous" – Jesus of Nazareth, when He is installed as King in Jerusalem to reign over Israel and the entire Earth (Zech. 14:9; Luke 1:32-33; Matt. 19:28; 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11 - 20:6). What a pleasure it will be to be ruled by a righteous king. The present ruler of my country at this time, by way of contrast, is, in many respects, a lawless king, not a righteous one. He makes decrees, whenever he wishes, that should be formulated into law by the Legislature. He makes decrees that violate the country's Constitution. He refuses to enforce laws that do not fit in with his agenda. Jesus will be a Righteous King. For that we will be utterly grateful!

²⁴⁶ Heb. 7:2 - and then also king of Salem: "Salem," as we have learned, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shālôm* ([7965](#)), the most basic meaning of which is "Peace." "Salem" is a shortened version of Jerusalem. So Melchizedek was both "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace." Again, what a fitting symbol he is for the Ultimate King of Righteousness / King of Peace, Jesus, God's Anointed One. Let it be said that, in this world, there can be no peace without righteousness. Where righteousness prevails, peace will also prevail. The city of Jerusalem historically has rarely been a city of peace. And it is not today. That is because righteousness does not prevail in that city or in that region. Those conditions await the return of the Great King!

²⁴⁷ Heb. 7:2 - which is king of peace. The writer of Hebrews interprets for us the meaning of "King of Salem." The time is yet coming for the land of Israel when righteousness and peace will kiss each other, and truth will spring from the earth (Ps 85:10-11).

E 4 His genealogy 7:3a

G 1 No father recorded: {3} Without father,²⁴⁸G 2 No mother recorded: without mother,²⁴⁹G 3 No genealogy recorded: without genealogy,²⁵⁰G 4 No beginning recorded: having neither beginning of days²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Heb. 7:3 - without father: The English renders the single Greek word, *apatōr* (540), used only here in the Greek NT. It means, strictly, “without father,” or “fatherless.” Here commentators differ. The majority treat this descriptor, and the remaining descriptions in 7:3, metaphorically. A few defend a literal interpretation.

(1) Metaphorically, most commentators say that, according to the Biblical account (Gen. 14:18-20), the writer of Hebrews is merely saying that there is *no record* of [Melchizedek's](#) ancestry, descendants, birth, or death. They take the position that, and assume the writer of Hebrews really knows that, of course, [Melchizedek actually had](#) a father and mother, from whom he was born, and that he *actually died*, being a man. (2) Those who take the literal interpretation argue that [Melchizedek](#) actually had no father or mother, that he was never actually born, and that he never actually died. It is in this sense that it can be accurately stated by the writer of Hebrews that “he (presently) remains a priest perpetually” (7:3). If he actually died, how could he presently be a priest? Men who died cannot presently be a priest. (The lone exception to this rule would be Jesus, who, though He died, has been *resurrected*, and thus *can* be a priest in the present time.)

Those who take the literal view speculate that [Melchizedek](#) may have been an angel appearing in the form of a man – that he actually served God in the form of the historical [Melchizedek](#). This would qualify him as having no father nor mother, no genealogy, and no beginning, nor end of days. Indeed the Qumran Community evidently regarded [Melchizedek](#) as an angel. Though there are arguments to be made in favor of the metaphorical view, I believe the arguments in favor of a literal view are preferable. History tells us that employing an unwarranted metaphorical hermeneutic is a root of all sorts of evil, especially when it comes to prophecy. [Replacement Theology](#) is, after all, based on a metaphorical hermeneutic.

If [Melchizedek](#) in Genesis 14 was, in fact, an angel appearing on earth as a human, it would not be the first time, nor would it be the last that this phenomenon has occurred. A solid argument can be made that the “sons of God” (*bene elohim*) in Genesis 6:1-4 were actually fallen angels appearing in the form of evil men. (See the author’s [Annotated Outline of Genesis](#), footnote on Genesis 6:2 – “sons of God.”) Moreover, two of the “men” who appeared to Abram in Genesis 18 and spent the ill-fated night with Lot, rescuing him from the evil homosexuals of Sodom and from the fiery judgment of God, were actually good angels, messengers of God (Gen. 19). (Note that these individuals are identified as “men” (*ish*, 376) in Gen. 18:2, 16, 22; 19:5, 8, 10, 12, 16. They are identified as “angels” (*malak*, 4397) in Gen. 19:1, 15.

John MacArthur, in his commentary on Hebrews, p. 172; and Thomas Constable, in his [notes on Hebrews](#), are examples of those who interpret the statements of Hebrews 7:3 metaphorically. Zane Hodges, in his commentary on Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, pp. 797-798, is an example of those who interpret Hebrews 7:3 literally.

²⁴⁹ Heb. 7:3 - without mother: The English translates the single Greek word, *amētōr* (282), used only here in the Greek NT. The same arguments supporting a literal understanding of “without father” can be used to support a literal understanding of “without mother.”

²⁵⁰ Heb. 7:3 - without genealogy: The English translates the single Greek word, *agenealogêtos* (35), used only here in the Greek NT. It means, literally, “without genealogy or ancestral record” ([Friberg](#)). The [Friberg Lexicon](#), in its subsequent definition, however, takes the metaphorical view of this word in Heb. 7:3. I prefer to take it literally.

²⁵¹ Heb. 7:3 - having neither beginning of days: The metaphorical view presumes that [Melchizedek](#) actually was born, but that since the record in Genesis 14 included no account of his having been born, the writer of Hebrews can say that, typologically, [Melchizedek](#) represents Christ, who *literally* had no beginning of days since He existed eternally. The literal view, understanding that [Melchizedek](#) was, presumably, an angel who took the form of a human, means that [Melchizedek](#) actually had no beginning of days, for he had a pre-temporal (but not eternal) existence.

- G 5 No ending recorded: nor end of life,²⁵²
- E 5 His significance 7:3b
 - G 1 Made similar to the Messianic Son: but made like the Son of God,²⁵³
 - G 2 Eternally a priest: he remains a priest perpetually.²⁵⁴
- D 2 The significance of Abraham's encounter with [Melchizedek](#): The superiority of the latter's priesthood 7:4-10
 - E 1 The significance of Abraham's tithe to [Melchizedek](#) 7:4
 - G 1 [Melchizedek's](#) greatness reiterated: {4} Now observe how great²⁵⁵ this man²⁵⁶ was
 - G 2 Abraham's greatness inferior to that of Melchizedek: to whom

²⁵² Heb. 7:3 - nor end of life: The metaphorical view presumes that [Melchizedek](#) actually did die, but that since the record in Genesis 14 included no account of his having died, the writer of Hebrews can say, typologically, that [Melchizedek](#) represents Christ, who, though He died, was resurrected, and exists eternally as high priest according to [Melchizedek's](#) order. But the metaphorical view is always reading into the text that which the text does not say. It presumes to know the real thinking of the writer of Hebrews, which contravenes (in their view) what he actually said. Again, I prefer the literal interpretation. [Melchizedek](#) did not die, for, although he appeared to be a man, he was not actually a man. He was an angel who appeared in the form of a man.

²⁵³ Heb. 7:3 - made like the Son of God: "Made like" translates the single Greek word *aphomoioō* (871), used only here in the Greek NT. It appears here as a perfect passive [participle](#), and could be translated, literally, "having been made like." There are those who speculate that [Melchizedek](#) was a Christophany, an OT, preincarnate appearance of Christ. This word, however, rules that view out, for it states not that [Melchizedek](#) was the Son of God, but that in his existence, it could be said of him, "having been *made like*" the Son of God. It is worth noting that the Hebrew phrase "sons of God" (*bene elohim*) (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6, 2:1; 38:7) almost certainly refers to angels.

²⁵⁴ Heb. 7:3 - he remains a priest perpetually: "he remains" translates the [present](#) tense verb *menō* (3306), emphasizing durative action. How can it be said that a man who lived nearly 2000 years prior to the time of the writing of Hebrews, and then died (which is the presumption of the metaphorical view) in any realistic sense be said to be remaining in the present time a priest? Can it be said of Aaron, admittedly dead, that he, in the present time remains a high priest? Hardly. The language is problematic for the metaphorical view, and not problematic for the literal view. [Melchizedek](#) still is a priest in the present time because he never died. (See the previous footnote under 7:3 - "without father.")

"Perpetually" translates the phrase, *eis to diēnekēs*, which appears only in the book of Hebrews (here, and in Heb. 10:12, 14). In Heb. 10:12 it signifies that Jesus "offered one sacrifice for sins *for all time*." In Heb. 10:14 the sense is that Jesus "offered one sacrifice for sins *for all time*." This simply emphasizes the fact that [Melchizedek](#), like Jesus, remains ([present](#) tense) for all time (perpetually) a priest. This could hardly be said of a man who is dead, but not resurrected. It reinforces the view that [Melchizedek](#) either was (and is) an angel appearing as a man, or that he was a specially created man who was never born and who has never died.

²⁵⁵ Heb. 7:4 - how great: The writer of Hebrews will do a superb job of portraying Melchizedek as a superior to Abram. His point will be that a priest who serves after the order of Melchizedek will necessarily be a priest who is superior to the Levitical priests who are descendants of Abraham. He will also argue that this priest, Jesus, will offer a superior sacrifice and will serve under a superior covenant.

²⁵⁶ Heb. 7:4 - this man: More accurately, "this one." No word for "man" appears in the Greek text. Therefore 7:4 cannot be adduced as support for the argument that Melchizedek was a man, as opposed to an angel appearing as a man.

Abraham, the patriarch,²⁵⁷ gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.²⁵⁸

E 2 The contrasting of the tithes of the two priesthoods 7:5-6a

G 1 The tithes for the Levitical priesthood 7:5

H 1 Their reception of the priestly office: {5} And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office

H 2 Their command to take tithes

J 1 According to law: have commandment in the Law²⁵⁹

J 2 Of their brethren – descendants of Abraham: to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

G 2 The tithe for the [Melchizedek](#) priesthood 7:6a

H 1 [Melchizedek](#) not a descendant of Abraham: {6} But the

²⁵⁷ Heb. 7:4 - Abraham, the patriarch: The writer of Hebrews called Abraham “the patriarch” (*patriarchēs*, [3966](#)). Strictly speaking, the word means, “beginning father.” But the second member of the compound word, *archē* ([746](#)), though it primarily means “beginning,” has overtones of “rule” or “ruler” (as it does in Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12). Thus, by extension we could aptly say that the patriarchs were the “beginning rulers” of the nation of Israel. Abraham, being the very first forefather or “father ruler” was the greatest (Heb. 7:4, the only place this word is used in Hebrews). There are only three other uses in the NT: David is called “the patriarch” in Acts 2:29. The twelve sons of Jacob were called “the twelve patriarchs” (Acts 7:8). Joseph’s brothers (less Benjamin) are called by Stephen “the patriarchs” (Acts 7:9). It is no wonder that the devilish dogma of feminism utterly despises patriarchalism – the rule of fathers. But God has decreed that leaders in the church must be apt rulers of their families (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6), even though the word “patriarch” is not there used.

The writer’s point here is that Abraham was “The Patriarch,” the greatest of the Hebrew people. Yet there was another, [Melchizedek](#), who was even greater than Abraham. This evidenced in that Abraham paid a tithe to [Melchizedek](#), and [Melchizedek](#) blessed Abraham. Therefore, Jesus’ priesthood, of the order of [Melchizedek](#), is a greater priesthood than Abraham’s priesthood, through the latter’s descendants Aaron and his sons, members of the tribe of Levi.

²⁵⁸ Heb. 7:4 - gave a tenth of the choicest spoils: Both the Hebrew original and the LXX translation of Gen. 14:20 render, simply, “And he gave to him a tenth of all.” The writer of Hebrews 7:4 states, literally, “...to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the firstfruits” (*akrothinion*, [205](#)), used only here in the entire NT. Whether or not the “firstfruits” is the best of all the plunder is, perhaps, not the point here. The point is that Abram sacrificed that which was rightfully his and first gave a tenth of it to Melchizedek. Doubtless, he would not have given inferior plunder to Melchizedek. If he took the pains to divide out his plunder numerically into ten parts, he would have given Melchizedek at the least, a representative sample. And perhaps, he would have given him a superior sample. But we do not know that. All the text states is “firstfruits.” That concept is derived from the OT *bikkûr* ([1051](#)), which implies the “first” of the crops, not necessarily the “best.” See the usage in Exod. 23:16; 34:22.

The point the writer of Hebrews wishes to make is that Abram’s gift of a tenth of the firstfruits of his plunder implies the superiority of Melchizedek to Abram. The writer will make the point that the [Melchizedekan](#) priesthood is superior to the Aaronic, Levitical priesthood, associated with men who were descendants of Abram (Heb. 7:4-11).

²⁵⁹ Heb. 7:5 - have commandment in the Law: Some of the specific statutes authorizing the priestly sons of Levi to collect a tithe from the other Sons of Israel, even though the latter have also come forth from the loins of Abram include Num. 18:21, 26; 2 Chron. 31:41.

one whose genealogy is not traced from them²⁶⁰

H 2 Yet he received tithes from Abraham: collected a tenth from Abraham²⁶¹

E 3 The blessing and the priesthoods 7:6b-7

G 1 [Melchizedek's](#) blessing of Abraham: and blessed the one who had the promises.²⁶² 7:6b

G 2 The greater always blesses the lesser: {7} But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.²⁶³ 7:7

E 4 The longevity of the priesthoods 7:8

G 1 Levitical priests die: {8} In this case mortal men receive tithes,²⁶⁴

G 2 [Melchizedek](#) lives: but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.²⁶⁵

E 5 The Levitical priesthood tithed to [Melchizedek](#) 7:9-10

G 1 Levi receives tithes: {9} And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, 7:9a

G 2 But Levi tithed to [Melchizedek](#) in Abraham: 7:9b-10

²⁶⁰ Heb. 7:6 - But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them: I.e., [Melchizedek](#).

²⁶¹ Heb. 7:6 - collected a tenth from Abraham: This proves [Melchizedek's](#) superiority over Abraham.

²⁶² Heb. 7:6 - and blessed the one who had the promises: [Melchizedek](#) blessed Abraham, the one to whom God had given the marvelous promises concerning blessing, the land of Israel, notable descendants who would become a great nation (Gen. 12:1-3). The promises were confirmed by God with a unilateral [covenant](#) (Gen. 15:1-21). As the writer will point out in the next verse, the greater person ([Melchizedek](#)) blessed the lesser person (Abram).

²⁶³ Heb. 7:7 - the lesser is blessed by the greater: The writer of Hebrews considered this point to be inarguable, undisputable. The fact that [Melchizedek](#) blessed Abram demonstrates [Melchizedek's](#) superiority to Abram.

²⁶⁴ Heb. 7:8 - mortal men receive tithes: Literally, “dying men” receive tithes. “Dying” is the [present participle](#) of *apothnêskō* (599); “men” is *ánthrōpos* (444). The writer’s point is that the priests and Levites who receive tithes are mortal, i.e., in the process of dying.

²⁶⁵ Heb. 7:8 - of whom it is witnessed that he lives on: The writer speaks, of course, of [Melchizedek](#). If [Melchizedek](#) were really an ordinary mortal man, as most interpreters hold, the writer’s statement rings rather hollow. To follow their interpretation, here is what the writer of Hebrews had to be thinking: “Now, according to the record, [Melchizedek](#) never died. But we know that is not really true. He did die. We just say that he did not die, and that must suffice for the argument I am making.” To me it makes far more sense to hold that [Melchizedek](#) was not, in fact, an ordinary mortal man. Either he was an angel appearing as a man, or else he was a man specially created by God for the purpose of being [Melchizedek](#). The latter option raises all sorts of questions as to the solidarity of the human race. That is why I prefer the view that [Melchizedek](#) was an immortal angel appearing as a man – the King/Priest [Melchizedek](#). If I am wrong, I am certain that one day Melchizedek himself will be able to inform me of my errant conclusion. I am certain that I will need, one day, to take many courses in remedial theology....

H 1 The assertion of tithing: paid tithes, ²⁶⁶

H 2 The explanation of the assertion: {10} for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. ²⁶⁷

D 3 The change to the better priesthood 7:11-19

E 1 The perfection of the priesthoods 7:11

G 1 Perfection not attained under the Levitical priesthood: {11} Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood ²⁶⁸

G 2 The Law received under the Levitical priesthood: (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), ²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Heb. 7:9 - Levi, who received tithes, in Abraham paid tithes: Using the theological truth of federal headship, the writer of Hebrews asserts that Levi, head of the Levites, and thus of Aaron, the head of the priestly families, paid a tithe to Melchizedek through Abram. He is demonstrating that the priesthood of Melchizedek, the King/Priest, is superior to the priesthood of Levi and Aaron.

²⁶⁷ Heb. 7:10 - for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him: In this way, the writer of Hebrews demonstrates the truth of his claim that Levi, the head of the Levitical priest assistants, and ancestor of Aaron, head of the priestly family, is subservient to Melchizedek. The text here is saying that Levi was still in the loins (*osphÿs*, [3751](#)) of his father Abraham when Melchizedek met Abraham. "[Thus Levi participated in Abraham's action](#) when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek" ([NetBible](#) note).

²⁶⁸ Heb. 7:11 - if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood: "Perfection" is *teleiôsis* ([5050](#)), used only twice in the NT – in Luke 1:45, where it is translated, "fulfillment, and in the present passage, where it is translated, "perfection." In Luke 1:45 Elizabeth addressed Mary, "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a **fulfillment** of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." Here in Heb. 7:11 it is translated, "**perfection**." In both instances it has to do with the achievement of a promised or planned destination.

What the writer is saying is that the Levitical priesthood was the *means* to a planned destination, *not* the destination in and of itself. If the latter had been true, there would have been no need for another priest to arrive, namely Jesus, who is priest after the order of [Melchizedek](#). He was introducing the concept, which he would state explicitly in 7:12, that the Levitical priesthood would be superseded by the [Melchizedekan](#) priesthood, of whom Jesus is the sole representative.

Thomas Constable (*Notes on Hebrews*) states it this way:
<http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p1013>

7:11 The writer's point was that since God promised in Psalm 110:4 that the coming Messiah would be a priest after [Melchizedek's](#) order, He intended to terminate the Levitical priesthood because it was inadequate. If the Levitical priesthood had been adequate, the Messiah would have functioned as a Levitical priest.

²⁶⁹ Heb. 7:11 - (for on the basis of it the people received the law): "Received the law" translates the single Greek word *nomotheteō* ([3549](#)), used only here and in Heb. 8:6. In both instances, the word appears as a third person singular, passive voice, perfect tense statement of fact. At some point in the past, with results continuing to the writer's present time, the [Israeli](#) people, as a corporate entity, had been given law, or had been "constituted by law" on the basis of the Levitical priesthood.

In Heb. 8:6, the writer used the same word in the identical configuration, where the verse is translated, "has been enacted" as follows: "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises." Using the same wording as above in Heb. 7:11, we can accurately say about Jesus (author's literal translation), "Now, moreover, He has obtained a different ministry, by as much also as he is mediator of a superior covenant, which, under superior promises has been *constituted by law*" (at some time in the past, with results continuing to the writer's present time) (emphasis mine).

So we can say that Jesus has already begun His different high-priestly ministry (see Heb. 8:1-6), that he is presently mediator of a superior covenant (the [New Covenant](#)), which covenant, by superior promises, was "constituted by law" in the past with results continuing to the writer's present time.

The upshot of the matter is that we believers today operate under the [New Covenant](#), not the Old. That is true whether we are speaking of justification or sanctification. We are operating under the [New Covenant](#), the superior one.

G 3 The need for a new priesthood: what further need *was there* for another priest to arise²⁷⁰

H 1 From the [Melchizedek](#) order: according to the order of Melchizedek,

H 2 Not from the Aaronic order: and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

E 2 The new priesthood under a better hope 7:12-19

G 1 The new priesthood and the Law 7:12-14

H 1 Changing the priesthood requires changing the Law: {12} For when the priesthood is changed,²⁷¹ of necessity there takes place a change of law also.²⁷² 7:12

²⁷⁰ Heb. 7:11 - what further need *was there* for another priest to arise: The fact that the Bible (in Psalm 110:4) predicts another priest after the order of Melchizedek is a silent, yet thunderous pronouncement that the Levitical priesthood did not bring about perfection or completeness. Another priest is needed.

²⁷¹ Heb. 7:12 - when the priesthood is changed: “is changed” is the [present](#) passive [participle](#) of *metathithêmi* (3346), which is used here and twice in Heb. 11:5, where it is stated, “By faith Enoch **was taken up** ...; and he was not found because God **took him up**.” It is also used in Acts 7:16, “From there **they were removed** to Shechem and laid in the tomb ...” and in Jude 1:4, which speaks of “ungodly persons **turning** the grace of our God into licentiousness” (author’s translation).

So in a literal sense, *metathithêmi* refers to the physical transfer of something from one location to another (Acts 7:16 and Heb. 11:5 (twice)). In a figurative sense, it speaks of something (here, the priesthood) being changed (in a positive sense in Heb. 7:12), and (in a negative sense, referring to the grace of God) even perverted (Jude 1:4). The writer will use the corresponding noun, “change” – *metathesis* (3331) later in Heb. 7:12.

²⁷² Heb. 7:12 - For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also: The word “change” is the word *metathesis* (3331). The writer used the corresponding verb *metathithêmi* (3346), to transfer (literally) or alter (figuratively) just a few words earlier (see the preceding footnote). His point is that altering the priesthood (*hierôsune*, 2420) necessitates an alteration in law (*nomos*, 3551).

When Jesus died, He offered His own body as a once-for-all, effective sacrifice for sins. He did so as a [Melchizedek](#) priest, not a Levitical priest. When He was resurrected, He ascended to heaven and appeared there, entering “through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.” “[N]ot through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:11-12). His priestly sacrificial offering having been completed, He has been seated as the [Melchizedek](#) priest at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2) for nearly two thousand years.

The writer’s point, again, is that a change in priesthood necessitates a change of law. We can no longer be operating under the Law of Moses, for it makes no provision for a [Melchizedek](#) priest to offer sacrifices. There is no stronger statement anywhere in the New Testament that we are no longer operating under the Law of Moses. That truth is as applicable to Jewish believers as it is to Gentile believers, for Jesus is a [Melchizedek](#) priest on behalf of the whole Church, not merely the Gentile Church. We believers in Jesus no longer operate under the law of Moses. We operate under the Law of the Messiah (Gal. 6:2; see also 1 Cor. 9:21). For more on the Law of Messiah, see the footnote below on Heb. 7:18.

Thomas Constable (*Notes on Hebrews*) states,
<http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p1013>

7:12 The priesthood was such a major part of the whole Mosaic Covenant that this predicted change in the priesthood signaled a change in the whole Covenant. This verse is one of the clearest single statements in the New Testament indicating that God has terminated the Mosaic Law (Covenant; cf. Rom. 10:4). Paul went on to say that Christians, therefore, are not under it (Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 3:24-25; 5:1; 6:2; 2 Cor. 3:7-11). That is, it is not what God has given to regulate the lives of Christians.

H 2 The Messianic Son's tribe requires changing the Law 7:13-14

- J 1 The Messianic Son comes from another tribe: {13} For the one concerning whom these things are spoken ²⁷³ belongs to another tribe, 7:13a
- J 2 None from this tribe attended the altar: from which no one has officiated at the altar. 7:13b
- J 3 Jesus' tribal origin: {14} For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, ²⁷⁴
- J 4 Moses spoke nothing about Judah concerning priesthood: a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 7:14b

G 2 The old Law and the better hope 7:15-19

H 1 The new priest in relation to the old Law 7:15-17

- J 1 Of the [Melchizedek](#) order: {15} And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 7:15
- J 2 Not made after a fleshly law: {16} who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical ²⁷⁵ requirement, 7:16
- J 3 Made after the power of eternal life: but according to the power of an indestructible life. ²⁷⁶

"If Christ is our high priest today, then there has to be a change in the law, since He could not qualify as a priest under the Levitical arrangement (being of the tribe of Judah). If the law has not been done away today, then neither has the Levitical priesthood; but if Christ is our high priest, we cannot be under the law. Every prayer offered in the name of Christ is an affirmation of the end of the law." [245] [Quoting Charles Ryrie. See also Leon Morris and Hal Harless.]

"So by his own independent line of argument our author reaches the same conclusion as Paul: the law was a temporary provision, 'our tutor to bring us unto Christ . . . but now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor' (Gal. 3:24f.)." [246] [Quoting F. F. Bruce.]

²⁷³ Heb. 7:13 - the one concerning whom these things are spoken: Referring to the Messiah, the Ultimate Priest, Jesus, a descendant of King David, of the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14).

²⁷⁴ Heb. 7:14 - Judah: Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah – Gen. 49:10; Isa. 11:1; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:1-16; 2:6; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-14; 3:23-38; Rom. 1:3-4; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5.

²⁷⁵ Heb. 7:16 - physical: In the context, an acceptable translation of the Grk. adjective, *sarkinos* ([4560](#)), usually translated, "fleshly".

²⁷⁶ Heb. 7:16 - an indestructible life: "Indestructible" is *akátalutos* ([179](#)), occurring only here in the NT. It means, "strictly, of what cannot be brought to an end *indestructible*; hence, *endless, everlasting* (Heb. 7:16)" ([Friberg](#)). This speaks of Christ, the eternal Logos (John 1:1-5), who became man (John 1:14), who, though He died

J 4 The oath of God 7:17

K1 An eternal priest: {17} For it is attested *of Him*,
"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER" ²⁷⁷

K2 After [Melchizedek's](#) order: ACCORDING TO
THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." ²⁷⁸

H 2 The contrasting of the old Law and the better hope 7:18-19

J 1 The old Law cancelled 7:18

K1 The weakness of the old Law led to its
cancellation: {18} For, on the one hand, there
is a setting aside of a former commandment ²⁷⁹

on our behalf rose again on the third day to immortality and supremacy (1 Cor. 15:3-8; Php. 2:8-11).

²⁷⁷ Heb. 7:17 - YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER: Once again, the writer quotes a portion of Psalm 110:4. Literally Heb. 7:17 reads here, "For it is declared, 'You – priest into the ages'" This is a pronouncement by Yahweh that the Messiah – the Davidic king who will reign from Zion over His enemies (Psa. 110:1-2), aided by the people of Israel (Ps. 110:3) and the Lord Himself (Ps. 110:5) and who will triumph over the nations (Psa. 110:5-7), is the very one who is also a priest *forever* (according to the order of Melchizedek) (Ps. 110:4). The emphasis here in Heb. 7:17 is on the word "FOREVER" ("into the ages"), matching up with the author's assertion that Jesus is the priest who has arisen "not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but *according to the power of an indestructible life*" (Heb. 7:16, emphasis mine).

²⁷⁸ Heb. 7:17 - ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK: This is the final time in Hebrews that the author utters the name Melchizedek. The complete list of occurrences: Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:2; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17. Again, the writer is quoting Ps. 110:4.

²⁷⁹ Heb. 7:18 - For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment: The words "setting aside" translate the single Greek word *athetēsis* (115), used only here and in Heb. 9:26 in the NT. It means annulment. In Heb. 7:12, the writer stated that the Law of Moses had been altered (*metathesis*, 3331). In Heb. 7:18, he used a stronger word. He stated that the Law of Moses [former commandment, *proagō* (4254) *entolē* (1785) is synonymous with the former law or former covenant] had been set aside, or annulled (*athetēsis* 115). That means the Law of Moses is no longer in force. In Heb. 9:26, the only other time this word (*athetēsis*) is used in the entire NT, the writer stated that Christ annulled or did away with sins. Just as surely and effectively as Christ annulled or did away with sins, so as surely has the former commandment, the Law of Moses, been annulled or done away with. According to Constable (<http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p1025>):

7:18-19 These verses summarize the argument that God has superseded the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic Law (Covenant). He has replaced the old system with a system that can do what the old one could not do, namely, bring us into intimate relationship with God.

"The term *athetesis*, 'annulment,' is a stronger term than *metathesis*, 'alteration' (v 12)."[248]

Here are the comments of John MacArthur (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews*):

Here is the climax of the text. Aaron is replaced by Christ. God has set aside the old and imperfect and has replaced it with the new and perfect. Setting aside (*athetēsis*) pertains to doing away with something that has been established. It is used, for example, of annulling a treaty, a promise, a law, a regulation, or of removing a man's name from a document. The whole paraphernalia of the sacrificial system, the whole ceremonial system, was canceled, annulled, done away with entirely. God assured its end in A.D. 70, when He allowed the Temple to be destroyed.

The old system could reveal sin. It could even cover sin, in a certain way and to a certain temporary degree.

7:18a

K2 Because of its powerlessness: because of its weakness and uselessness ²⁸⁰

K2 Because it could make nothing perfect: {19} (for the Law made nothing perfect), ²⁸¹ 7:19a

But it could never remove sin, and so itself had to be removed. It brought nothing to conclusion. It gave no security. It gave no peace. A man never had a clear conscience. But the priesthood of Jesus Christ made all of what Israel looked forward to a reality. It brought access to God.

Just as surely as Jesus annulled (did away with) sins (Heb. 9:26), He annulled (did away with) the former commandment (the Law of Moses) (Heb. 7:18). Believers in Jesus, whether Jewish or Gentile, are now under another law, the law of the Messiah (Gal. 6:2; see also 1 Cor. 9:21). It is also known as “the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), “royal law” (loving your neighbor as yourself) (James 2:8), and “law of liberty” (James 2:12).

If Paul was no longer obligated to live under the Law of Moses, why was he so careful to observe it as a mature Christian? (See Acts 21:17-26; 23:1; 24:14-16; 25:8; 26:4-5; 28:17.) I believe one of his primary reasons was so that he could reach Jewish people for Christ. He made himself a slave to all, including his own Jewish people, so that he might win more for Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

I believe another reason may have been that Paul did not wish to violate his own conscience. There is a cultural aspect of law that can be so powerful as to affect one’s conscience. In his letter to the Romans, Paul addressed this in Romans 14:1-15:9. On such issues as diet (e.g., Lev. 11) and the observance of days (e.g. Lev. 23), both legislated in the Law of Moses, well-meaning Christians can believe opposing principles. It is possible for some Christians to believe that they should restrict their diet while at the same time equally sincere Christians believe it is not necessary to restrict their diet. It is possible for some Christians to believe that they should observe certain sabbath and feast days, while at the same time equally sincere Christians believe they are not obligated to observe certain sabbath and feast days. Neither is to judge the other or hold the other in contempt. In fact, those who are stronger ought to bear the burdens of the weak. But both sides are to be fully persuaded in their own minds. Neither side can violate his conscience.

For further discussion of this topic of the Christian and the Law, see the author’s [Annotated Outline of Acts](#), in particular, the footnote under Acts 21:23.

²⁸⁰ Heb. 7:18 - because of its weakness and uselessness: The former commandment (*entolê*, [1785](#)), the Law of Moses, had to be set aside (*athetêsis*, [115](#)), or annulled, because of its weakness (*asthenês*, [772](#)) and uselessness (*anôphelês*, [512](#)). *asthenês*, an adjective, is often used literally to describe a sick person (Luke 10:9; Acts 4:9; 5:15, 16; 1 Cor. 11:30). More often in the NT it is used in a figurative sense of that which is “less effective *weak, feeble, not strong*” (*Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*). Examples include 1 Cor. 8:7, 9, 10; 9:22; 12:22; Heb. 7:18. *anôphelês* ([512](#)), also an adjective, is used only twice in the NT – Titus 3:9 and here in Heb. 7:18. In Titus 3:9 Paul exhorted Titus, “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable (*anôphelês*, [512](#)) and worthless (*mataios*, [3152](#)). So the Law of Moses, the former Covenant, was weak, or ineffective and also useless, or unprofitable in the sense that it could only point out sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7), serve to impute sin (Rom. 5:13), cause the offence to abound (Rom. 5:20), and serve as a vehicle of the wrath of God (Rom. 4:15) – it could never guarantee righteousness, as did the [New Covenant](#).

²⁸¹ Heb. 7:19 - (for the Law made nothing perfect): The Law (*ho nomos*, [3551](#)) by design, made nothing complete – did not bring anything to its goal. “Made nothing perfect” translates the [aorist](#) tense of the verb *teleioō*, [5048](#). According to the *Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, its uses are as follows:

(1) from the standpoint of complete preparation, bringing something to its goal *complete, fulfill, accomplish*; ... (2) from the standpoint of totality, of executing something fully *accomplish, complete, carry out*; ... (3) spiritually, as qualifying someone to stand before God and dwell in His presence, especially in Hebrews *perfect, make perfect* (HE 7.19; 10.14).

The [aorist](#) tense looks at the jurisdiction of the Law as a whole; – over its lifetime, the Law was unable to qualify fully a single person to stand before God. That was never its purpose. The Law was not meant to justify people in God’s sight (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:19-20; Gal. 2:16), but to show them they were sinful (Rom. 3:20), identify specific sins (Rom. 7:7); exhibit the wrath of God (Rom. 4:15); provide a just basis for imputing sin (Rom. 5:13); and cause

J 2 The new hope brought in 7:19b

K1 It brings in a better hope: and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope,²⁸²

K2 It is a means of drawing near to God: through which we draw near to God.²⁸³

D 4 The oath of the better priesthood 7:20-22

E 1 The Messianic Son made priest with an oath: {20} And inasmuch as *it* was not without an oath 7:20

E 2 The Levitical priesthood had no oath: {21} (for they indeed became priests without an oath, 7:21a

E 3 The Messianic Son became priest by means of an oath: but He with an oath²⁸⁴ through the One who said to Him, 7:21b

E 4 The significance of the oath 7:21b-22

sin to abound (Rom. 5:20).

²⁸² Heb. 7:19 - there is a bringing in of a better hope: Under the [New Covenant](#), under which the new, [Melchizedek](#) Priesthood and the new Law, the Law of the Messiah operate, there is a better, or superior (*kreittōn*, [2909](#)) hope (*elpis*, [1680](#)), or certain expectation which is based upon the promise of God. This hope is better than any hope under the Law of Moses, for that was a conditional covenant. Under the Mosaic Covenant God's blessings were conditioned upon human obedience (Deut. 28:1-14). Failure to obey brought about God's cursings (Deut. 27:15-26; 28:15-68). Notice that, by sheer quantity of Biblical text, the cursings far outweigh the blessings. Moreover the Law of Moses brought no certainty of fulfillment. That is not a criticism, but merely a statement of fact.

The [New Covenant](#), under which the [Melchizedek](#) Priesthood operates, is not conditional. It guarantees results (Jeremiah 31:31-37; cf. 32:40; 33:14; Ezek. 37:26; Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16-17). This is a far superior hope, guaranteeing certain obedience not only in time (for Israel and the Church, almost certainly, during the Millennium), but also in the perfected environment of New Earth and New Jerusalem, both of which are populated only by the righteous redeemed. Now it is true, the guaranteed obedience of the [New Covenant](#) has not yet been *fully implemented* with the house of Israel and with the House of Judah, or with the Church. Nevertheless, the [New Covenant](#) has been *ratified* and *inaugurated* through Jesus' death and His subsequent resurrection (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6) as is evidenced by Jesus' ministry under the auspices of the new, [Melchizedek](#) Priesthood (Heb. 7:11-28; Heb. 8:1-13; Heb. 9:1-28).

²⁸³ Heb. 7:19 - through which we draw near to God: Under the Old, Mosaic Covenant, worshipers were always kept at some distance from God (see, for example, Exod. 19:10-25). Under the [New Covenant](#), inaugurated by the Messiah, believers are urged to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). See also Heb. 10:22; Jas. 4:8. "Drawing near to God" cannot mean merely justification. The verb appears in the [present](#) tense. We constantly are drawing near to God through this better hope. So this better hope and this drawing near must also include sanctification as well as justification.

²⁸⁴ Heb. 7:21 - but He with an oath: God did not utter an oath in order to guarantee His own veracity. That is never suspect. Instead, God complied with longstanding human custom in order to prove the seriousness of His intent. Just recently, Lois Lerner, former head of the IRS, was willing to give testimony to a congressional investigating committee. But when she was placed under oath, she would not testify because she did not want to be charged with perjury. In other words, now she could be called to account for giving false testimony, whereas, earlier in the hearings, she could not. So we conclude that God followed human custom in order to be more convincing to the people of Israel and to the readers of Scriptures. By way of application, we humans conclude that God is deadly serious about appointing Jesus the Messiah as Eternal Priest according to the classification of Melchizedek.

- G 1 The Divine author of the oath: "THE LORD HAS SWORN
- G 2 The immutability of the oath: AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND,
- G 3 The content of the oath: 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'");
- G 4 The effect of the oath – Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant: {22} so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.²⁸⁵ 7:22
- D 5 The eternity of the better priesthood 7:23-25
 - E 1 The contrast of the Levitical priesthood 7:23
 - G 1 The proliferation of Levitical priests: {23} The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers
 - G 2 The reason for the proliferation – the obstacle of death: because they were prevented by death from continuing,
 - E 2 The nature of the [Melchizedek](#) priesthood 7:24
 - G 1 The case of Jesus: {24} but Jesus, on the other hand,
 - G 2 His eternal existence: because He continues forever,²⁸⁶
 - G 3 The permanence of His priesthood: holds His priesthood

²⁸⁵ Heb. 7:22 - Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant: On the basis of God's oath (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:21), uttered and recorded centuries after His offering of and Israel's acceptance of the Mosaic covenant (Psalm 110:4; cf. Exod. 19:1–24:11), Jesus, at some point anterior to the writing of the letter to the Hebrews, with results continuing to the writer's time (based on the perfect tense of the verb *ginomai* (1096), "has become") became the guarantor (*egguos*, 1450 – used only here in the NT) of a superior (*kreittōn*, 2909) covenant (*diathêkê*, 1242) – the [New Covenant](#).

Heb. 7:22 is the first time the writer used the word *diathêkê* (1242) in Hebrews. Here is a complete list – 17 uses in all: 7:22; 8:6, 8, 9, 9 10; 9:4, 4, 15, 15, 16, 17, 20; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20. The basic idea of *diathêkê* is "settlement". It is used, according to [Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#),

(1) as a legal technical term in settling an inheritance, as common in the Greek and Roman world *last will and testament* (probably HE 9.16,17); (2) between two or more persons, a binding *contract, agreement, treaty* (GA 3.15); (3) predominantly in the NT, as in the Old Testament and Septuagint, a declaration of the will of God concerning His self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which he entered into relationship with man *covenant, agreement* (LU 1.72; MK 14.24; possibly HE 9.16,17)."

We know that the writer, in Heb. 7:22, by the term "better covenant", had in mind the [New Covenant](#). We know this because in Heb. 8:6-12, he quoted extensively from Jer. 31:31-34, the central passage predicting the [New Covenant](#). He again referenced the [New Covenant](#), quoting from Jer. 31:33-34 in Heb. 10:15-17.

Jesus' guarantee of the [New Covenant](#) coincided with His death, resurrection, ascension to heaven, offering of His sacrifice in the heavenly tabernacle, and His taking His seat at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), where He serves as priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 7:28; 8:1) after the order of [Melchizedek](#) (Heb. 5:5-6, 10; 6:20; 7:11-15; 17-21). His sacrificial work having been completed, as evidenced by His being seated, Jesus continues before the Father His eternal representation of and intercession on behalf of those who have placed their faith in Him (Heb. 7:25). During this Church Age, Jesus is the High Priest without peer.

²⁸⁶ Heb. 7:24 - because He continues forever: Literally, "because he remains into the age" (*eis ton aiōna*, 165).

permanently.²⁸⁷

E 3 The advantage of the permanent ([Melchizedek](#)) priesthood 7:25

G 1 The gain of mankind

H 1 Eternal salvation: {25} Therefore He is able also to save forever²⁸⁸

H 2 The qualification – coming to God through this priest (Jesus): those who draw near to God through Him,

G 2 Because of the perpetual availability of this priest for intercession: since He always lives to make intercession for them.²⁸⁹

D 6 The superior sacrifice of the better priesthood 7:26-28

E 1 This high priest's flawless moral character and elevated status allows Him to make a better sacrifice: {26} For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest,²⁹⁰ 7:26

²⁸⁷ Heb. 7:24 - holds his priesthood permanently: The word “holds” (*echō*, [2192](#)), appears in the [present](#) tense. This means that Jesus is presently, during the [Church Age](#), operating as priest under the order of [Melchizedek](#). It cannot, therefore, be argued that believers today, whether Jewish or Gentile, are operating under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Law (Mosaic Covenant). A change in priesthood demands a change in law. “Permanently” is *aparátatos* ([531](#)), used only here in the NT. It means, “strictly *not transient*”; hence of what is fixed and not subject to change *permanent, never changing* (Heb. 7:24)” ([Friberg](#)). Jesus’ role as [Melchizedek](#) high priest will never be altered throughout eternity, even when He takes His seat as King upon earth.

²⁸⁸ Heb. 7:25 - save forever: Though certainly a possible translation of the Greek text – *sōzō* ([4982](#)) *eis to pantelēs* ([3838](#)) – it is probably not the better translation of the two options. More likely “save to the uttermost” is preferable (ESV, KJV) or “save completely” (NIV), both of which translations carry the same idea. The Greeks had a much more typical way of saying “forever.” That way is *eis to aiōn* ([165](#)) (“into the ages”) or *aiōnios* ([166](#)) (“eternal”). See, for example, Heb. 5:9, which speaks of Jesus as being the source of “eternal salvation.” (In the Grk. text the word order in Heb. 5:9 is “salvation” (*sōtēria*, [4991](#)) “eternal” (*aiōnios*, [166](#)).) The Greek word *pantelēs* ([3838](#)) is used only twice in the NT – in Luke 13:11 and Heb. 7:25. In Luke 13:11 Dr. Luke used the word to describe a woman who could not straighten up “at all” (“completely”) because she was “bent double.” That reinforces my preferred translation of the word in Heb. 7:25. Of course, if Jesus saves someone “completely” or “to the uttermost,” (Heb. 7:25) that salvation is eternal.

²⁸⁹ Heb. 7:25 - since He always lives to make intercession for them: The word “since” does not appear in the Greek text, even though it may be implied. “He always lives” is “He always living” (*dzōn*, [2198](#)) translating a masculine [present participle](#), indicating continual existence. “To make intercession for them” is “in order to be interceding” ([present infinitive](#) of *entunchánō*, [1793](#)) on behalf of them.” So it seems that a large part of Jesus’ present existence is to direct petitions on behalf of us Christians to the Father on a continual basis. That is a decidedly priestly role, not a kingly role. Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus is presently serving as Priest. References to a present reign as King are absent.

²⁹⁰ Heb. 7:26 - high priest: *archiereús* ([749](#)) – chief priest or high priest. This word is used in Hebrews as follows: Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:20; 7:26, 27, 28; 8:1, 3; 9:7, 11; 9:25; 13:11. Most often, but not always, it refers to Jesus as High Priest. At other times it refers to a generic, mortal high priest in Israel. In Heb. 7:26, the author pens a series of adjectives to describe Jesus, this one-of-a-kind high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

G 1 His sanctity: holy, ²⁹¹

G 2 His harmlessness: innocent, ²⁹²

G 3 His purity: undefiled, ²⁹³

G 4 His moral distinction: separated from sinners ²⁹⁴

G 5 His elevated status: and exalted above the heavens; ²⁹⁵

E 2 The nature of this high priest's sacrifice 7:27

G 1 His superiority to Levitical priests: {27} who does not need daily, like those high priests,

G 2 The non-necessity for His offering of daily sacrifices for sin: to offer up sacrifices, ²⁹⁶

H 1 For His own sins: first for His own sins

H 2 For the sins of the people: and then for the *sins* of the people,

²⁹¹ Heb. 7:26 - holy: *hósios* (3741). This is not the typical word for "holy," which is *hágios* (40), used far more frequently. In Acts 2:27 and Acts 13:35, *hósios* speaks of the "Holy One" whom God will not permit to enter decay. In Acts 13:34 it speaks of the "holy and sure blessings of David." Men are to pray, "lifting up *holy* hands" (1 Tim. 2:8). Qualified elders are spoken of as being "*devout*" (Tit. 1:8). God is spoken of as alone being "*holy*" (Rev. 15:4). The "*Holy One*" is said to be righteous because He judged these things (Rev. 16:5). In the context of Heb. 7:26 *hósios* speaks of being undefiled by sin.

²⁹² Heb. 7:26 - innocent: *ákakos* (172), used elsewhere only in a passive sense in Rom. 16:18, where it is translated, "unsuspecting." Here it is used in an active sense, describing the High Priest Jesus as being, literally, "without evil." According to Friberg, He is "upright, without fault, harmless." Its antithesis, *kakós* (2556), when describing a person, refers to someone who is "evil."

²⁹³ Heb. 7:26 - undefiled: *amíantos* (283), used only four times in the NT. Literally, it means *undefiled, unsoiled*. Figuratively, in a religious and moral sense, *pure*; thus, of persons who are *pure, spotless* (Heb. 7:26); of things *unspoiled, undefiled, pure* (James 1:27); of an inheritance *beyond the reach of decay or change* (1 Pet. 1:4); of marriage *intact, pure* (Heb. 13:4) (Friberg).

²⁹⁴ Heb. 7:26 - separated from sinners: Jesus, our great High Priest, was human in every aspect except this – He and He alone was untainted by sin. He had no sin nature, and He never once committed an act of sin or engaged in a sinful thought or attitude. Literally, He exists "having been separated" (perfect passive *participle* of *chōrizō*, 5563) "from the sinners." All other men, including Mary his mother (notwithstanding the [dogmatic proclamation of Pope Pius IX in 1854](#)), were and are part of the category of "the sinners." Jesus alone, of all mankind, existed and exists "having been separated from the sinners." See also 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22.

²⁹⁵ Heb. 7:26 - exalted above the heavens: Jesus ascended up into heaven (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:1-2, 9-11; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 6:19-20; 8:1; 9:24). There He serves as our Great High Priest (Heb. 7:24-8:2; 9:11-12, 24-28; 10:11-12). He will not embark upon His reign as King until He returns to earth, which is the venue for His reign, and His Father has made His enemies a footstool for His feet (Psa. 110:1-3, 5-7; Heb. 10:12-13).

²⁹⁶ Heb. 7:27 - to offer up sacrifices: Priests were to offer daily sacrifices (Ex. 29:38-46). Provision was made for the priest to offer sacrifices for his own sins (Lev. 4:3-12). Every Day of Atonement the High Priest was to offer a sin offering for himself and for his household (Lev 16:6-10).

G 3 His successful offering of only one sacrifice: because this He did once for all ²⁹⁷ when He offered up Himself. ²⁹⁸

E 3 Why the Messianic Son could be a sacrifice 7:28

G 1 The imperfection of high priests under the Law: {28} For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, ²⁹⁹

G 2 The superiority of the high priest under God's oath: but the word of the oath, ³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Heb. 7:27 - once for all: Christ's sacrifice was a "once for all" sacrifice. Roman Catholics teach that Christ's offering of Himself on Calvary was the bloody sacrifice. They argue, incorrectly, that the Eucharist is the "unbloody sacrifice of Christ." They state the following:

The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory." ¹⁹⁰ [Footnote 190 documents these statements as follows: Council of Trent (1562) *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, c. 2: DS 1743; cf. *Heb 9:14,27.*] (All emphases were in the original text.)

They insist that Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and the oft-repeated Eucharist are "one single sacrifice." But that is saying more than Christ or the Apostles or the writer of Hebrews ever said or meant. This text states that Christ's sacrifice was a "once for all" sacrifice. There is no further need of a sacrifice for sin, whether "bloody" or "unbloody." (For documentation of the incorrect Roman Catholic belief, see ["The Sacrament of the Eucharist"](#) paragraph 1367.)

"Once for all" translates the single Greek word *ephápax* (2178), used only five times in the NT. Paul used it in a similar way in Rom. 6:10 ("He died to sin *once for all*"); and the writer of Hebrews used it the same way all three times – "He did *once for all* when He offer up Himself" (Heb. 7:27); "He entered the holy place *once for all* having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12); and "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*" (Heb. 10:10). Paul used the word once in a slightly different sense, "He appeared to more than five hundred brethren *at one time*" (1 Cor. 15:6).

²⁹⁸ Heb. 7:27 - offered up Himself: Christ "gave Himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2); Christ ... "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God" (Heb. 9:14); Christ, "having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). There is another, equally true sense, in which Christ was passive – "so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:28). The active agent in this latter passage is probably God the Father – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

²⁹⁹ Heb. 7:28 - For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak: Literally, "For the Law appoints men as high priests having weakness" "Weakness" is the noun *astheneia* (769). In Heb. 4:15 we learned that High Priest Jesus was able to sympathize with our human frailties (see the footnote there), yet He had no sin. In Heb. 5:2 we saw that all merely human high priests are "beset with" or surrounded with weakness. Jesus, however, unlike Aaron and other high priests, had no need to offer sacrifices for sin for Himself (Heb. 5:3; Heb. 7:26-27). The writer will momentarily argue (Heb. 7:28) that God's oath, which came after the Law, authorized (Jesus the) Messianic Son – literally – "into the age (aiōn, 165) having been made perfect" (or complete). Jesus, unlike the many human priests appointed under the Law, possessed no weakness. Mortality? Yes. Weakness? No.

³⁰⁰ Heb. 7:28 - but the word of the oath: Here the writer refers to the psalmist's record of Yahweh's oath as recorded in Psalm 110:4, "The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" The writer's point is that "the word of the oath" ... "appoints a Son" So Jesus as [Melchizedekan](#) priest is also God's Son. How can that be?

It cannot be emphasized enough that all of Psalm 110 is Messianic. According to Christ Himself, David wrote this psalm. Jesus asked the Pharisees (Matt. 22:41) a leading in question in Matt. 22:42, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" The Pharisees correctly answered, "*The son of David*" (Matt. 22:42). Jesus probed

- H 1 Its occurrence after the Law: which came after the Law,
- H 2 Its appointment of the Messianic Son: *appoints* a Son,³⁰¹
- H 3 The perfection of the Messianic Son: made perfect³⁰²
- H 4 The perpetual perfection of the Messianic Son: forever.³⁰³

D 7 The better ministry of the better priesthood 8:1-6

further (Matt. 23:43-44, quoting Psalm 110:1), “Then how does David in the Spirit call him ‘Lord,’ saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet’”? Jesus concluded with a cryptic question, which the Pharisees were unable or unwilling to answer, “If David calls him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?” (Matt. 23:45). The answer, of course, is that the Messiah was both descendant (“son”) of David, and at the same time, David’s Adonay “Lord” – co equal with Yahweh and Creator of the Universe.

My point here is four-fold: (1) That Jesus attributed Psalm 110 to David; (2) That Psalm 110 in its entirety is a Messianic psalm; (3) That Jesus’ sonship is connected with His being the Messiah; (4) And that the word of the oath (Psalm 110:4) came after the Law, and thus superseded the Aaronic provisions of priesthood in the case of Jesus, who, upon God’s oath, has been appointed Eternal Priest according to the classification of Melchizedek.

³⁰¹ Heb. 7:28 - *appoints* a Son: The reader must supply the understood word “appoints.” There is no article before the word “Son.” So, literally, supplying the necessary verb, the text reads, “But the word of the oath, the one after the Law, (appoints) Son into the age having been made complete.” The writer of Hebrews referred to Psalm 110:4 when he wrote the words, “the word of the oath ... appoints Son” Yet, the word “Son” is never uttered in Psalm 110:4, which reads, “The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” So how is the writer of Hebrews justified in designating Jesus, the Messiah, as “Son” (of God) when in fact the designation “Son” did not appear in Psalm 110:4? I believe there is an appropriate explanation.

First, it cannot be emphasized enough that all of Psalm 110 is Messianic. Of the seven verses of Psalm 110, six of them (Psa. 110:1-3, 5-7) refer to the Messiah’s role or office of conquering King. That is indisputable. The seventh and remaining verse, Ps. 110:4, refers to the Messiah’s designation as eternal Priest after the classification of Melchizedek. So I ask again, how can Jesus the Eternal [Melchizedekan](#) Priest be designated as “Son” when that designation does not occur in Psalm 110:4, and indeed does not occur anywhere in Psalm 110?

The answer is that Jesus’ sonship of God the Father is connected, not with His eternal pre-existence, but with His existence in time as the Messiah, the Son of David. Because the writer of Hebrews quoted from perhaps the most Messianic of all psalms (Psalm 110), he assumed his readers would know that the Messiah, whether viewed as Priest or as King, had an inherent “Father-Son” relationship with God by virtue of his being the son of David, with whose anointed descendants God had promised a unique “Father / Son” relationship. This relationship is connected with God’s promise to David and his descendants as recorded in 2 Sam. 7:14.

To further illustrate, the first time Jesus is referred to as God’s “Son” in the book of Hebrews is in Heb. 1:2. But three verses later, in Heb. 1:5, the writer documents Jesus’ Sonship by quoting from Psalm 2:7, where the Father addresses the Messiah, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” Immediately thereafter, the writer quotes 2 Sam. 7:14, “I will be a Father to him and he shall be a son to Me”

I challenge the reader to find any reference to Jesus’ being the Son of God which cannot also be linked with His being the Anointed (Messianic) Son of David, and thus also the Son of God. See, for example, Matt. 3:16-17; 16:28-17:5; Mark 1:9-11; 9:1-8; Luke 3:21-22; 9:27-36; John 1:29-34.

³⁰² Heb. 7:28 - made perfect: Literally, “having been made complete,” the perfect passive [participle](#) of *teleiōō* (5048). Jesus has been made complete or perfect in the senses (1) of being the High Priest who is the Messianic Son, descended from David, rather than being merely a Levitical high priest; (2) of being appointed by an oath rather than by a mere stipulation of the Law; (3) of having no weakness; (4) of being authorized by oath *after* the giving of the Law, which oath *trumps* the Law; (5) and finally, of being Messianic Son “into the age,” meaning, “forever.” Aaronic high priests could only serve in time as long as they were alive. But Jesus, because He has been resurrected, and by virtue of Yahweh’s oath, fulfills an eternal high priesthood.

³⁰³ Heb. 7:28 - forever: I.e., “into the age.” “Age” is *aiōn* (165). The author used this word in Heb. 1:2, 8; 5:6; 6:5, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; Heb. 9:26; 11:3; 13:8, 21. He used it twice in Heb. 1:8; 13:21 for a total of 15 X.

- E 1 Our possession of the heavenly high priest: {1} Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, ³⁰⁴ 8:1a
- E 2 The better position of the heavenly high priest – seated at the right hand of the throne of God: who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne ³⁰⁵ of the Majesty in the heavens, ³⁰⁶ 8:1b
- E 3 The better tabernacle of the heavenly high priest 8:2

³⁰⁴ Heb. 8:1 - main point ... we have such a high priest: A main point, or perhaps *the* main point of the writer of Hebrews is that we Christians in the Church Age possess the ultimate High Priest (*archiereús*, [749](#)), Jesus. In the context of this letter, he was writing to professing Hebrew Christians, but we Gentile Christians also possess this High Priest.

³⁰⁵ Heb. 8:1 - throne: There is a throne (*thrónos*, [2362](#)) in heaven (Heb. 1:8; 4:16; 8:1; 12:2). This throne is referred to more often in the book of Revelation than in any other book (Rev. 1:4; 3:21; 4:2). John saw a rainbow (literally, “circle of light”) surrounding the throne. This rainbow (or halo) looked like an emerald in appearance (Rev. 4:3). John also saw 24 thrones encircling the throne. Seated on these thrones were 24 elders (Rev. 4:4). John saw and heard lightning and thunder emitting from the throne (Rev. 4:5). John saw seven lamps burning before the throne (Rev. 4:5). These symbolized the seven spirits of God. There was a something like a sea of glass before the throne (Rev. 4:6). In the center and around the throne were four living creatures (Rev. 4:6). It is apparently God who sits on the throne (Rev. 4:9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10). John saw, in the midst of the throne and the four living beings, and in the midst of the elders, a lamb standing, as if slain, possessing 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the 7 spirits of God (Rev. 5:6; 7:17; 12:5). John saw a great multitude standing before the throne (Rev. 7:9, 15). John saw angels standing around the throne (Rev. 7:11). This throne apparently resides inside God’s temple (Rev. 7:15; 16:17). John saw a golden altar of incense before the throne (Rev. 8:3). The 144,000 will sing a new, unlearnable song before the throne (Rev. 14:3). The 24 elders and four living creatures will worship God on the throne because He has judged [the Great Prostitute](#) (Rev. 19:4). John heard a voice from the throne urging all God’s slaves to praise Him (Rev. 19:5). One day there will be a “Great White Throne” and one sitting upon it, from whose face heaven and earth will flee away (Rev. 20:11). We are not told where this throne will exist. The dead, small and great, will stand before this throne (Rev. 20:12). Later, John heard a loud voice from the throne announcing that the tabernacle of God is among men (Rev. 21:3). Evidently this throne was situated within New Jerusalem, which John saw descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:2). The One sitting on the throne announced He was making all things new (Rev. 21:5). On the throne in New Jerusalem God and the Lamb will be jointly seated (Rev. 22:1, 3). A river of water of life will flow from this throne (Rev. 22:1), and there will no longer be any curse (Rev. 22:3).

³⁰⁶ Heb. 8:1 - who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens: Subscribers to [Covenant Theology](#), along with other nondispensational scholars, and even [Progressive Dispensationalists](#), attempt to persuade us that Christ is now reigning as King at the right hand of the Father. But that is not the point the writer of Hebrews makes. His point is that Jesus, the *High Priest*, is seated at the right hand of God. This is consistent with his opening statement, in which he declared in part, that after the Messianic Son “had made purification of sins [a priestly act], He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). This is also consistent with the message recorded by David in Psalm 110:1 (see also Heb. 1:13) “The LORD says to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” Jesus is not presently *reigning* over His kingdom – He is *waiting* for His kingdom. That Messiah is not presently ruling over His enemies is reinforced by the prediction of Psalm 110:2, “The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies.’” Jesus’ rule as King will not begin until He has returned to earth and has taken up His throne on Mt. Zion, Jerusalem. Presently, Jesus actively serves as *High Priest* at the right hand of the Father, where “...He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

To assert that Jesus is presently reigning as Davidic King from heaven is unwarranted by the facts. He is not. He is ministering as Melchizedekian High Priest, and insofar as His kingdom is concerned, He is patiently waiting at the right hand of the Father until such a time as His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet (Psa. 110:1; Heb. 1:13). That has not yet happened, for Jesus has not yet returned to earth, and His enemies are in rampant and vocal rebellion against God and His Anointed King (Psa. 1:1-3). The nation of Israel cannot even build its own Temple on its own Temple Mount because it has been usurped by a Muslim shrine and a mosque. Furthermore, the vast majority of [Israelis](#) do not acknowledge Jesus is their King. Please don’t tell me Jesus is presently reigning as Davidic King!

- G 1 The minister of the sanctuary: {2} a minister in the sanctuary³⁰⁷
8:2a
- G 2 The minister of the true tabernacle: and in the true tabernacle,³⁰⁸
8:2b
- G 3 Pitched by the Lord, not by man: which the Lord pitched, not
man. 8:2c
- E 4 The better gifts and sacrifices of the heavenly high priest 8:3
 - G 1 The appointed function of every high priest: {3} For every *high priest* is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices;
 - G 2 The need for Jesus to offer something: so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.³⁰⁹
- E 5 The better tabernacle of the heavenly high priest 8:4-5
 - G 1 If the high priest Jesus were on earth, He would not qualify as priest 8:4
 - H 1 The earthly hypothesis: {4} Now if He were on earth,
 - H 2 The non-priestly conclusion: He would not be a priest at all,

³⁰⁷ Heb. 8:2 - a minister in the sanctuary: "minister" is *leitourgós* ([3011](#)), used only in Rom. 13:6; 15:16; Php. 2:25; Heb. 1:7; 8:2. Strictly, it refers to one who performs public service. In the NT, it refers to one who performs the will of God by serving others (Friberg). In the NASB, it is translated "minister(s)" 4X; and "servants" 1X. "Sanctuary" is the neuter plural of *hágion* ([39](#)), and could probably better be translated "holy things" up in heaven, the abode of God. The term refers to the entire area or areas of which "the true tabernacle" is the focal point.

³⁰⁸ Heb. 8:2 - and in the true tabernacle: More literally, Heb. 8:2 reads, "a minister of the holy things and of the true tent...." Even more literally, the text reads "and of the tent, the true one" "Tabernacle" is *skēnē* ([4633](#)). The KJV popularized the use of the word "tabernacle," as a translation of *skēnē*, but in reality the word refers simply to a tent, or perhaps booth, a portable dwelling place. The word is in contrast to a fixed, permanent dwelling place.

Stephen used this word to refer to Israel's tabernacle, the tent that God's presence filled in the early part of Israel's history. He called it "the tabernacle (tent) of testimony" (Acts 7:44). The writer of Hebrews referred to this same [Israeli](#) tabernacle (tent) in Heb. 8:5; 9:2, 3, 6, 8, 21. He referred to the temple as the modern-day form of the early tabernacle (tent) in Heb. 13:10. But in Heb. 8:2; 9:11, the writer of Hebrews referred to the true tabernacle (tent) up in heaven, the greater and more perfect tabernacle (tent), of which the earthly tabernacle (tent) was but a model. In Rev. 13:6, John heard the Beast (the Antichrist) blaspheming God, His name, and His tabernacle (tent). In Rev. 15:5 John saw the temple of the tabernacle (tent) of testimony in heaven opened. This must be the same tabernacle (tent) to which the writer of Hebrews referred in Heb. 8:2; 9:11.

In one of the most poignant and humbling references in all the Bible, after the creation of the New Earth, John heard a voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle (tent) of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them" (Rev. 21:3). God will leave His permanent dwelling place in heaven and come and dwell with man in New Jerusalem upon New Earth forever! How touchingly condescending can God be? He loves us so much He will leave His permanent home and come "camping" with us humans forever here upon New Earth! Unbelievable!

³⁰⁹ Heb. 8:3 - this high priest also have something to offer: The writer does not go on to spell out what Jesus has to offer. He does not because he has already done so. In Heb. 7:27 "He offered up Himself."

- H 3 The reason – the Law has already specified those who are to offer the gifts: since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;
- G 2 The earthly tabernacle and its paraphernalia are merely a copy and shadow of the heavenly things 8:5
- H 1 The statement of the truth: {5} who serve ³¹⁰ a copy ³¹¹ and shadow ³¹² of the heavenly things,
- H 2 The documentation of the truth: 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 ³¹³ WHICH WAS

³¹⁰ Heb. 8:5 - who serve: The priests the writer alluded to in 8:4 offer gifts, but in so doing, actually only serve a tabernacle or temple that is but a copy of the real temple up in heaven (8:5).

³¹¹ Heb. 8:5 - copy: The word is *hupodeigma* ([5262](#)), used only six times in the NT. In John 13:15, Jesus gave His followers an *example* to follow; in Heb. 4:11, the writer spoke of a negative *example* to avoid; in Heb. 8:5 the earthly tabernacle or temple is a *copy* of the original temple up in heaven; in Heb. 9:23 the tabernacle and its vessels Moses cleansed with blood were *copies* of the things in the heavens; in James 5:10, James urges his readers to take the prophets as an *example* of suffering and patience; and in 2 Pet. 2:6, God made the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah a negative *example* of the consequences coming for those who live ungodly lives.

In Hebrews, the writer used the word once as meaning an *example* (4:11). But twice he used it in the sense that the earthly tabernacle and its vessels were *copies* of the real temple in heaven (8:5; 9:23). So his usage employed both uses of the word – *example* and *copy*.

³¹² Heb. 8:5 - shadow: *skia* ([4639](#)) is used sparingly – seven times in the NT. Six times it is translated “shadow,” and once, “shade.” It refers, (1) literally, to the shadow or shade of an object which blocks out the sunlight (Mark 4:32 - the *shade* of a tree; Acts 5:15 - the *shadow* of Peter); (2) metaphorically, (a) to the *shadow* of death (Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79); (b) to that which is a shadowy copy of a greater reality (i) which either already exists (the earthly tabernacle was a *shadow* of the temple up in heaven - Heb. 8:5), (ii) or else is to come (food, drink, festival, new moon, and Sabbath day are a “*shadow* of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ” - Col. 2:16-17); (the Law has “a *shadow* of the good things to come and not the very form of things” - Heb. 10:1). As is readily seen in Heb. 8:5, the words “copy” (*hupodeigma*, [5262](#)) and “shadow” (*skia*, [4639](#)) are used as synonyms. The earthly tabernacle or temple that the Levitical priests served was not the genuine article. It was a *copy* or *shadow* of the temple up in heaven. The writer’s point was to demonstrate that the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly temple was a superior ministry to that of the Levitical priests serving in the *copy* and *shadow* of the heavenly temple.

³¹³ Heb. 8:5 - PATTERN: translates *tupos* ([5179](#)), used only here in Hebrews. According to the [Friberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), *tupos* means

(1) literally *blow*; by metonymy, the impression made by the blow *mark, trace* (JN 20.25); as a figure formed by blows of the hammer or chisel *image, statute* (AC 7.43); as a small-scale form designed to be copied *pattern, model* (AC 7.44; HE 8:5); (2) figuratively; (a) of teaching or writing *form, content* (RO 6.17); (b) of behavior *example, pattern, model* (1 TI 4.12); (c) as a person or event serving as a prophetic symbol to prefigure a future person or event (RO 5.14).

It is this last definition that most people think of when they hear the English word “type” (a transliteration of the Greek word) or “typology.” As can be seen here, however, the writer of Hebrews was using the word *tupos* to depict a *model* that God produced for Moses to observe and copy when constructing the tabernacle or tent to be used by [Israelis](#) in their worship of Yahweh. Both the model that God showed Moses and the tabernacle he would later construct were but a copy (*hupodeigma*, [5262](#)) or shadow (*skia*, [4639](#)) of the real temple up in heaven.

To be candid, Romans 5:14 is the *only* NT Scripture that uses the word *tupos* in the way we typically think of the word – as a prophetic symbol of a future event or person. There Paul identified Adam as a type or prophetic symbol of Christ who was to come. In five of the fifteen instances, *tupos* is used to depict something or someone who

SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

E 6 The better ministry of the heavenly high priest 8:6

G 1 Jesus' more excellent ministry: 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry,³¹⁴

G 2 His mediation of a better covenant: by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant,³¹⁵

G 3 Based on better promises: which has been enacted on better promises.³¹⁶

C 5 The Mediator of a Better Covenant 8:7 - 9:28

D 1 The [New Covenant](#) implies the inferiority of the old 8:7-13

E 1 The rationale of the covenants 8:7

G 1 The imperfection of the first covenant: {7} For if that first

serves or is to serve as an "example(s)" and is so translated in the NASB (1 Cor. 10:6; 1 Th. 1:7; 1 Tim 4:12; Tit. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3).

Here is a list of each of the fifteen uses of *tupos* ([5179](#)) in the NT and the NASB translation: John 20:25 - "imprint" (of the nails); John 20:25 - "place" (of the nails); Acts 7:43 - "images"; 7:44 - "pattern"; 23:25 - "form"; Rom. 5:14 - "type"; 6:17 - "form" (of teaching); 1 Cor. 10:6 - "examples"; Php. 3:17 - "pattern"; 1 Th. 1:7 - "example"; 2 Th. 3:9 - "model"; 1 Tim. 4:12 - "example"; Tit. 2:7 - "example"; Heb. 8:5 - "pattern"; 1 Pet. 5:3 - "examples."

³¹⁴ Heb. 8:6 - a more excellent ministry: "More excellent" translates the comparative form of the single Greek adjective *diáphoros* ([1313](#)), used only 4X in the NT. Twice it appears in the normal adjectival state, where it is translated in its normal meaning, "different." Paul used it to speak of spiritual gifts that "differ" (Rom. 12:6), and the writer of Hebrews used it to speak of "various" washings (Heb. 9:10). Twice, the writer of Hebrews used the word in its comparative form: Heb. 1:4, where he states that Jesus inherited a "more excellent" name; and Heb. 8:6, where he states that Jesus has obtained a "more excellent" ministry. The two words "more excellent" are a bit of an overtranslation. "More important" or the single word "superior," (as in NIV; NetBible) or even "better" would do just as well. At least "more excellent" includes the comparative aspect. The point of the writer is that Jesus, as the [Melchizedekan](#) priest, had a superior ministry to that of the Aaronic priests.

The word "ministry" translates *leitourgia* ([3009](#)). Strictly speaking, the word refers to public service performed by an individual. But in the NT it is confined to religious service. That can indicate priestly service (Luke 1:23; Heb. 8:6; 9:21) or Christian service or ministry (2 Cor. 9:12; Php. 2:17, 30) (adapted from [Friberg](#)). In Heb. 8:6 it refers to the priestly service of Jesus, the [Melchizedekan](#) High Priest, which is superior to that of the Aaronic high priests.

³¹⁵ Heb. 8:6 - a better covenant: "better" is the comparative of the adjective *kreíttōn* ([2909](#)). This word is used 19X in the NT, 13X in Hebrews alone (Heb. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24)! "Covenant" is *diathēkē* ([1242](#)), used far more often (17X) in Hebrews than in any other NT book. Often (9X) the reference is to the [New Covenant](#) (Heb. 7:22; 8:6, 8, 10; 9:15; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20); less often, to the [Old Covenant](#) (Heb. 8:9; 8:9; 9:4; 9:4, 15, 20); and twice to a covenant in general (Heb. 9:16, 17). Here in Heb. 8:6, the writer refers to the [New Covenant](#), as he develops that thought in Heb. 8:7-13. The [New Covenant](#) is superior to the [Old Covenant](#) both in that it is unconditional and eternal, and, as the writer here indicates, based on better promises.

³¹⁶ Heb. 8:6 - better promises: "promises" is the plural of *epangelía* ([1860](#)). The promises of the [First Covenant](#) were primarily material and certainly conditioned upon obedience (Deut. 28:1-68). The promises of the New Covenant were unconditional and primarily spiritual (Isa. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:31-34), though there were certainly material overtones.

covenant had been faultless,³¹⁷

G 2 The presence of the [New Covenant](#) substantiates its superiority: there would have been no occasion sought for a second.³¹⁸

E 2 The declaration of the [New Covenant](#) 8:8-9

G 1 Israel's guilt a reason for its inception: {8} For finding fault with them,³¹⁹ He says, 8:8a

G 2 The nature of the [New Covenant](#) 8:8b

H 1 It is future: "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING,"³²⁰

H 2 It is initiated by God: SAYS THE LORD,

H 3 It will be unconditional: WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT³²¹

³¹⁷ Heb. 8:7 - if that first *covenant* had been faultless: As the NASB translation correctly reveals, the word "covenant" does not appear in the Greek text. It has been supplied by the translators because the writer was, indeed, referring to the "[First Covenant](#)," the one mediated by Moses at Mt. Sinai. "Faultless" translates the adjective *ámemptos* (273), elsewhere in the NT typically translated with some form of the word "blameless" (Luke 1:6; Php. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Thess. 3:13). The adjective is used (1) with regard to people as being *blameless, faultless, without guilt* (Luke 1:6); (2) with regard to things as being *faultless, without defect* (Heb. 8:7) ([Friberg](#)).

The writer is not suggesting that the [First Covenant](#) was in any sense faulty or had defects. How could it? It was the Word of God! Paul states that "the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12). Rather, the position of the writer of Hebrews is consistent with the fact that the Law was never designed to make people righteous. To the contrary, it was designed to show people how unrighteous they actually were. It was and is impossible for any human (save Jesus) to keep the Law perfectly. Since the [First Covenant](#) could not guarantee righteousness, it was, in that sense, inferior to the [Second Covenant](#), which *did* guarantee righteousness.

³¹⁸ Heb. 8:7 - a second: I.e. a [second covenant](#), the one also known as the [New Covenant](#).

³¹⁹ Heb. 8:8 - For finding fault with them: I.e., with the [Israelis](#) as a nation, for not being willing or able to keep the [First Covenant](#). The translation of NetBible at this point, "But showing its fault" translates the Greek text as referring to the First Covenant, rather than to the [Israeli](#) people. But the Greek text is *autous*, which is a plural relative pronoun. The NetBible's translation is not, therefore, likely accurate, unless the editors are correct in giving credence to the textual variant *autoi* (see their footnote). "Finding fault" translates the [present](#) tense masculine singular [participle](#) *mémphomai* (3201). The singular number corresponds with the singular number of the verb *légō* (3004), "He [i.e. God] says." So, in the judgment of the NASB editors, the text correctly reads, "For finding fault with them [i.e., the [Israelis](#)], He says" I agree with the NASB. Even granted the textual variant the NetBible accepts, the reasoning of the editors is too convoluted.

³²⁰ Heb. 8:8 - BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING: The writer of Hebrews begins quoting from Jer. 31:31-34. This opening phrase is from Jer. 31:31. The phrase means that from the writer's point of view the timing of this New Covenant was still future. Jesus, as the Messiah, ratified the New Covenant with His death. But the New Covenant still has not been implemented for the Nation of Israel as a whole. Those "days are [still] coming."

³²¹ Heb. 8:8 - WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT: The writer of Hebrews continues to quote from Jer. 31:31. The [New Covenant](#) was first promised in Jer. 31:31-34. The [New Covenant](#) is identified in connection with the arrival of the Messiah (Redeemer) in Isa. 59:20-21. There it is designated simply as "My covenant." Jesus and the NT writers referred to the [New Covenant](#) in Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24. The [New Covenant](#) is implied in Heb. 8:7. Jesus ratified the [New Covenant](#) with His death (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). The [New Covenant](#) was promised in conjunction with the presence of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 59:21). The [New Covenant](#) was *partially* implemented in conjunction with the arrival of the Holy Spirit upon the Church on the Day of

H 4 It will be directed toward Israel and Judah

J 1 WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

J 2 AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;³²²

G 3 The reason for the [New Covenant](#) 8:9

H 1 It cannot be like the old, conditional covenant: {9} NOT LIKE THE COVENANT

J 1 Made with the ancestors: WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS³²³

J 2 Made during the Exodus: ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;

H 2 Israel's failure

J 1 They continued not in the old covenant: FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,³²⁴

Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-33). It will be *more fully* implemented when Christ establishes His kingdom here upon earth, headquartered in Jerusalem, [Israel](#) (Isa. 59:18-21).

³²² Heb. 8:8 - WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH: We members of Jesus' [Church](#), which consists of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, have benefitted from the [New Covenant](#), which had spill-over blessings to non-Jewish people. But we must never forget that the [New Covenant](#) was promised initially to the House of Israel and the House of Judah. That can never be altered, nor will it ever be altered. The [New Covenant](#) is first and foremost a covenant with [Israel](#) / Judah, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms combined.

"Amillennial interpreters take the reference to 'the house of Israel' and 'the house of Judah' as 'symbolical of the healing of every human breach and the reconciliation of all nations and persons in Christ, the seed of Abraham in whom all the peoples of the earth are blessed and united . . .'" (Thomas Constable, quoting Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983, p. 300.) Constable continues, "Premillennialists see no warrant, in the texts involved, to take these references as anything but literal." Thus, [Replacement Theology](#) wrongfully insists that the [Church](#) has become the "[New Israel](#)" and has forever replaced [Israel](#) as the focal point of God's blessing and His dealing with the world. That is simply untrue. According to the terms of the [New Covenant](#) (Jer. 31:31-34) and God's statement that [Israel](#) will never cease to exist (Jer. 31:35-37) the view of [Replacement Theology](#) is Biblically indefensible.

³²³ Heb. 8:9 - NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS: The writer continues to quote from Jer. 31:32. In Jer. 31:32 Yahweh was referring to the [Covenant](#) He made with Israel through the mediation of Moses at Mount Sinai. The record of Yahweh's initial overture was recorded in Exod. 19:1-6. The subsequent narrative in Exodus recorded Israel's acceptance of the [covenant](#), its ratification, and its terms. Yahweh's point in Jer. 31:32, repeated in Heb. 8:9, is that the [New Covenant](#) He would make with the House of Israel and the House of Judah would be unlike the [First Covenant](#). The [First Covenant](#) was conditional and ineffective regarding righteousness; the [New Covenant](#) would be unconditional and effective regarding righteousness.

³²⁴ Heb. 8:9 - FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT: The writer of Hebrews paraphrases Jer. 31:32. This has been the cyclical history of [Israel](#) down through the ages. For a time the people would generally keep God's [Covenant](#). But after a time they would begin to disobey it, and would even worship false gods. The [First Covenant](#) had no inherent power to provide an obedient heart and obedient actions. The point of Yahweh in Jer. 31:32 was that [Israel's](#) failure to keep the [First Covenant](#) necessitated His arranging a [New Covenant](#), one that would achieve obedient hearts and actions among the people of [Israel](#).

J 2 God was forced to stop paying attention to them:
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM,³²⁵ SAYS
THE LORD.

E 3 The essence of the [New Covenant](#) 8:10-12

G 1 God's statement of intent regarding a [New Covenant](#): {10}
"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE"³²⁶
8:10a

G 2 The object of God's [New Covenant](#): WITH THE HOUSE OF
ISRAEL³²⁷

G 3 The time of God's [New Covenant](#): AFTER THOSE DAYS,
SAYS THE LORD:³²⁸

G 4 God's action 8:10b

H 1 Putting His laws in their minds: I WILL PUT MY LAWS

³²⁵ Heb. 8:9 - AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM: "I did not care" is *ameleō* (272), to ignore, neglect, or pay no attention to. It is used sparingly – in Matt. 22:5 ("paid no attention"); 1 Tim. 4:14 ("neglect"); Heb. 2:3 ("I did not care"). *Ameleō* does not mean "discard", but "ignore". God's neglecting of [Israel](#) demonstrates the conditional nature of the [Mosaic Covenant](#). God's blessings were conditioned on [Israel's](#) obedience. This conditional nature is most clearly demonstrated in one of Moses' final speeches to [Israel](#), found in Deut. 27:15 - 28:68.

³²⁶ Heb. 8:10 - FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE: The writer of Hebrews quotes from Jer. 31:33. He is speaking of the [New Covenant](#). The Hebrew text, characteristically, is repetitious and almost laborious, for the sake of emphasis. "That I will make" is the future tense of *diatithēmai* (1303), which occurs 7X in the NT (Luke 22:29; Luke 22:29; Acts 3:25; Heb. 8:10; 9:16, 17; 10:16). Its most basic meaning is to "ordain." NASB typically translates it "made" or "make," but translates it "granted" and "grant" in Luke 22:29. Yahweh's point in Jer. 31:33 was that He would one day in the future implement His New Covenant with [Israel](#). He has not yet done so, for [Israel](#), for the most part, is in disbelief, continuing to reject Jesus of Nazareth as its Anointed King. One day that will change (Zech. 12:10-13:1), for God will have granted to the people of the nation of [Israel](#) hearts of flesh.

³²⁷ Heb. 8:10 - WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL: The writer of Hebrews, a NT writer, continues to quote from Jer. 31:33. He correctly records that the [New Covenant](#) was made by Yahweh with the nation of [Israel](#). The writer will not make any application to his readers until Heb. 9:14. Any present-day explanation of the [New Covenant](#) that assumes the [Church](#) is the [New Israel](#) or that ignores the eternal existence of the Nation of [Israel](#) is not a Biblical explanation, and should be repudiated. God made the [New Covenant](#) with [Israel](#). It can be partially, but not fully fulfilled in the [Church](#). Its complete fulfillment can only be in the nation of [Israel](#). The NT writers understood that. Why cannot a great many present-day scholars understand that? Why do they persist in their animus against Israel? (See a [review](#) of the book, *Future Israel*.)

³²⁸ Heb. 8:10 - AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: "After those days" simply continues the prophecy of the New Covenant begun in Jer. 31:31, and repeated in Heb. 8:8, "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD The NetBible, in its footnote on Jer. 31:33, "in Heb 'after those days,' declares, "Commentators are generally agreed that this refers to the return from exile and the repopulation of the land referred to in vv. [31:] 27-28 and not something subsequent to the time mentioned in v. [31:] 30. This is the sequencing that is also presupposed in other new covenant passages such as Deut. 30:1-6; Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:24-28."

If I understand the editors correctly, and commentators in general, they are saying that the [New Covenant](#) was implemented with [Israel](#) at her return from the Babylonian exile. My response is that nothing could be further from the truth. The [Israeli](#) people did not *then*, nor do they *yet*, have God's law written within them and on their hearts. They *still* do not know the LORD, for they do not know His Messiah, and consequently, their sins are not forgiven (Isa. 59:20-21). The fulfillment of this prophecy is *still in the future* for Israel.

INTO THEIR MINDS,

H 2 Putting His laws in their hearts: AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. ³²⁹

H 3 Being a God to them: AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,

G 5 [Israel's](#) automatic response 8:10c-11

H 1 Being a people to God: AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ³³⁰ 8:10c

H 2 Not needing teaching concerning God: {11} "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH 8:11

J 1 Object: EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,

J 2 Object: AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER,

J 3 Content: SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'

H 3 Having a nation-wide knowledge of God: FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, ³³¹

³²⁹ Heb. 8:10 - I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS: God guarantees to give [Israel](#) minds and hearts to follow Him. This demonstrates the unconditional nature of the [New Covenant](#). It is vastly superior in this regard to the [Old Covenant](#). This [New Covenant](#) and what it will accomplish is included in many OT Scriptures: Isa. 59:20-21; 61:4-8; Jer. 31:31-37; 32:36-41; Ezek. 11:19-20; 16:60-63; 36:22-28; 37:24-28. There are also several NT references to the [New Covenant](#): Luke 22:20; Rom. 11:26-27; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:15-17, 29; 13:20. Though Jesus ratified this [New Covenant](#) by His death, and though the [New Covenant](#) was initially fulfilled in the Church on the Day of Pentecost, it is not yet been fulfilled for [Israel](#). And, if the truth were stated, it has not even been fulfilled completely in the Church. Who in the Church today always has God's laws on their minds and written on their hearts? No one, at least not consistently. So the *complete* fulfillment of the [New Covenant](#) even for the Church awaits the Church's glorification, including glorified, immortal, sinless, resurrected or translated bodies (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:50-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:7-9).

³³⁰ Heb. 8:10 - AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE: This is a promise to the nation of [Israel](#). The writer of Hebrews is quoting Jer. 31:33. One can state that Gentile believers in Christ also become God's people and He becomes their God. That is inarguable (John 17:20-21; Eph. 2:11-22). But that is not the point of the writer of Hebrews here. His concern is with the [New Covenant](#) in relation to [Israel](#), its original beneficiaries (Heb. 8:8, 10). This will be initially fulfilled in the Nation of [Israel](#) in connection with Christ's [Millennial Kingdom](#). It will be completely fulfilled in regard to the Nation of [Israel](#) in connection with the [Eternal Kingdom](#) centered in [New Jerusalem](#) upon [New Earth](#) (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

³³¹ Heb. 8:11 - FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME: This statement of the writer of Hebrews, quoting from Jer. 31:34, forever lays to rest the faulty view that the [New Covenant](#) for [Israel](#) was in any sense fulfilled by the [Israeli](#) return from Babylonian exile. The prophecy of Jeremiah clearly states that *all* the people of [Israel](#), from the least of them to the greatest, will know God. No [Israeli](#) will need to exhort another [Israeli](#) to know the LORD, for *all* of them will know Him. That has never yet happened in the entire history of the nation of [Israel](#). The fulfillment of this prophecy awaits a yet future time in [Israel's](#) yet-to-be-written history when *all* [Israelis](#) know Yahweh, and *all* know and submit to His Anointed Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. That will happen when [Israelis](#) repent of having killed their Messiah (Zech. 12:10-13:1). When Jesus, the Messiah returns, He will purge out all the rebels from within [Israel](#) (Ezek. 20:33-38). Only those [Israelis](#) who truly know Yahweh and His Messiah will be left to inhabit the land of [Israel](#) in the [Millennial](#) Earth. Then, truly, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:25-27; Isa. 59:20-21).

J 1 Least important: FROM THE LEAST

J 2 Most important: TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

G 6 God's pardon 8:12

H 1 Dispensing mercy despite their unrighteousness: {12}
"FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR
INIQUITIES,"³³²

H 2 Not remembering their sins: AND I WILL REMEMBER
THEIR SINS NO MORE."³³³

E 4 The inference from the [New Covenant](#) 8:13

G 1 The [New Covenant](#) makes the first obsolete: {13} When He
said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete.³³⁴

G 2 The old covenant is ready to disappear: But whatever is

³³² Heb. 8:12 - FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES: The writer of Hebrews continues to quote from Jer. 31:34, and thus far, his only application of the [New Covenant](#) has been to the house of [Israel](#) and the house of Judah (Heb. 8:8, 10). He will not even make any application to his readers until Heb. 9:14. God can only be merciful (*hileōs*, [2436](#)) to the iniquities (plural of *adikia*, [93](#), used only here in Hebrews; more literally, "unrighteousnesses") of [Israelis](#) because Jesus, through His own blood, has paid the Divinely-revealed death penalty (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:3) for those iniquities (Heb. 9:12-14).

³³³ Heb. 8:12 - AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE: The writer continues his quotation of Jer. 31:34. In typical Hebrew poetic synonymous parallelism, God promised Israel a time would come when He would be merciful to Israeli iniquities, which was to say, in a different way, but with a similar meaning, He would not remember their sins (plural of *hamartia*, [266](#), used 25X in 24 verses in Hebrews) any more. "Remember" is the 1st person [Aorist](#) passive of *mimnēskō*, [3403](#), used 4X in Hebrews). The idea is not that God suddenly develops a faulty memory, but that, because Jesus will have paid the penalty for sins, [Israelis](#)' sins will no longer be retained in His memory. That is, their sins will no longer be taken into account, for the penalty will have been paid. If the reader is wondering, of course, this also applies to us believing Gentiles in this age. But that is not the point of the writer at this stage of his development of the [New Covenant](#). He is still talking about how the [New Covenant](#) affects the house of [Israel](#) and the house of Judah (Heb. 8:8, 10).

³³⁴ Heb. 8:13 - He has made the first obsolete: The verb could be translated simply, "He has made the first old." "He has made obsolete" translates the Perfect tense of the verb *palaioō* ([3822](#)), which word is used only four times in the NT – Luke 12:33, where it refers to money belts which do not "wear out"; Heb. 1:11, which predicts that the earth and the heavens "will become old" like a garment; and twice in Heb. 8:13, which describes God as having "made obsolete" the first ([Mosaic](#)) [Covenant](#). It can be argued that the verb *palaioō* simply means "to make old", particularly since the associated noun, *palaios* ([3820](#)) is usually translated, simply, "old." However, both words seem to imply not merely old, but old to the point of becoming defective, so that, for example, old garments are not really fit to wear any more. Furthermore, in Heb. 8:13, the writer uses another word for old ("growing old") = *geraskō* ([1095](#)) (from which we derive our English word "gerontology" or "geriatric"). This word is used only in John 21:18 and Heb. 8:13. Since it also means "grow old" the translators could hardly use the same translation for two different Greek words. In the first occurrence here in Heb. 8:13, the Perfect tense conveys the conviction of the writer of Hebrews that, when God through Jeremiah announced the [New Covenant](#), at that point He rendered the [Mosaic](#) [Covenant](#) "old," with results remaining to the present time. Nevertheless, [Israel](#) continued to operate under the [Old](#) [Covenant](#) for centuries. With the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, reinforced by the subsequent imposition of a Muslim mosque and a Muslim shrine on the Temple Mount, making a Jewish temple with Jewish sacrifices unimaginable, it has been impossible for [Israel](#) or anyone to keep the [Old](#) [Covenant](#).

For the Church today, there is no point in attempting to keep the [Old](#) [Covenant](#) if it has been superseded by the [New](#), despite the interpretation, for example, of D. Thomas Lancaster in his book, *Restoration: Returning the Torah of God to the Disciples of Jesus*, published by First Fruits of Zion.

becoming obsolete³³⁵ and growing old³³⁶ is ready to disappear.³³⁷

D 2 The order of worship under the old covenant 9:1-10

E 1 The basis of worship: {1} Now even the first *covenant*³³⁸ 9:1

G 1 Rules for worshiping: had regulations of divine worship³³⁹

G 2 A place for worshiping – the tabernacle: and the earthly sanctuary.³⁴⁰

³³⁵ Heb. 8:13 - But whatever is becoming obsolete: “becoming obsolete” is the Neuter [Present](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *palaiōō* (3822). Literally, the phrase could be translated, “But whatever is being caused to grow old” The [present](#) tense denotes whatever, including the [Old Covenant](#), that is in the *process* of growing old. The Passive voice indicates that something or someone outside the [Old Covenant](#) is causing it to grow old. As a matter of fact, it is God who is doing so by virtue of His prediction of a [New Covenant](#). This is the second time *palaiōō* appears in this verse.

³³⁶ Heb. 8:13 - and growing old: “growing old” translates the Neuter [Present](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *gērāskō* (1095). The phrase could be translated “and being caused to age.” *Gērāskō* is used only 2X in the NT – here and in John 21:18, where Jesus predicts something unpleasant will happen to Peter when he ages. Obviously *gērāskō* is a synonym for *palaiōō*.

³³⁷ Heb. 8:13 - is ready to disappear: Literally, “is near (*engūs*, 1451) to disappearance (*aphanismós*, 854).” *Aphanismós* is used only here in the entire NT. The writer is not suggesting that the [First Covenant](#) has completely disappeared, but its vanishing point is on the horizon and drawing near. Perhaps, if he were writing after A.D. 70 and the destruction of the Jewish temple, he would have declared that the [First Covenant](#) had, indeed, vanished. In that event it would have been impossible to observe the Law in any complete sense, since the sacrificial system embodied in the Law would have become impossible. But we cannot know that he would have said that – it is only speculation on our part. As I have already indicated, there are those who state that it is incumbent upon even Gentile members of the church to observe as much of the Law as they can. (See D. Thomas Lancaster in his book, *Restoration: Returning the Torah of God to the Disciples of Jesus*, published by First Fruits of Zion.) In light of the Divinely-planned and caused disappearance of the [First Covenant](#), it is difficult to justify their view.

³³⁸ Heb. 9:1 - Now even the first *covenant*: The writer of Hebrews does not use the word “covenant,” but that is what he is discussing. In Heb. 9:1-10, he discusses the symbols and venues of worship under the [First Covenant](#). He does so in order to point out the limitations of worship under the [First Covenant](#). Subsequently he will speak of the superiority of Christ’s sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-14) and the ways in which [New Covenant](#) is superior to the [First Covenant](#) (Heb. 9:15-28).

³³⁹ Heb. 9:1 - had regulations of divine worship: The writer, in Heb. 9:1, introduced two topics – “regulations of divine worship,” by which he evidently referred to the regulations for priestly access into the different compartments of the sanctuary (the outer and inner tabernacles) (Heb. 9:6-10) – and “the earthly sanctuary,” by which he evidently meant the different symbolical items of furniture within the tabernacle (Heb. 9:2-5). He discussed the two topics [in reverse order](#) to the order in which he introduced them in Heb. 9:1.

³⁴⁰ Heb. 9:1 - and the earthly sanctuary: The word “earthly” translates the neuter gender of the adjective *kosmikos* (2886), used only here and in Titus 2:12. The word translated “sanctuary” is the neuter gender of the adjective *hágios* (40), which appears 19X in 17 verses in Hebrews. The neuter gender appears 16X. Frequently it refers to the Holy Spirit. Since “Spirit,” *pneûma* (4151), is neuter in gender, the adjective “holy” is in agreement: Heb. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 10:15.

Elsewhere, the neuter gender of *hágios* refers to “the holy places” or “holy things” (plural) up in heaven (Heb. 8:2); the earthly “holy place” (singular, translated “sanctuary” in NASB) (Heb. 9:1); “the holy places” or, better, the holy things” (plural) (NASB, “the holy place”), the designation for the holy items in the outer tabernacle or tent (Heb. 9:2); a separate compartment or tabernacle/tent behind the second veil termed “the Holy of Holies” (NASB), more literally “Holy Places of Holy Places” (both plural), or perhaps, “Holy Things of Holy Places,” or perhaps best, “the Holy Things of the Holy Things” (Heb. 9:3); “the holy place” (NASB), (literally, “the holy places” or “holy

E 2 The tangible articles in the worship 9:2-5

G 1 The tabernacle proper: {2} For there was a tabernacle³⁴¹
prepared, the outer one,³⁴² 9:2a

G 2 The Holy Place or sanctuary, having furniture 9:2b

H 1 The candlestick: in which *were* the lampstand³⁴³

H 2 The table: and the table³⁴⁴

H 3 The sacred bread: and the sacred bread;³⁴⁵

things” – plural) Heb. 9:8; “the holy place” (NASB), literally, “the holy places” or, perhaps better, “the holy things” (up in heaven) (Heb. 9:12); “a holy place” (NASB), literally, “holy places” (plural) (Heb. 9:24); “the holy place” (NASB), literally, “the holy places” or “the holy things” (plural) (Heb. 9:25; 10:19; 13:11).

The use of the neuter gender of *hágios* (40) indicates that the writer had in mind physical items (tents and pieces of furniture) rather than people (the priests or worshipers). The use of the plural of *hágios* (40) indicates the multiple holy items of holy furniture (in the two different tent compartments separated by the veil). The writer’s use of the singular (rather than the plural) of *hágios* (40) in Heb. 9:1 indicates that he was thinking of the earthly “holy place” or “holy thing” (“sanctuary”) as a single unit.

³⁴¹ Heb. 9:2 - tabernacle: *skênê* (4633), “tent,” generally, a portable dwelling place for nomads, pilgrims, herdsmen, etc. (Friberg). In this case, the tent first constructed at Mt Sinai (Ex. 26:1-37) as the dwelling place of God, replete with symbolical items of furniture (Ex. 26-31).

It was natural for the writer to use the tabernacle for his lesson, rather than the temple, because he proceeded to associate this sanctuary with the giving of the Old Covenant at Sinai (cf. 8:5). Furthermore, he had been using Israel’s experiences in the wilderness to challenge his readers. (Constable)

³⁴² Heb. 9:2 - the outer one: Literally, “the first.” The writer describes the first tent (compartment) a priest would enter if he were serving worshipers.

³⁴³ “9:2 - lampstand: *lychnia* (3087). Typically, a metal stand, sometimes with multiple arms on which were placed burning lamps. Lampstands were used domestically (Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33), in worship settings (Heb. 9:2); and frequently in the Apocalypse to represent John’s vision of Christ (Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1); once to represent the witness of a church (Rev. 2:5); and once to represent the future two witnesses (Rev. 11:4; Zech. 4:11-14). The lampstand to which the writer of Hebrews referred was described in Exod. 25:31-40. It was constructed of pure gold, having provisions for seven lamps, fueled by olive oil.

According to Zech. 4:1-7, the lampstand which the prophet was shown symbolized the power of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing God’s work. The seven lamps also symbolized the all-seeing eyes of Yahweh which range to and fro throughout the earth (Zech. 4:10). The lampstand in the tabernacle was obviously related symbolically to the references to the lampstand with seven lamps in Revelation 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1). Perhaps there is a symbolism related to Christ as the “Light of the World” (John 8:12; 9:5), but there is no way the OT worshipers could have known that. For the OT worshipers, the lampstand revealed that God is light (1 John 1:5). Perhaps they could have deduced that they, His worshipers, were to reflect that light to others (Ex. 19:5; Matt. 5:14-16; Luke 12:35; Php. 2:15; 1 John 1:6).

³⁴⁴ Heb. 9:2 - table: *trápēdza* (5132) refers to the “Table of Showbread,” (literally, “Bread of the Presence”) revealed in Exod. 25:23-30. The table was made of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold. It was outfitted with four gold rings, through which acacia carrying poles, overlaid with gold, could be inserted. There were assorted dishes, pans, jars, and bowls associated with the table and used in connection with pouring out drink offerings.

³⁴⁵ Heb. 9:2 - sacred bread: The word Greek word for “sacred” does not appear here. More literally, “and the setting before (*próthesis*, 4286) of the breads.” Twelves loaves (or large, flat pieces) of unleavened bread were to be kept on the table at all times, “set before” the LORD, changed every Sabbath. This bread is termed “the bread of the Presence” (Ex. 25:30). (Literally, this text reads, “You are to set upon the table bread of faces toward My face continually.” This meant that the bread was to be in the presence of Yahweh continually. Other cultures expected their (false) god to eat the bread, but this was never the case with Israel. According to Edersheim, both Israeli and

H 4 The name of the compartment: this is called the holy place.³⁴⁶

G 3 The Holy of Holies, having furniture 9:3-5a

H 1 Set off by the second veil: {3} Behind the second veil³⁴⁷ 9:3

J 1 A second tent: there was a tabernacle³⁴⁸

J 2 Its name: which is called the Holy of Holies,³⁴⁹

H 2 The golden altar of incense: {4} having a golden altar of incense³⁵⁰ 9:4a

H 3 The golden ark of the covenant, which included: and the ark of the covenant³⁵¹ covered on all sides with gold,

Christian interpreters have deemed that this bread was an emblem of the Messiah.

In my view, at the least, the Israeli people would have understood that, just as bread was the most common food staple of their day, so Yahweh was to be their most basic sustenance. The twelve loaves would have signified the twelve tribes (or clans) of Israel. For the Christian with NT revelation, Jesus, our Messiah, has revealed that He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48). All who come to Him will never hunger, nor will they ever thirst, and all who believe in Him are granted eternal life (John 6:35-40, 44-51).

³⁴⁶ Heb. 9:2 - this is called the holy place: Literally, “this is called holy places” or perhaps “holy things” (the adjective *hāgīos*, [40](#), appears in the [Nominative](#) Neuter Plural). The meaning is that this first compartment contains multiple holy things or holy places.

³⁴⁷ Heb. 9:3 - Behind the second veil: Literally, “After, moreover, the second spreading downwards” (*katapétasma*, [2665](#), a literal description of a veil or curtain or drape – Friberg). A veil or curtain separated the “holy places or holy things” of the first compartment from the worshipers out in the courtyard. A second veil or curtain *diathēdiathēdiathē* separated the first compartment from the holiness of the second compartment.

³⁴⁸ Heb. 9:3 - there was a tabernacle: Only one word appears here in the Greek text, *skênē* ([4633](#)), “tent.” The NASB almost universally translates this word as “tabernacle,” perhaps a holdover from the AV. We would know it today as a “tent.” All of the ensuing description was designed to underscore for the reader the grandeur of the religious symbols of the [First Covenant](#).

³⁴⁹ Heb. 9:3 - which is called the Holy of Holies: Literally, “which is called ‘Holy Places of Holy Places’” or perhaps, ‘Holy Things of Holy Things’ (*hāgia hagiōn* – both [40](#)). The first member is the [Nominative](#) Neuter Plural Adjective – “Holy Places or Things”; the second member is the Genitive Neuter Plural Adjective – “of Holy Places or Things.” This is the name of the Second Compartment of the Tent or Tabernacle.

³⁵⁰ Heb. 9:4 - having a golden altar of incense: This statement has puzzled expositors because it sounds here as though the altar of incense lies [within the Holy of Holies](#) (Ex. 30:6; 40:3-5; 21-27). In the original description of the altar of incense (Exod. 30:1-10), the altar of incense was within the Holy Place. The conundrum can be solved, however, by interpreting the author of Hebrews to say that the [Altar of Incense was closely associated with the Veil](#) that separated the two compartments. Clearly, in Exod. 30:1-10, both items of furniture are closely associated with one another. The Golden Altar of Incense undoubtedly symbolizes the prayers of the saints ascending upwards to God (Psalm 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4).

³⁵¹ Heb. 9:4 - and the ark of the covenant: “ark” is *kibōtós* ([2787](#)), meaning “box.” In the NT it refers to “(1) the sacred box in the innermost shrine of the tabernacle or temple ark, chest (Heb. 9:4); (2) the boxlike boat built by Noah ark, ship (Matt. 24:38)” (Friberg); “covenant” is *diathēkē* (1242), referring to the binding, bilateral and thus conditional legal [contract between God and Israel](#) mediated by Moses at Mt. Sinai. This sacred box was covered

9:4b

J 1 The golden pot of manna: in which was a golden jar holding the manna,³⁵²J 2 Aaron's rod: and Aaron's rod which budded,³⁵³J 3 The tablets of the covenant: and the tables of the covenant;³⁵⁴H 4 The mercy seat with cherubim: {5} and above it *were* the cherubim of glory³⁵⁵ overshadowing the mercy seat;³⁵⁶

inside and out with gold. The specifications for the ark of the covenant were recorded in Ex. 25:10-16. The three items mentioned later in this verse were placed before the ark of the covenant under normal circumstances (Ex. 16:32-34; Num. 17:10-11), but were probably [carried in the ark](#) when the people moved from place to place. Atop the ark was a lid consisting of two golden cherubim. God's presence dwelt between the two cherubim. In this way the Holy of Holies was God's residence, and the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat atop was the specific place of His presence with the people of Israel. For Holy, transcendent God to condescend to dwell among mortal, sinful people required that the people be as holy morally and as clean physically as possible. Thus the multitude of laws, including even dietary laws found in Leviticus 11:1-20:27.

³⁵² Heb. 9:4 - golden jar holding the manna: When the people of Israel, having been rescued by God from Egypt, complained in the desert about not having food, He sent them manna each day except on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:1-7). God decreed that a representative sample be kept as a visible memorial of His provision (Ex. 16:32-36). At some point in Israel's history, the Ark of the Covenant and the Golden Jar of Manna were lost.

³⁵³ Heb 9:4 - Aaron's rod which budded: The historical incident is as follows: Korah, a son of Levi, along with Dathan, Abiram, and On, all sons of Reuben, rose up in rebellion against Moses and Aaron and their authority. The rebels were supported by 250 leaders of the congregation (Num. 16:1-3). Moses challenged Korah and his fellow Levitical supporters to bring censers with fire and incense and appear before the LORD, who would reveal who were His chosen Levitical priests (Num. 16:4-11). Dathan and Abiram refused to answer Moses' summons (Num 16:12-14). The next day 250 Levitical supporters of Korah appeared with censers, incense, and fire, along with Aaron, who brought his censer with fire and incense (Num. 16:15-22). Yahweh instructed Moses to order the nation to get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:23-30). As soon as Moses had finished instructing the people, the ground under the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and all those who belonged to Korah opened up, and all those people and their families fell, screaming, into Sheol. The ground closed up after them. And fire spewed forth from the LORD and burned the 250 men with their censers (Num. 16:31-35). The next day the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses because of the deaths on the previous day. God sent a plague, and 14,700 people died on account of their support for Korah (Num. 16:41-50). Through Moses the LORD instructed twelve tribal leaders to bring a rod representing his tribe. On the tribe of Levi would be written the name of Aaron. The rod of the chosen tribe who were to be priests, Yahweh would cause to bud. Moses deposited these twelve rods before the LORD in the tent of testimony (Num. 17:1-7). The next day, the rods were retrieved from the tent and showed to the people. Only Aaron's rod budded. Yahweh instructed Moses to put Aaron's rod "before the testimony" (i.e., the ark) as a sign to quell the grumbings of the people so they would not die before the LORD (Num. 17:8-11). This whole incident reaffirmed God's choice of Aaron, of the sons of Levi, to be the only father of all the priests.

³⁵⁴ Heb. 9:4 - and the tables of the covenant: "tables" is *pláx* ([4109](#)), used only in 2 Cor. 3:3 and Heb. 9:4. In secular literature, it can refer to anything flat, such as a mesa, plain, or the sea, or something smaller, such as a rock. In the NT it is only used in the sense of a flat table or tablet. In this case, the two flat tables or tablets of stone on which God inscribed the ten commandments (Ex. 25:16; 31:18; 32:15; Deut. 9:9, 11, 15; 10:3-5).

Of the covenant: "covenant" is *diathêkê* ([1242](#)), a binding legal agreement. In this case it refers to the bilateral, conditional [First Covenant](#) God gave to Israel mediated by Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:1-31:17).

³⁵⁵ Heb. 9:5 - cherubim of glory: "[cherubim](#)," plural of *cheroub* ([5502](#)), is a transliteration of the plural of the Hebrew *kerûb* ([3742](#)). [Cherubim](#) guarded the way to the tree of life after man had sinned (Gen. 3:24).

Satan, God's arch enemy, was evidently a privileged [cherub](#) who, before he sinned, walked among the stones of

9:5a

G 4 The parenthetical desire of the author to refrain from detail: but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.³⁵⁷ 9:5b

E 3 The ritual of the worship 9:6-10

G 1 The activities of the priests 9:6-7

H 1 The ordinary priest 9:6

J 1 Entrance only into the Holy Place: {6} Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle³⁵⁸

J 2 His service to God: performing the divine worship,

fire on the holy mountain of God, presumably the heavenly Mount Zion, on which God's temple and throne are situated (Ezek. 28:14). After the [cherub's](#) sin, God cast him out of the heavenly mountain (Ezek. 28:16).

Models of two two-winged [cherubim](#) adorned the mercy seat, the covering of the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:17-22). God's presence would dwell there, enthroned above the [cherubim](#) (Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Psa. 80:1; 99:1). Solomon constructed two gigantic [cherubim](#) to preside in the holy of holies in his temple. These [cherubim](#) were each about fifteen feet tall, and, with wings outstretched, were each about fifteen in breadth (1 Kings 6:23-28).

Evidently [cherubim](#) can have different forms. Ezekiel saw a vision of the glory of God sitting upon a mobile platform mounted on intersecting, multi-directional wheels, powered by four angels called [cherubim](#) (Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:14, 20). Each [cherub](#) possessed four wings. Each possessed the faces of a man, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. They could tolerate fire and lightning. Ezekiel saw these same "wheel [cherubim](#)" escorting the glory of God out of Jerusalem (Ezek. 10:3-11:23).

Evidently the writer of Hebrews associated the "[cherubim](#) of glory" with the glory of God as witnessed by Ezekiel and which dwelt in conjunction with the model [cherubim](#) on the mercy seat in the tabernacle and later the temple.

³⁵⁶ Heb. 9:5 - overshadowing the mercy seat: "overshadowing" is the [Present](#) Active Neuter Plural [Nominative](#) of *kataskiádzō* (2683), used only here in the NT. The cherubim, with the attendant glory of God, were continually overshadowing the mercy seat.

"The mercy seat" is the neuter singular adjective, accusative case (here, with corresponding article) *to hilastêrion* (2435), used only here and in Rom. 3:25 (without the article), where it is translated "a propitiation." [Friberg](#): "with focus on the means by which sins are forgiven *having atoning power, bringing about reconciliation*; substantively *to hilastêrion means of forgiveness* (Rom. 3:25); by metonymy, with a focus on the place where sins are forgiven by means of the blood from an atoning sacrifice placed there *place of forgiveness, place where God forgives sins*, often translated *mercy seat* (Heb. 9:5)." A related word, the noun *hilasmós* (2434), "propitiation" is used but twice in the NT – 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

The mercy seat was authorized and somewhat explained in Exodus 25:17-22. It was the place where, once a year (Heb. 9:7), on the Day of Atonement, burning incense on the altar of incense, the high priest brought in blood from a bull to sprinkle it with his finger on the east side of the mercy seat seven times. This was to atone for his sins and those of his household (Lev. 16:11-14). Then he was to bring in the blood of a goat which had been killed as a sin offering for all the people of Israel (Lev. 16:15-17). The fact that the offerings had to be made annually underscores the fact that the blood atoned (*kâphar*, 3722) for (i.e. "covered") (Lev. 16:6, 11, 16), but did not permanently pay for the sins of the people of Israel. Indeed, how could the blood of bulls and goats ever pay for human sin? Only the priceless blood of Christ could permanently pay for human sin (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:11-14)!

³⁵⁷ Heb. 9:5 - we cannot now speak in detail: He could have, of course, but he chose not to. It was not his purpose to expand on the glories of the First Covenant, its mediator, its priests, and its provisions for worship, but rather upon the glories of the New Covenant, its Mediator, its High Priest, and its provisions for worship.

³⁵⁸ Heb. 9:6 - the outer tabernacle: Literally, "the first (*prōtos*, 4413) tent (*skênê*, 4633)."

H 2 The high priest 9:7

- J 1 Entrance into the Holy of Holies only annually: {7} but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year,³⁵⁹
- J 2 Entrance only with blood: not without *taking* blood,³⁶⁰
- K1 Offered for himself: which he offers for himself³⁶¹
- K2 Offered for the people: and for the sins of the people³⁶² committed in ignorance.³⁶³

G 2 The significance of the ritual 9:8-10

- H 1 The significance is by Divine design: {8} The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, 9:8a
- H 2 Access to the Holy of Holies had then not yet been revealed: that the way into the holy place³⁶⁴ has not yet

³⁵⁹ Heb. 9:7 - once a year: On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The procedures on the Day of Atonement are specified in Lev. 16:1-28. The time of the annual Day of Atonement is specified in Lev. 16:29-34; 23:27-28.

³⁶⁰ Heb. 9:7 - blood: Blood is all-important in human existence. God would not permit the sons of Israel or foreigners associated with them to eat blood (Lev. 17:10). "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" (Lev. 17:11). "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

³⁶¹ Heb. 9:7 - which he offers for himself: The high priest had to offer sacrifices to purify both himself and his family, i.e. the other priests of his Aaronic clan who were assisting in worship on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-14).

³⁶² Heb. 9:7 - and for the sins of the people: This sacrifice on the Day of Atonement is outlined in Lev. 16:15-19.

³⁶³ Heb. 9:7 - committed in ignorance: Forgiveness of sins committed in ignorance was the intention of the provision for sacrifices in the OT (Lev. 4:1-2; 5:17-19; Heb. 5:1-3). Under the Law, deliberate rebellion was punishable by death. Such sins included adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest (Lev. 20:11-12, 14), homosexuality (Lev. 11:13), bestiality (Lev. 20:15-16) murder (Lev. 24:17), idolatry (Deut. 17:2-5), practicing necromancy or dealing in the occult (Lev. 20:27), blaspheming the name of Yahweh (Lev. 24:16), child sacrifice (Lev. 20:1-3), cursing one's father or mother (Lev. 20:9), and willfully, persistently defying one's parents (Deut. 21:18-21). See also the punishment for Achan and his family (Josh. 7:25), for Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-3), for the man who picked up wood on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36).

³⁶⁴ Heb. 9:8 - the way into the holy place: literally, "the way into the holy places" or perhaps better, "holy things." There is a textual problem here. The translators of the KJV, following the [Textus Receptus](#), based on the later, so-called "[Majority Text](#)," rendered this phrase, "the way into the holiest of all." But this is a later reading, and probably not genuine. The writer of Hebrews has carefully distinguished between the first compartment (The Holy Place), which he referenced in Heb. 9:2, 6) and the second compartment (The Holy of Holies), which he described in those terms only once (Heb. 9:3), but also referenced in Heb. 9:7. [Thomas Constable](#) opted for a metaphorical approach: "The 'holy place' is God's throne-room in heaven, and the 'outer [lit. *first*] tabernacle' refers to the earthly tabernacle and its successors, namely, the temples in Israel (v. 8)." But where is the justification for that? The author

been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,³⁶⁵ 9:8b

H 3 The tabernacle system prefigured the present situation 9:9-10

J 1 The prophetic symbolism: {9} which is a symbol for the present time.³⁶⁶ 9:9a

J 2 The sacrifices could not perfect: Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,³⁶⁷ 9:9b

knows what he is talking about. He never addresses a heavenly sanctuary until Heb. 9:11. Here is how I interpret the author's statement in Heb. 9:8: In the Israeli Tabernacle (Tent) / Temple, ordinary priests could enter the First Compartment where "The Holy Things" were situated. Only High Priests could enter the very presence of God in the Second Compartment, wherein were situated "The Holy Things of the Holy Things." As long as there exists the First Compartment, wherein are situated "The Holy Things," the average (non-priestly) worshiper cannot even enter it! The unstated but implied logic: If believers cannot even enter the Holy Place, as long as it exists, how on earth will they ever have the opportunity to enter the Holy of Holies?

³⁶⁵ Heb. 9:8 - while the outer tabernacle is still standing: Literally, "while the first tent is still standing." As long as the legal system (the Mosaic Law) is still intact, and the First Tent (the compartment we usually call "The Holy Place") is still in existence, the barriers that prevent believers from even accessing the Holy Place are still in place and even minimal access into God's presence has not yet been disclosed.

³⁶⁶ Heb. 9:9 - which is a symbol for the present time: The word "symbol" (*parabolê*, [3850](#)) is "a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration; (1) in the Gospels *parable, illustration* (Matt. 13:3); (2) in Hebrews a prophetic *symbol, type, figure* (Heb. 9:9)" ([Friberg](#)). This word is used fairly extensively in the Synoptic Gospels, and, elsewhere, only twice in Hebrews. In Heb. 11:19 it is translated in the NASB as "type."

"...for the present time," literally, "for the time, the one having come to be." The author proceeds to define "the present time" as one in which "both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience" (Heb. 9:9). This seems to me to be resounding testimony that, at the time of writing, the Israeli Temple still stood, and gifts and sacrifices were still being offered there. The OT sacrificial system always had an imperfectibility about it, but it was something that God prescribed, here, we are told, *as a parable, or type or symbol*. The writer is about to contrast the present system (Heb. 9:18-23), still in operation in his day, with the perfect sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:11-14, 24-28), which ratified the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15-17). He will continue to expand on these subjects in Heb. 10:1-18, making a profound application in Heb. 10:19-39.

³⁶⁷ Heb. 9:9 - which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience: literally, "which are unable, according to conscience (*suneidêsis*, [4893](#)), to make complete the one worshiping." The gifts and sacrifices offered under the Mosaic Covenant in the Tabernacle / Temple could never completely satisfy the consciences of those on behalf of whom they were offered.

I am reminded of Duane Thomas, a talented, but not-too-cooperative running back for the Dallas Cowboys, who once played in a Super Bowl back in the 1970's. When asked by a reporter how it felt to play in the "ultimate game," he responded, "If it's the 'ultimate game,' why will they play it again next year?" The reporter was speechless. Similarly, the worshiper knew that, even though he was following God's laws, there was no ultimate sacrifice that he could make that would finally, and permanently satisfy his conscience that full atonement had been made for all-time. Only the perfect and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus could accomplish that. We know that looking backwards from this side of the cross. But before Jesus' death, no worshiper could have his conscience completely satisfied. There would always have to be another offering another time. The debt would never be paid off.

The point, however, that the writer of Hebrews makes here, is that the gifts and sacrifices offered under the Old Covenant were ineffective because they were merely external (Heb. 9:10). They could not affect the heart of the worshiper. The writer of Hebrews mentioned several times the importance of having a clean conscience (Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18).

J 3 The components of the ritual 9:10a

K1 Meats: {10} since they *relate* only to food ³⁶⁸K2 Drinks: and drink ³⁶⁹K3 Dippings: and various washings, ³⁷⁰K4 Fleshly rules: regulations for the body ³⁷¹J 4 The purpose of the ritual – to be used only until God would make all things good: imposed until a time of reformation. ³⁷² 9:10b

³⁶⁸ Heb. 9:10 - food: the plural of *brōma* (1033), literally, “foods.” This word is universally translated as “food” or “foods” in the NASB. This generic word for foods encompasses the meat offerings and the bread / flour offerings used in Old Covenant worship. The point of the writer is that foods were only externals. They could not affect the heart.

³⁶⁹ Heb. 9:10 - drink: the plural of *pōma* (4188), literally, “drinks,” used only here and in 1 Cor. 10:4. There were drink offerings in the OT (Ex. 29:40), and offerings that were mixtures of oil, wine, and grain flour (Num. 15:4-5, 6, 10). The point of the writer is that these were only externals. They could not affect the heart.

³⁷⁰ Heb. 9:10 - and various washings: The Greek text is *kai* (and) *diaphthorōis* (1313) (“different, diverse, of varying kinds” – Friberg) *baptismois* (909) (“a religious technical term related to ceremonial rites of purification by the use of water *act of dipping, immersion*; (1) of an inanimate object *washing* (Mark 7:4; possibly Heb. 6:2); (2) of a person *baptism* (possibly Heb. 6:2)”) (Friberg).

Diaphthoros is used elsewhere in the sense of “various” only in Rom. 12:6. We have already encountered it in the sense of “more excellent” or “superior” in Heb. 1:4 (the Messianic Son has a “more excellent” or superior name) and Heb. 8:6 (Jesus, our high priest, has “a more excellent” or superior ministry).

Baptismós is used only 3X in the NT: Mark 7:4, “washing”; Heb. 6:2, “washings,” and Heb. 9:10, “washings.” One can see how closely related this word is to the word *báptisma* (908). The latter noun is always ceremonial in nature when associated with water. In other words, water baptism is a ceremonial immersion. It accomplishes nothing spiritually, other than giving the participant a clear conscience because he has obeyed the command of our Lord (1 Pet. 3:21). It publicly symbolizes a believer’s identification with John and his message of repentance (Matt. 3:11) or with Jesus and His message (Matt. 28:19). The only baptisms which really accomplish something spiritually are Jesus’ baptisms of fire (Matt. 3:11-12) and the Spirit (Matt. 3:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:13). To posit water baptism as having the ability to accomplish regeneration, as Roman Catholics (Catechism, 1213, 1215, 1263, 1265, 1267, 1272, 1274, 1277) and some Protestants do, is to misinterpret the meaning and value of water baptism. There is no water on earth that can wash away my sins. Only the blood of Christ is powerful enough to do that (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:11-12, 13-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 18-19; Rev. 1:5).

³⁷¹ Heb. 9:10 - regulations for the body: literally, “regulations (*dikaíōma*, 1345) of the flesh (*sárx*, 4561).” On a literal level, *sárx* refers to the “meaty” as opposed to the skeletal or psychic part of a person or animal (1 Cor. 15:39). By synecdoche, it refers to the physical body as a whole (Acts 2:31) (meanings 1 and 2 adapted from Friberg). Here the emphasis seems to be that the ordinances of the First Covenant regulated the outer actions of a person, but they were not designed to, and thus could not, alter the heart of the person. In the New Covenant God promised to give the Jewish people hearts of flesh, not hearts of stone.

³⁷² Heb. 9:10 - imposed until a time of reformation: “reformation” is from *dióρθōsis* (1357), used only here in the NT. It sometimes has the sense of “setting straight,” as with a broken limb. It may refer to the process of establishing a new order. The “time of reformation” to which the writer refers began with Jesus’ ratification of the New Covenant with His death and resurrection. Through faith in Jesus, Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, in this Church Age are the initial beneficiaries of this New Covenant, originally promised to Israel (Jer. 31:31-37). During the Millennium, Israel as a nation will benefit from the New Covenant (Isa. 59:21-60:22; Rom. 11:25-27). Ultimately, all redeemed mankind will benefit (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

D 3 The Messiah's sacrifice as the foundation for the [New Covenant](#) 9:11-28

E 1 The Messiah as a high priest was His own sacrifice 9:11-15

G 1 The realm of His high priesthood 9:11

H 1 He became high priest of good things to come: {11} But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come,³⁷³

H 2 His entrance into a greater tabernacle: *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle,³⁷⁴

J 1 Not made by humans: not made with hands,

J 2 Not part of this world: that is to say, not of this creation;

G 2 The nature of His sacrifice 9:12

H 1 The type of blood

J 1 Not animal: {12} and not through the blood of goats and calves,³⁷⁶

³⁷³ Heb. 9:11 - But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come: Literally, "But when Christ, having appeared as high priest of the good things having come" So, with this sense – "the good things that have come" – NIV, ESV, and RSV translate.

The title "[Christ](#)" (*Christós*, [5547](#)) appears here without the article, emphasizing the quality of the noun, not the particularity. The title means, "Anointed One," almost always, in the NT, referring to the Ultimate Anointed Messianic Son of David, either in general, or specifically, in relation to Jesus of Nazareth. Half the time, in the book of Hebrews, as illustrated here, the title "Christ" refers to His High Priestly ministry (Heb. 5:5; 9:11, 14, 24, 28; 10:10). See also the footnote on "[Christ](#)" at Heb. 3:6.

"*as* a high priest" – Jesus was anointed by God at His baptism to be prophet, priest, and king. In His earthly life He served predominantly as prophet. With his sacrificial death, and with His ascension to the right hand of the Father, He served, and is presently serving as priest. When He returns to earth, having received His kingdom, He will rule as king upon earth. But the writer of Hebrews here is concerned about Messiah's having appeared ([Aorist Participle](#) of *paraginomai*, [3854](#)) as high priest (*archiereús*, [749](#)), a term that appears frequently in the four Gospels, Acts, and Hebrews, but nowhere else.

"of the good things to come" – literally, "of the good things having come" – meaning the changing economies that began with the Jesus' ratification of the [New Covenant](#) – specifically the [Church Age](#), the [Millennium](#) to follow, and the [Eternal State](#) in connection with [New Jerusalem](#) and [New Earth](#). With the arrival of the [Holy Spirit](#) at the beginning of the [Church Age](#) on the Day of Pentecost, the [New Covenant](#) has been partially, but not fully implemented.

³⁷⁴ Heb. 9:11 - through the greater and more perfect tabernacle: "Tabernacle" is *skênê* ([4633](#)), "tent." The writer refers to the "tent" or "temple" up in heaven (Rev. 13:6; 15:5; cf. Rev. 21:3).

³⁷⁶ Heb. 9:12 - not through the blood of goats and calves: Probably a reference to the sacrifices offered annually on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:1-28). "Goats" is the plural of *trágos* ([5131](#)), a male goat, used only 4X in the NT, only in Hebrews (Heb. 9:12, 13, 19; 10:4); "calves" is the plural of *móschos* ([3448](#)), referring to the young of cattle, of whatever sex. It is used 3X in Luke in the parable of the "Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:23, 27, 30); twice in Hebrews (Heb. 9:12, 19); and once in Rev. 4:7. Lev. 16:3 specified a "bull" (*par*, [6499](#)), but the Hebrew word lexically *may* refer to a young bull. However, when a *young* bull is specified in the OT, it seems to be termed "bull, son of cattle" (e.g. Ex. 29:1; Num. 7:27). Regardless, the writer of Hebrews is stating that when Jesus entered the holy places up in heaven, He did not use the inferior blood of sacrificial animals. He used His own blood as a means

J 2 But His own: but through His own blood,³⁷⁷

H 2 His entrance into the Holy of Holies: He entered the holy place³⁷⁸ once for all,³⁷⁹ having obtained eternal redemption.³⁸⁰

G 3 The efficacy of His sacrifice 9:13-14a

H 1 The stop-gap adequacy of animal sacrifice 9:13

J 1 The substances used

K1 The blood of goats: {13} For if the blood of goats

K2 The blood of bulls: and bulls³⁸¹

K3 The sprinkled ashes of a heifer: and the ashes

of access into the very presence of God!

³⁷⁷ Heb. 9:12 - but through His own blood: It seems self-evident that animal blood, of whatever specie, could never atone for human sin. Indeed, the root idea of the OT word for “atone” (*kāphār*, [3722](#)) is “to cover” (see Gen. 6:14). Animal blood could temporarily “cover over” human sin, but animal blood could never *pay* for human sin. At least the animal sacrifices conveyed these two ideas: (1) that sin is deadly, and can only be paid for by death; and (2) that God accepts a substitutionary payment. In the case of Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12-14; 6:1), He used His own infinitely valuable blood (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:11-12, 13-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 18-19; Rev. 1:5) to pay completely for human sin. Animal blood could never pay for human sin.

³⁷⁸ Heb. 9:12 - He entered the holy place: literally, “he entered once for all into the holy places” (or perhaps “holy things”). The writer is equating “the holy places” or “holy things” of Heb. 9:12 with the tabernacle or “tent” found up in heaven (Heb. 9:11).

³⁷⁹ Heb. 9:12 - once for all: This three-word English phrase translates the single Greek word *ephápax* ([2178](#)), used only in Rom. 6:10 (Jesus died to sin “once for all”); 1 Cor. 15:6 (Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brethren at “one time”); Heb. 7:27 (Jesus did this “once for all” when He offered up Himself); Heb. 9:12 (He entered the holy place “once for all” having obtained eternal redemption); and Heb. 10:10 (we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ “once for all”). In light of the statements about Christ’s death, it is incomprehensible to me that Roman Catholicism can offer an “unbloody,” “propitiatory” sacrifice of Jesus’ body and blood every time mass is celebrated (Council of Trent, [22nd Session](#), Chapter II).

³⁸⁰ Heb. 9:12 - having obtained eternal redemption: “having obtained” is the [Aorist Participle](#) of *heurískō* ([2147](#)). This verb is used 176X in the NT. Everywhere else in the NASB, except in 2 Cor. 11:12, where it is translated “regarded,” and here in Heb. 9:12, where it is translated “obtained,” it is translated with some form of the verb “to find.” We should not fear to translate it, “having found eternal redemption,” for that is what the text literally states.

“Eternal” is *aiō’nios* ([166](#)); and “redemption” is *lútrōsis* ([3085](#)), which appears only in Luke 1:68; 2:38; Heb. 9:12. Strictly speaking, the noun *lútrōsis* refers to a “loosing.” By extension it means, in an active sense, the act of providing a ransom or releasing from slavery or captivity. In a more passive and figurative sense, it speaks of the deliverance, freedom, or liberation secured. In Luke 1:68 and 2:38 deliverance is to be viewed as both spiritual and political liberation. Since the recipients of this letter were largely Israeli Christians, spiritual and political and bodily deliverance cannot be eliminated from the word here. Ultimately the eternal redemption Jesus found is to be all-encompassing (see Rev. 21:1-22:5).

³⁸¹ Heb. 9:13 - blood of goats and bulls: See the footnote on “not through the blood of goats and calves” at Heb. 9:12. Here, the writer of Hebrews specified “bulls.” Probably at Heb. 9:12 he understood “bull calves” for “calves” in Heb. 9:12. In other words, the two are synonymous.

of a heifer³⁸² sprinkling

J 2 The result obtained – sanctification to the purifying of the flesh: those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,³⁸³

H 2 The superior worth of the Messianic Son's sacrifice 9:14a

J 1 The superiority of the blood of Christ: {14} how much more will the blood of Christ,³⁸⁴

J 2 He offered Himself to God

K1 Through the Spirit: who through the eternal Spirit³⁸⁵

K2 His offering of himself, unblemished, to God: offered Himself without blemish to God,³⁸⁶

³⁸² Heb. 9:13 - the ashes of a heifer: In the OT Law, an unblemished, unbroken red heifer was to be sacrificed. The ashes were to be collected and mixed with water. The liquid concoction was to be used for sprinkling to remove impurity (Num. 19:1-10). This “ash-water” was to be used to purify those who were defiled through contact with a corpse (Num. 19:11-13). The purifying water was also to be used to purify everyone and every thing in a tent in which a person had died (Num. 19:14-19). The law of purification with the “ash-water” was summarized in Num. 19:20-22. The emphasis here is on purification from defilement. We must remember that death came as the result of human sin against God. So death defiles, just as sin defiles. We must also remember that God lived among the Israeli people with all their defilement. He made laws to protect the people and thus Himself from defilement, as much as possible. The point of the author of Hebrews is that, though the OT offerings and sacrifices could provide a temporary cleansing for defilement, only the blood of Christ could effectively cleanse the consciences of his readers and enable them to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14).

³⁸³ Heb. 9:13 - sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh: Under the old economy, the offering of the blood of goats and bulls cleansed the sins of the whole person. However, the ash-water of the red heifer was actually sprinkled on the bodies of those defiled by death (Num. 19:13, 19) and the tents and physical objects which had been defiled by death (Num. 19:17-18). This cleansing from contamination was as much for God's benefit as for the peoples' benefit (Lev. 11:44-45; 12:7; 14:11-18, 21-32; 15:13-15, 25-30. Note especially Lev. 15:31!)

³⁸⁴ Heb. 9:14 - how much more will the blood of Christ: If the blood of animals and the ash-water from a red heifer can in some manner contribute to the cleansing of the flesh (Heb. 9:13), how much more will the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:11-12, 13-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 18-19; Rev. 1:5) actually cleanse our conscience? The point of the author is that the sacrifices of the First Covenant only cleansed the externals. Only the great High Priest, who offered up his own life's blood, can bring about the cleansing of the inner person, the conscience and the heart.

³⁸⁵ Heb. 9:14 - who through the eternal Spirit: At His baptism, God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-34). This is when the God-Man Jesus became the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. Everything Jesus did from that point on He did in the power of the Spirit. It is no surprise that, in His supreme act as High Priest (Psalm 110:4), He offered Himself without blemish to God in the power of the Eternal Spirit. This reference to the “Eternal Spirit” is unique in Scripture (so [Constable](#)).

³⁸⁶ Heb. 9:14 - offered Himself without blemish to God: God's standard for sacrifices has always been animals without defect or blemish Lev. 1:3, 10; Deut. 17:1, etc. The God/Man Jesus of Nazareth, God's Anointed Prophet/Priest/King for the nation of Israel was God's Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:19). A question that has dogged theologians down through the years is this: Was Christ able not to sin (but could have), or was He not able to sin. In Latin the question was framed as, Was Christ “*posse non peccare*” (able not to sin) or was He “*non posse peccare*” (unable – not possible – to sin)? I hold that Christ was unblemished because He was *not*

G 4 The results of His sacrifice 9:14b-15

H 1 It can purge men's consciences: cleanse your conscience³⁸⁷
9:14b

J 1 From dead works: from dead works³⁸⁸

J 2 To serve the living God: to serve the living God?³⁸⁹

H 2 Jesus' death effected the working of the [New Covenant](#)
9:15

J 1 The Major Premise – Jesus is the Mediator of a [New Covenant](#): {15} For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant,³⁹⁰

able to sin. God had already performed the Divine experiment on the human race. He made the first man and his wife holy, without a sin nature, without the pull of the world. And yet, when confronted with the possibility of sinning, seduced by a malevolent but gifted deceiver, and though being *posse non peccare*, able not to sin, they sinned. That experiment has never had to be repeated. What I derive from that first experiment, and looking over the whole of human history is this – unless God makes it impossible for you to sin, you will sin. Jesus, being God-come-in-the-flesh, was unable to sin. Had he been merely “able not to sin,” I fear He would have. The first Adam was merely “able not to sin” – but he sinned. The second Adam was “not able to sin” – and He did not.

³⁸⁷ Heb. 9:14 - cleanse your conscience: “cleanse” is the future tense of *katharidzō* ([2511](#)), used in this letter in Heb. 9:14, 22, 23; 10:2. It can refer (1) to literal physical cleansing (Luke 11:39); (2) ritual cleansing (Acts 10:15); or (3) moral / spiritual cleansing, as it does here in Heb. 9:14 (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

The pronoun “your” is textually in dispute. The Greek text of the American Bible Society (4th Edition) opts for “our,” but neither reading materially affects the meaning of the text. “Our” is the more difficult reading, and thus, may be the correct reading.

“Conscience” is *suneidēsis* ([4893](#)), the moral awareness placed by God within each person, that which is the basis by which we make moral judgments as to what is right and wrong (Rom. 2:15). A conscience can only operate based on the knowledge it possesses. Faulty knowledge leads to a faulty conscience (see the references to a “weak conscience” in 1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12). Note, for example, the lengths to which God went to alter the knowledge base for Peter so he would not violate his conscience by accompanying and eating with “unclean” Gentiles (Acts 10:9-20, 28-29). A conscience can be “seared” (1 Tim. 4:2) or “defiled” (Tit. 1:15). Believers in Jesus who draw near to God through Him “with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” have their “hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience” (Heb 10:22). “Conscience” appears in this letter in Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18.

³⁸⁸ Heb. 9:14 - from dead works: Most individuals from Western Civilization believe that mankind, with a few exceptions, consists of “good people.” Those who don’t display goodness simply need to be better educated. And so most Western people perform what they perceive are “good works.” They perform these “good works” in churches, in volunteer organizations, in the political arena, and in society at large.

But God has an entirely different view of mankind, corrupted as we are by sin, the devil, and the world around us. From God’s point of view, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one” (Rom. 3:10-12). So from God’s point of view, all of our works are dead works. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9).

³⁸⁹ Heb. 9:14 - to serve the living God: Some years ago there was a frivolous movement that proclaimed, “God is dead.” It was actually the proponents of the view who were spiritually dead. God is frequently known as the “living God,” not some worthless idol or the pseudo god of a false religion. See, e.g. Deut. 5:26; Josh. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Ps. 42:2; Jer. 10:10; Matt. 16:16; Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:10; Heb. 3:12; 9:14.

³⁹⁰ Heb. 9:15 - the mediator of a new covenant: Jesus is the sole (1 Tim. 2:5) mediator (*mesitēs*, [3316](#)) of the [New](#) and “better” [Covenant](#) (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The idea of a mediator is that he is a neutral and trusted person “in the middle” (*mēsos*). In this case Jesus guarantees the fulfillment of a contracted obligation (adapted from

- J 2 The Minor Premise – His death pays for the transgressions under the First (Mosaic) Covenant: so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant,³⁹¹
- J 3 The Conclusion – Those called (under the terms of the [New Covenant](#)) receive eternal life with all its benefits: those who have been called³⁹² may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.³⁹³
- E 2 The Messiah's death was needed to put the [New Covenant](#) into effect 9:16-22
- G 1 The universal principle: A covenant (or will) requires the death of the covenant-maker 9:16-17
- H 1 The statement of the principle: {16} For where a covenant is,³⁹⁴ there must of necessity be the death of the one who

[Friberg](#)). This contract is called the [New Covenant](#), which guarantees changed hearts. Sadly, the Catholic Church falsely elevates Mary, the mother of Jesus, to the status of [Mediatrix](#). There is only one mediator, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

³⁹¹ Heb. 9:15 - first covenant: The conditional covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai with Moses as mediator. Various called "[First Covenant](#)," [Old Covenant](#)," [Mosaic Covenant](#)," "The Law" ([3551](#), e.g. Matt. 12:5) "[The Law of Moses](#)," the "Torah" ([8451](#), e.g., Ex. 24:12).

³⁹² Heb. 9:15 - those who have been called: This phrase translates the plural Perfect Passive [Participle](#) of the verb *kaléo* ([2564](#)). This word can indicate a naming, as in "you shall call His name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21, 25). It can mean a "summons," as in "Herod secretly called the magi" (Matt. 2:7). It can mean "invited," as in "those who were invited were not worthy" (Matt. 22:8). On a theological level, there are two different calls – a general call and an effective call to salvation. All are issued a "general" "call" to salvation (Matt. 22:14; cf. Psalm 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-20; 2 Pet. 3:18-19). But only those whom God has chosen are issued an "effective" call to salvation. That is the idea here in Heb. 9:15; so also in 1 Pet. 2:9 and Rev. 17:14. To the Western mind, this seems totally unfair. But the grim reality is that if God were not to choose certain individuals, no one in the human race would respond to His general call. "The ones having been called" acknowledges that believers, at some time in the dateless past, were passively (without their having done anything to merit it) and effectively called to salvation, and these results continue to the present time of the writing. God is the active, but unvoiced caller. The universal Church (*ekklesia*, [1577](#)) consists of the "called out ones." See [Call](#). See also "[Defending Election](#)."

³⁹³ Heb. 9:15 - may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance: "inheritance" is *kléronomia* ([2817](#)). Literally, an inheritance is that which "is received as a gift from someone who has died" (Friberg). Spiritually, an inheritance is that which is given to believers on the basis of the death of Jesus. In the context of Hebrews, the eternal inheritance is a significant participation in the reign of the Messiah here on earth – the kingdom that begins in Jerusalem, Israel, here on the present earth. This kingdom will be an eternal one because it will continue into the Eternal State upon New Earth, headquartered in New Jerusalem.

³⁹⁴ Heb. 9:16 - For where a covenant is: The writer has switched from talking about a covenant to talking about a will, though he uses the same word (*diathékē*, [1242](#)). According to Zane Hodges (Hebrews, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Vol. 2, 802):

While "covenants" and "wills" are not in all respects identical, the author meant that in the last analysis the [New Covenant](#) is really a testamentary disposition. Like human wills, all the arrangements are secured by the testator and its beneficiaries need only accept its terms.

Treating the [New Covenant](#) in this way, the author argued that its force—like that of all human wills—depends on the death of the one who made it. That is when it takes effect.

made it.³⁹⁵ 9:16

H 2 The reason for the principle 9:17

J 1 The covenant goes into effect upon the death of its maker: {17} For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead,

J 2 The covenant is ineffectual while the maker still lives: for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

G 2 The old covenant was effected by death through bloodshed 9:18-22

H 1 The old covenant never operated without bloodshed 9:18-21

J 1 The assertion concerning the First Covenant: {18} Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood.³⁹⁶ 9:18

J 2 Moses' pronouncement of the Law: {19} For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, 9:19a

J 3 The sprinkling of the blood 9:19b

K1 The use of the blood of calves and goats: he took the blood of the calves and the goats,³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Heb. 9:16 - there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it: The benefits of the [New Covenant](#), of which the author speaks, could never be realized in any sense, or to any degree by its beneficiaries until the death of the Messiah, who for the purposes of this discussion, is one with Yahweh, His Father (John 10:30). Jesus' death ratified the [New Covenant](#). Its provisions (Jer. 31:31-34), which especially emphasize the impartation of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 59:20-21; Ezek. 11:16-20; 36:24-30; 37:14; Joel 2:28-29) began to be realized, in a preliminary way, when the Holy Spirit descended into the lives of the Israeli believers on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). The [New Covenant](#) was made, after all, with the House of Israel (Jer. 31:31-34). Within minutes, another 3,000 Israelis repented of their stance toward Jesus and placed their trust in Him as their Messiah (Acts 2:37-42). Not long thereafter, Samaritans placed their trust in Jesus as Messiah (Acts 8:4-17), and finally, full-blooded Gentiles did so also (Acts 10:1-48). In the future, all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25-27; cf. Isa. 59:20-21). Ultimately the [New Covenant](#) secured by Jesus' death and resurrection will positively affect all of redeemed humanity (Rev. 21:-22:5).

³⁹⁶ Heb. 9:18 - the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood: The writer refers to Moses' ratification of the [First Covenant](#) by means of animal blood (Exod. 24:3-8)

³⁹⁷ Heb. 9:19 - he took the blood of the calves and the goats: The writer seems here to refer to the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:2-19). Technically, these offerings were offered by Aaron, the High Priest, but he performed his duties at the behest of Moses, representing God. For the purpose of proving his point, the writer of Hebrews does not seem to differentiate between the ratification of the [First Covenant](#) by the blood of bull calves (Ex. 24:5) and the annual purification by means of the blood of a bull (Lev. 16:14) and by means of the blood of a goat (Lev. 16:15) on the Day of Atonement. (See also Lev. 16:18-19.) An alternative explanation is that the blood of goats is indicated in the "burnt offerings" of Ex. 24:5 (see [John Gill](#)).

K2 The use of water, scarlet wool, and hyssop: with water and scarlet wool and hyssop,³⁹⁸

K3 All were sprinkled on the scroll and the people: and sprinkled both the book³⁹⁹ itself and all the people,

J 4 Moses' declaration – The blood of the covenant God made with you: {20} saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." ⁴⁰⁰ 9:20

J 5 The further sprinkling of blood 9:21

K1 On the tabernacle: {21} And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle⁴⁰¹

K2 On the vessels: and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.⁴⁰²

H 2 The importance of bloodshed 9:22

J 1 Most things are purified by bloodshed: {22} And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood,

³⁹⁸ Heb. 9:19 - water and scarlet wool and hyssop: In Exodus 24:1-8, the account of the ratification of the [First Covenant](#) with blood, only blood is mentioned. Water, scarlet wool, and hyssop are not. However, as [John Gill](#) suggests, since “sprinkling” was mentioned (Ex. 24:6, 8), that could account for the use of hyssop branches in sprinkling the altar and the people. Moreover, in the protocol for the cleansing of a healed leper, water, scarlet material, and hyssop were all used (Lev. 24:1-7). The writer of Hebrews may have assumed these materials were used also in the ratification of the [First Covenant](#). Or he may have understood that their use elsewhere was all part of the process of purification and cleansing required under the [First Covenant](#).

³⁹⁹ Heb. 9:19 - book: This is the Greek word *biblion* (975): It is typically translated “book,” but in Moses’ day, papyrus reeds were rolled up in a scroll. Thus, my designation in the heading. Moses had been educated in the most advanced schools of that era. There is no reason to suppose that he had not been taught to read and to write. He was highly educated.

⁴⁰⁰ Heb. 9:20 - THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU: A quotation of Ex. 24:8.

⁴⁰¹ Heb. 9:21 - he sprinkled ... the tabernacle: There is no record in Exodus 24:1-8 that Moses sprinkled the tabernacle (tent – [skēnē](#)) with blood, for the tabernacle had not even been constructed yet. However, the writer may have assumed that the altar (Ex. 24:6) represented the yet-to-be-constructed tent with all its furnishings. Or, perhaps he was referring to the sanctification of the tabernacle as recorded in Exod. 40:9. There, however, only anointed oil was used. Perhaps the writer of Hebrews assumed that Moses used blood in sanctifying the tabernacle and its furnishings in addition to Yahweh’s prescribed anointing oil. But not following Yahweh’s instructions precisely at times brought disaster on people (cf. Lev. 10:1-3; Num. 20:2-13). So the first explanation makes more sense – the altar stood for the future tabernacle and all its equipment.

⁴⁰² Heb. 9:21 - and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood: Once again, there is no record that Moses sprinkled all the vessels of the ministry with blood in Exod. 24:1-8. He did apply anointing oil to all the vessels of the ministry according to Exod. 40:9-11. But nothing is said about blood there. Once again the most likely scenario is that the writer of Hebrews took the anointing of the altar with blood (Ex. 24:9-11) as representing the yet-to-be-constructed tent with all its furnishings.

J 2 There is no forgiveness without bloodshed; and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.⁴⁰³

E 3 So also the [New Covenant](#) was effected by the Messiah's superior death 9:23-28

G 1 A contrast of the two covenants 9:23

H 1 The figures of the realities were rightfully purified by an inferior sacrifice under the old covenant: {23} Therefore it was necessary for the copies⁴⁰⁴ of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these,

H 2 The realities were rightfully purified by a superior sacrifice under the [New Covenant](#): but the heavenly things⁴⁰⁵ themselves with better sacrifices than these.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ Heb. 9:22 - without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness: This is true because, from the beginning of time, God assured Adam, "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). God was not pronouncing judgment upon disobedience, but merely reciting the inevitable consequence. It was like saying, "If you step off the ledge of a 100-story building, you will surely die." Forgiveness of sin requires either that I die for my sins, or that a suitable substitute dies in my place. Israelis, thus, were not to eat the blood of animals (Lev. 17:10), "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" (Lev. 17:11). The blood of animals could cover, but not truly forgive human sin. Only the blood of Christ can truly forgive sin. He is a man, a perfect man, and He is the Messiah. His blood was valuable enough, and His life perfect enough, to pay the debt for all the sin of the entire world. That forgiveness, however, is accessed only by a reassessment of who Jesus is (Acts 2:38) and through faith in Jesus, the Messiah (John 3:16-18, 36; 5:25; 11:25; 20:30-31; 1 John 5:10-13).

⁴⁰⁴ Heb. 9:23 - copies: *hupódeigma* ([5262](#)) refers to that which is a representative model of a larger and greater reality. For example, when a company is planning a new building, an architect will display a model of that building to give the public an idea of what the finished product will look like. The writer was stating that tabernacle and the articles of furniture within it were merely representations of the real temple and its furnishings up in heaven. Further, he was saying that models or representations on earth were suitably cleansed or purified with animal blood and anointing oil. But the real sanctuary and its accouterments up in heaven had to be cleansed or purified with something far more valuable than animal blood or oil. Only the inestimably valuable blood of the Messiah would suffice.

⁴⁰⁵ Heb. 9:23 - but the heavenly things: i.e. including, but not limited to, the heavenly temple (Rev. 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17) along with its ark of the covenant (Rev. 11:19), tabernacle of testimony (Rev. 15:5), golden altar (Rev. 6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7), and golden censers (Rev. 8:3). One might ask why the "heavenly things" need purifying. The answer is probably that the spirits of sinners entering heaven in some way defile all they contact. The blood of Christ reconciles even things in heaven to Himself (Col. 1:20). (See also [Thomas Constable](#).)

⁴⁰⁶ Heb. 9:23 - better sacrifices: i.e. the sacrifices which Christ offered. One would think that the writer would have referred only to the singular sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The plural "sacrifices" is a bit difficult to explain. Of course the death of Christ is the primary sacrifice. But it is also possible to suppose that other sacrifices include Jesus' willingness to forgive His enemies (Luke 23:34); His willingness to impart assurance of paradise to the repentant and believing criminal (Luke 23:43); His concern for the welfare of His mother (John 19:26-27); His deliberate fulfillment of Scripture (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34); His endurance of the trauma on the cross that comes from being human (John 19:28); His willingness to pay in full the debt of human sin (John 19:30); and His sacrifice not only of His body, but also His spirit (Luke 23:46). John Gill supposes that this is the [plural of excellency](#). That may be, but, for some reason, that sort of explanation has never resonated well with me. Another possibility is that Jesus' singular sacrifice procured the plural salvations of untold millions of people, and ultimately, of even the whole created order (Rom. 8:19-23). Thus in that sense Jesus, at one time, offered "better sacrifices" for multiple millions.

G 2 The Messiah's superior place of sacrifice 9:24

H 1 He entered not into the Holy of Holies, which is only a figure of the reality: {24} For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one,⁴⁰⁷

H 2 He entered into very heaven itself: but into heaven itself,⁴⁰⁸

K1 There to appear before God: now to appear in the presence of God⁴⁰⁹

K2 There appearing on our behalf: for us;⁴¹⁰

G 3 The superior sufficiency of the Messiah's sacrifice 9:25-28

H 1 No need for multiple sacrifices 9:25-26a

Regardless, Jesus sacrifice, under the terms of the spiritually proactive and regenerative [New Covenant](#), was far superior to all the sacrifices offered under the spiritually impotent [First Covenant](#). Please note that, in saying the [First Covenant](#) was "spiritually impotent," I am casting no aspersions whatever on that Covenant. As Paul stated, it is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). What I am saying is that the Law was impotent to save, or to make one righteous, for that was never its Divine purpose. It's purpose was to expose the existence of sin (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:7), and it has, throughout history, done that very effectively.

⁴⁰⁷ Heb. 9:24 - For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one: "holy place" is, literally "holy places" or "holy things." It refers to the portion of the tabernacle into which all priests could enter, the compartment that contained "the holy things" – the candelabra, the table of the bread of the presence, and the altar of incense. Or, it could refer to the entire tabernacle and all the "holy things" within. The point of the writer is that Christ did not enter the earthly, man-made compartment or tabernacle or temple, with all its holy items.

These, he says, are but a copy (*antitupos*, [499](#)), literally, "copies," or "representations" of the true ones up in heaven. It is worth noting that in the Greek text, "holy places" is plural, "copies" is plural, and "true ones" is plural, while "heaven" is singular.

Antitupos is used but twice in the NT, here, and in 1 Peter 3:21, where it means "correspondingly." In theological or exegetical terms, we refer to a type and its antitype. In that context, the "type" is the prefiguration and the "antitype" is the fulfillment. That is not the way *antitupos* is used in Scripture. In the Greek text it refers to the "copy" or "prefiguration," not its future fulfillment. Jesus entered the real holy places up in heaven, not the mere copies or representations here on earth.

⁴⁰⁸ Heb. 9:24 - but into heaven itself: As previously noted, "heaven" (*ouranós*, [3772](#)), literally "the heaven" appears here in the singular, which is frequently not the case (see "the kingdom of the heavens" repeatedly in Matthew, e.g., Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, etc.). The singular use here in Hebrews 9:24, combined with the presence of the article, as well as the reflexive, "itself," indicates the third heaven, the particular heaven itself in which God and His "holy things" exists. The "holy things" up in the third heaven, the abode of God, are the real, foundational "holy things" of which the "holy things" upon earth are a mere model or representation.

⁴⁰⁹ Heb. 9:24 - now to appear in the presence of God: "to appear" is the [aorist](#) passive infinitive of *emphamidzō* ([1718](#)), literally, "now caused to appear in the presence of God" or "now made visible in the presence of God." The [Aorist](#) tense is point action – here looking at the entirety of Jesus' present ministry in God's presence as a single, ongoing event. This appearance is not something Jesus did not Himself. Someone else – God Himself – caused Him to appear in His presence. He is not yet appearing as King. His ministry is one "on behalf of us," which emphasizes His priestly ministry.

⁴¹⁰ Heb. 9:24 - for us: literally "on behalf of us." God caused Jesus now to appear in His presence on our behalf – the writer and the readers. This emphasized Jesus' present priestly ministry. Jesus is not presently seated upon the throne of David. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father in the priestly seat after the order of Melchizedek.

- J 1 In contrast with that of the annual sacrifices of the high priest 9:25
- K1 Not frequent: {25} nor was it that He would offer Himself often,⁴¹¹
- K2 Not annually: as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.⁴¹²
- J3 Otherwise He would have suffered from creation onwards: {26} Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; 9:26a
- H2 One sacrifice is adequate 9:26b-28
- J1 The Messiah appeared climactically 9:26b
- K1 At the end of the age: but now once⁴¹³ at the consummation of the ages⁴¹⁴ He has been manifested⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ Heb. 9:25 - nor was it that He would offer Himself often: In contrast to the Levitical priests, Jesus did not have to offer Himself many times, or on an ongoing basis. His one sacrifice was so superior that it sufficed for all time. Sadly, the Roman Catholic Church maintains that every time the “Eucharist” (Lord’s Table, or Mass) is celebrated, Jesus is re-sacrificed. That is my term, not theirs. The Church maintains that the Eucharist is “one single sacrifice” (1367) along with Christ’s death on the cross. Yet the church calls the Eucharist “a sacrifice” (1366), and an “unbloody” “sacrifice” that “is truly propitiatory” (1367). In all of the millions of celebrations of the Mass throughout the centuries, Christ has been sacrificed again and again and again. Thus, what the Church states, and what it actually practices, are two different things. The writer of Hebrews says otherwise. He denies that Jesus “would offer Himself often.”(See [Propitiation](#).)

⁴¹² Heb. 9:25 - as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own: literally, “enters into the holy places” or “holy things” “each year”.... This refers to the High Priest’s offering of animal blood in the Holy of Holies on the annual “Day of Atonement” (Lev. 16:2-19).

⁴¹³ Heb. 9:26 - once: Despite the insistence of the Roman Catholic Church on the repeated “unbloody” “propitiatory” “sacrifices” of countless Masses (1366, 1367), the Scriptures state otherwise – Jesus appeared but once at the end of the ages to offer the sacrifice of Himself. The Eucharist, the Lord’s Table – whatever you want to call it – cannot contribute one iota to the one ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. The Lord’s Table is strictly memorial, not in any sense [propitiatory](#).

⁴¹⁴ Heb. 9:26 - but now once at the consummation of the ages: “consummation” is *suntéleia* (4930), used 6 times in the NT. All 5 times in Matthew, in the NASB, it is translated “end” (of the age). In Heb. 9:26 it is translated “consummation” (of the ages). [Friberg](#) defines it “as the point of time marking the close of an age *end, conclusion, completion* (Matt. 13:39).” The writer of Hebrews views Jesus’ sacrificial appearance as a dramatic event, occurring at the completion of the ages. His death and resurrection, together with the descent of the Holy Spirit, marked the beginning of the present [Church Age](#). With the anticipated [Pre-Tribulation Rapture](#) of the [Church](#), followed by the 7-year transition of Daniel’s 70th Week, we are set, perhaps very soon, to begin the Kingdom of the Heavens spoken of by John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. We are, indeed, at the completion of the ages!

⁴¹⁵ Heb. 9:26 - He has been manifested: These four words translate the Perfect Passive Indicative form of the single word *phanerōō* (5319). According to [Friberg](#), in the Passive voice describing persons, this word means “become known, be shown, be in true character (2 Cor. 5:11); appear, become visible, be revealed (John 21:14; 1

- K2 To take away sin by sacrificing Himself: to put away sin ⁴¹⁶ by the sacrifice of Himself. ⁴¹⁷
- J2 The universal principle: men die only once 9:27
- K1 Men are appointed one death: {27} And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once ⁴¹⁸
- K2 Afterwards comes judgment: and after this comes judgment, ⁴¹⁹
- J3 The Messiah's death meets all the requirements to sacrifice for the sins of many: {28} so Christ also, having been offered once ⁴²⁰ to bear the sins of

Tim. 3:16). "He has been manifested" accurately translates the Perfect tense and Passive voice, but "manifested" is a little-used word today. "He has been revealed" is a more understandable term, except that there are other Greek words typically translated "revealed." "He was made visible" is also an acceptable translation. The Passive voice indicates that God revealed Him, or made Him visible. In the Greek text, "He has been manifested" is the last word of the sentence.

⁴¹⁶ Heb. 9:26 - to put away sin: more literally, "for the annulment (*athétêsis*, [115](#)) of sin." Jesus' sacrifice did not, at the moment, either destroy sin or terminate it. But it provided for the ultimate vanquishing of sin. After the [Millennial](#) Reign of Christ, and the incineration of the present universe, God will create [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#), in which only righteousness and righteous people will exist (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

⁴¹⁷ Heb. 9:26 - by the sacrifice of Himself: There is a sense in which God offered up His Messianic Son as the ultimate sacrifice (John 3:16). But there is another sense in which Jesus, as the Great High Priest, offered up Himself through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:12, 14, 26; 10:12).

⁴¹⁸ Heb. 9:27 - it is appointed unto men to die once: God, through Adam, warned mankind that to rebel against God, to do something that God has forbidden, results in instantaneous [Spiritual Death](#) (Gen. 2:17; 3:6-8) culminating in [Physical Death](#) (Gen. 3:17, 19; 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31) and, unless redemption takes place first, irreversible "[Second Death](#)" (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). With the exception of Jesus, every human who has ever lived has a sin nature and has committed acts of sin (Rom. 5:12) (Catholic claims about Mary – [966](#) – not withstanding). Consequently all have died (Rom. 5:12). There have been two exceptions to physical death – Enoch (Gen. 5:21-24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12). There will be a multitude of exceptions in the future, when the living members of the Church are [snatched up](#) to meet the Lord in the air without dying (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Nevertheless, the general rule is that, if you sin, you die.

⁴¹⁹ Heb. 9:27 - and after this comes judgment: All men, whether redeemed or unredeemed, will be judged by Jesus in the afterlife (John 5:22-30). There appear to be more judgments than just one. Believers of the Church Age will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-15), also known as the Judgment Seat of God (Rom. 14:10). Unbelievers of all ages will evidently appear at the "Great White Throne Judgment" (Rev. 20:11-15). The principle of judgment is taught often in Scripture – Matt. 13:30, 41-42, 49-50

⁴²⁰ Heb. 9:28 - so Christ also, having been offered once: The Greek word order and meaning is instructive: "So also the Christ, once having been offered" Note that the writer uses the title, "the Christ" (Greek for "the Messiah"), and emphasizes the single offering of the Messiah. There need be no repeated sacrifices. "Having been offered" is the [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *prosphérō* ([4374](#)), "to bring to". It is used in the active voice most often in Matthew, for example, where it is most often translated as some form of the verb "bring" (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 9:2, 32; 12:22; 14:35; 17:16; 19:13; 22:19; 25:20). But the context in Hebrews is typically one of sacrifices, and so the word is typically translated as some form of the verb "offer" (Heb. 5:1, 3, 7; 8:3, 4; 9:7, 9, 14, 25, 28; 10:1, 2, 8, 11, 12; 11:4, 17). The passive here indicates that it was God who offered up His Messianic Son as a sacrifice. Literally, we could say that Jesus was "brought to" [sacrifice]. There is a bit of a play on words in Heb. 9:28: "having been

many,⁴²¹ 9:28a

J4 The culmination – the Messiah will appear again: will appear a second time⁴²² 9:28b

K1 Securing final salvation: for salvation⁴²³

K2 Having already dealt successfully with sin: without *reference* to sin,⁴²⁴

K3 Unto those eagerly watching for Him: to those who eagerly await Him.⁴²⁵

offered” translates *prosphérō* (4374) (“brought to”), while, in the next phrase, “to bear” translates *anaphérō* (399) (“bring up”). So Jesus was “brought to” [the point of sacrifice] in order to “bring up” “the sins of the many.”

⁴²¹ Heb. 9:28 - to bear the sins of many: “to bear” translates the *Aorist* Infinitive of *anaphérō* (399) (“to bring up”). This action was done at a point in time, as the *Aorist* tense indicates in this context. Often the verb simply means “to lead up,” as when Jesus “led up” Peter, James, and John onto a high mountain (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2). In Hebrews, the context is always that of a sacrificial offering that is “offered up” (so twice in Heb. 7:27). In Heb. 13:15 the readers are exhorted to “offer up” a sacrifice of praise. Here in Heb. 9:28, Jesus was “brought to” [understood – the place of sacrifice] in order that He might “bring up” or “offer up” the sins of “the many.” The upward motion should be taken to understand that Jesus successfully dealt with the sins of the many “upward” – in the sight of God.

“The many” is a colloquialism, and not meant to imply a limited number of people any more than Paul’s statement that “...by the transgression of the one the many died” (Rom. 5:15) is meant to imply that only some, but not all people died. “The many” means all people. Heb. 9:28 cannot be taken to mean that Jesus died *only for the sins of the elect*. He died for the sins of all people. But only those who place their faith in Jesus as the Messiah benefit from His sacrificial death for their sins.

⁴²² Heb. 9:28 - will appear a second time: We refer to this as the *Second Coming* of Christ, sometimes referred to as the *Parousia*. In reality the *Parousia*, or *Second Coming*, is divided into two stages. In the first stage Christ will return to Earth’s atmosphere. *Church-Age* believers who have died will be resurrected. Living *Church-Age* believers will be snatched up from the Earth for this meeting with the Lord in the air among the clouds (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Jesus will take them to heaven and will purify them as the *Bride of Christ* (Rev. 19:7-9). Then Christ will return to Earth in power and great glory (Rev. 19:11-21), vanquish all His enemies (Zech. 14:1-15), then reign for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6), the period of time also known as the *Millennium*.

⁴²³ Heb. 9:28 - for salvation: *sōtêria* (4991) here is not merely spiritual, but also physical and political *salvation* (Rom. 8:18-25). Zane Hodges: “The ‘salvation’ He will bring them at His second coming will be the ‘eternal inheritance’ of which they are heirs (cf. Heb. 9:15; 1:14).” (*TBKC*, Vol. II, p. 803.)

⁴²⁴ Heb. 9:28 - without *reference* to sin: Jesus came the first time to be offered up and to offer up Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all people. He presented Himself as the Messiah, but was rejected, but willingly died to pay for the sins of all. At His *First Advent* Jesus came as a Suffering Savior. At His *Second Advent*, He will not come to pay for the sins of mankind. He will come in order to punish people for their sins and their failure to accept His sacrifice and rule, and in order to leave a righteous remnant of mankind to inherit the Millennial Earth. He will come the second time as the Superior Sovereign, to whom all must submit.

⁴²⁵ Heb. 9:28 - to those who eagerly await Him: The salvation of which the writer speaks is reserved for those who eagerly await the return of the Messiah. This is true regardless if those who await Him are Israeli or Gentile. The rest of mankind will be horrified by the return of the Messiah. In fact, they will mourn in terror as they view the sign of His return (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7). This sharp bifurcation in reaction to Jesus’ return is aptly described by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 1:6-10. The appropriate anticipation of believers in regard to Christ’s second coming is also described in Matt. 24:42-44, 45-51; 25:1-13, 14-29, 31-46; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 5:8-11, 23-25; Tit. 2:13; Rev. 22:10-14, 20-21.

C 6 The Inaugurator of a Better Sacrifice 10:1-18

D 1 With regard to the effectiveness of actually atoning for sins 10:1-10

E 1 The ineffectiveness of sacrifices under the Law 10:1-4

G 1 The shadowy nature of the Law 10:1a

H 1 Possessing only a shadow of the good things that are future: {1} For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come ⁴²⁶

H 2 Not the essence of the good things that are future: *and* not the very form of things, ⁴²⁷

G 2 The inability of the sacrifices under the Law 10:1b-4

H 1 They were offered annually: can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, ⁴²⁸ 10:1b

H 2 They could never sanctify the people: make perfect those

⁴²⁶ Heb. 10:1 - For the Law: “the Law” is *ho nomos* (3551), and refers here to the [Law of Moses](#), elsewhere in Hebrews labeled the “[first covenant](#)” or the “[old covenant](#).”

since it has only a shadow: *skiá* (4639) literally means shadow. Here it is used metaphorically, as that which is an inferior symbol of a greater reality yet future. The writer has already stated that the priests here on earth, who work among the items of furniture in the tabernacle or temple, serve a copy (*hupódeigma*, 5262) and shadow (*skiá*, 4639) of the heavenly things (Heb. 8:5). The tabernacle or temple of Israel, with all its items of furniture and worship paraphernalia prescribed in the [Law](#), were only a shadow of the real Temple up in heaven with all its items of worship. The point of the writer is that the [Law](#), though rightfully revered by Israelis, could only prescribe a copy and shadow of the real means of worship up in heaven. Thus, the [Law](#) was limited, albeit limited by design, in its prescriptions of worship and sacrifice.

of the good things to come: i.e., all the things in heaven mentioned in the preceding paragraph, but also, all the provisions yet to come under the [New Covenant](#), including the eventual elimination of all sin, of all sinful people, and of all of the effects of sin in [New Heaven](#), [New Earth](#), and [New Jerusalem](#). Also see a good, but only partial summary of “the good things to come” under Hebrews 10:1 in the [commentary by John Gish](#).

⁴²⁷ Heb. 10:1 - *and* not the very form of things: “form” is *eikōn* (1504). Coins of that day were inscribed with the “likeness” (*eikōn*) of Caesar (Matt. 22:20; Mark 12:16; Luke 20:24). Man is the “image” (*eikōn*) and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10). Christ is the “image” (*eikōn*) of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). In the book of Revelation, unbelievers worship the “image” (*eikōn*) of the evil global ruler, described as “the beast” (Rev. 13:14, 15; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:2; 20:4). In Heb. 10:1 the writer of Hebrews is contrasting the “shadowy” earthly symbols of worship prescribed by the Law with the essential reality (“very form”) of the worship accouterments up in heaven, accessed only by those who partake of the benefits of the [New Covenant](#).

⁴²⁸ Heb. 10:1 - can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year: The repeated, annual sacrifices are a powerful witness to their inefficacy. The [Law](#), with its repeated sacrifices, can never bring anyone to a state of moral and spiritual perfection. Indeed, the [Law](#) was designed, among other things, to give cognizance of sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7), to “increase” sin (Rom. 5:20), and to serve as a tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24-25). The annual sacrifices were never designed to be the ultimate sacrifice, as their repetition reminds us.

By way of illustration, years ago a talented, but taciturn running back for the Dallas Cowboys, Duane Thomas, was being interviewed by a TV journalist. When asked how it felt to be able to play in the ultimate game (the Super Bowl), Thomas cogently countered, “If it’s the ultimate game, while will they play it again next year?” The interviewer was momentarily left speechless.

who draw near.⁴²⁹

H 3 They were ongoing 10:2

J 1 Effectiveness would have required their cessation:
{2} Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be
offered, 10:2a

J 2 Effectiveness would have cleared guilty consciences:
because the worshipers, having once been cleansed,
would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

H 4 Rather than clearing consciences, they annually reminded
people of their continuing sin! {3} But in those *sacrifices*
there is a reminder of sins year by year. 10:3

G 3 The impossibility that animal blood can remove human sin! {4}
For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take
away sins.⁴³⁰ 10:4

E 2 The effectiveness of the sacrifice of the Messiah's body 10:5-10

G 1 The proof from Scripture 10:5-9

H 1 The time of the Scriptural statement: {5} Therefore, when
He comes into the world,⁴³¹ He says, 10:5a

H 2 The nature of the Scriptural statement 10:5b-7

J 1 The desire of God 10:5b-6

⁴²⁹ Heb. 10:1 - make perfect those who draw near: "make perfect" is the [Aorist](#) Infinitive of *teleiōō* (5048), a verb used more often in Hebrews than in any other book (Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23). The basic idea is to "bring to completion." This meaning can be seen, for example, in the translations of Luke 2:43; 13:32; John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4; 19:28; Acts 20:24; Php. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 11:40; James 2:22; 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18. Particularly in Hebrews there is a spiritual emphasis, defined "as qualifying to stand before God in His presence" ([Friberg](#)). See Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 12:23. Here in Heb. 10:1, the writer is stating that the [Law](#) can never bring to a state of perfection those who draw near to God in worship. That is true because the [Law](#), with its endlessly repeated sacrifices, has only a shadow of the good things to come, not the essential reality (Heb. 10:1).

"Those who draw near" is the translation of the [Present Participle](#) of *prosérchomai* (4334). A more literal translation here is "the ones drawing near." The writer uses this verb in Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6; 12:18, 22. Matthew uses it far more often than any other NT writer.

⁴³⁰ Heb. 10:4 - it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away human sin: In the Law, Yahweh dictated to Israel through Moses that animal blood was necessary to atone (*kâphâr*, 3722) for human sin (Lev. 17:11). However, the basic meaning of *kâphâr* is to "cover." Animal blood would temporarily *cover over* human sin, but could never *pay* for it, as the writer of Hebrews so accurately states here (Heb. 10:4).

⁴³¹ Heb. 10:5 - when He comes into the world: The writer here refers to Psalm 40:7, which reads, "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.'" David wrote this of himself, but his words, in the providence of God, were prophetic. The greater meaning is directed toward the Messiah. The coming of the Messiah into the world describes His incarnation – the event at which the Eternal Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14).

- K1 Not for animal sacrifices: "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,"⁴³²
- K2 But the human body of the Messiah: BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;⁴³³
- K3 Animal sacrifices for sin bring no pleasure: {6} IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.⁴³⁴ 10:6

J 2 The submission of the Messiah 10:7

- K1 His voluntary obedience: {7} "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME'⁴³⁵
- K2 His willingness documented in Scripture: (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME)⁴³⁶

⁴³² Heb. 10:5 - SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED: The writer quotes from Psalm 40:6a. He will quote Psalm 40:6-8. The writer of Hebrews assigns this entire segment (Psalm 40:6-8) to the Messiah. Here the Messiah agrees that animal sacrifices and offerings do not really pay for sins. God really desires more than that – the ultimate sacrifice that will actually pay for all human sin.

⁴³³ Heb. 10:5 - BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME: The writer here paraphrases Psalm 40:6b. He takes “My ears you have dug out.” (in the [MT](#)) as a metaphor for the whole body ([John Gill](#)). (Literally, the [MT](#) reads, “My ears you have dug out.”) The writer is undoubtedly quoting from the [LXX](#), which, except for a couple of mss., reads *sōma*, ([4983](#) – “body”). In Jesus, the Messiah, the God/Man, God provided Himself a human body that was corporal, that was mortal, and could die (John 1:1, 14). But this mortal body could also be resurrected (Rom. 1:3-4). The body of which the writer speaks came to be in the Incarnation (John 1:1, 14). The Incarnation (Heb. 10:5) made possible the sanctifying crucifixion (Heb. 10:10).

As I have contemplated the selflessness of the Second Person of the Godhead, I have become almost more impressed with His Incarnation than with His Crucifixion. As horrific as the Crucifixion was, it lasted a relatively short period of time. But once the Incarnation took place, it would last the rest of eternity. The eternal Word of God, Creator of the universe (John 1:1-3), was, from eternity past, an unencumbered Spirit, albeit one who made occasional appearances as the [Angel of Yahweh](#). But in His Incarnation, the Creator became a microscopic embryo. He grew into a man, but this Eternal Spirit would be forever after encumbered with a confining human body! What an amazing sacrifice of freedom (Php. 2:5-8), all out of obedience to the Father and love for humanity!

⁴³⁴ Heb. 10:6 - IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE: The writer continues to quote from Psalm 40:6c. The sense is that, in the long run, sacrificial offerings of animals could never adequately pay for human sin (Heb. 10:4). The writer was documenting his thesis from Scripture.

⁴³⁵ Heb. 10:7 - “THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME: In Psalm 40:7, from whence the writer is quoting, David was speaking of his own willingness to dedicate his body to do the will of God. The writer of Hebrews appropriately applies this to the Messiah. Psalm 40:7 is the OT equivalent of Romans 12:1-2, where the believer is urged to present his body as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

⁴³⁶ Heb. 10:7 - (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME): The writer continues to quote from Psalm 40:7. There, David was asserting that his dedication of his body and will to the will of Yahweh was authorized in the Law. Here in Heb. 10:7 the writer applies this to the Messiah. The Messiah is asserting that Psalm 40:6-8 predicted His willing offering of His incarnate body to do the will of the Father. This offering of His body applied both to the Incarnation and to the Crucifixion.

K1 His determination to obey God: TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD."⁴³⁷

H 3 The explanation of the statement 10:8-9

J 1 What God did not desire: {8} After saying above,⁴³⁸
10:8a

K1 Sacrifice: "SACRIFICES

K2 Offering: AND OFFERINGS

K3 Burnt offering: AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS

K4 Offering for sin: AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN

J 2 God's disapproval not quenched, in spite of their lawfulness 10:8b

K1 God's non-desire: YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,

K2 God's non-pleasure: NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*"

K3 Despite their lawfulness: (which are offered according to the Law),⁴³⁹

J 3 The Messiah's statement – He comes to do God's will: {9} then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL."⁴⁴⁰ 10:9a

⁴³⁷ Heb. 10:7 - TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD: The writer of Hebrews quotes the first line of Psalm 40:8. There, David affirmed his willingness to do God's will. In Heb. 10:7, the writer ascribes to the Messiah His willingness to do God's will. Above all, this statement characterizes the obedience of Christ (Matt. 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38, 39).

⁴³⁸ Heb. 10:8 - After saying above: The writer of Hebrews has just quoted the LXX rendition of Psalm 40:6-8a. Now he requotes, in Heb. 10:8, a summary of Psalm 40:6 in order to draw a conclusion. That conclusion is that these sacrifices were offered according to the Law. Despite that fact, in Heb. 10:9, a further dimension of the OT Scripture as applied to the Messiah leads to an interesting further development concerning the Law. See the subsequent notes.

⁴³⁹ Heb. 10:8 - (WHICH ARE OFFERED ACCORDING TO THE LAW): Here is the writer's first conclusion. The OT sacrifices and offerings were offered according to the [Law](#). So they were authorized by the written Word of God. A subsequent development as described in Heb. 10:9 impinges upon the [Law](#). See the subsequent notes.

⁴⁴⁰ Heb. 10:9 - BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL: The author repeats his quotation from the [LXX](#) rendering of Psalm 40:8a. "Will" is *thélēma* ([2307](#)), what one wishes or desires to be done (Matt. 21:31). In the case of God, there are instances in which "will" refers to that which He has predetermined shall be accomplished (Rev. 4:11). The context must determine the nuance. In this instance, as viewed by the author of Hebrews, the Messiah had come to do that "will" which God desired to be done. However, as another passage reveals, what happened to Jesus was exactly that which God had predestined to occur (Acts 4:27-28). Furthermore, the writer is stating that God's will for the Messiah to offer His body superseded His previously announced will, stated in the [Law](#), that animal

J 4 The implication 10:9b

K1 God took away animal sacrifices: He takes away the first⁴⁴¹

K2 In so doing God established the Messiah's sacrifice: in order to establish the second.⁴⁴²

G 2 The final conclusion 10:10

H 1 Christians have been set apart: {10} By this will we have been sanctified⁴⁴³

H 2 Sanctification comes through the offering of a human body

J 1 The body of the Messiah: through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ⁴⁴⁴

J 2 The body offered once for all: once for all.⁴⁴⁵

D 2 With regard to effectiveness in view of the number of offerings 10:11-14

E 1 The priests' many offerings under the Law 10:11

G 1 Their posture – standing while ministering: {11} Every priest

sacrifices be offered for human sin. *Thélêma* occurs in Hebrews in Heb. 10:7, 9, 10, 36; 13:21. The writer will refer to that same “will” of God in Heb. 10:10.

⁴⁴¹ Heb. 10:9 - He takes away the first: I.e., God takes away the [Mosaic Covenant](#) (the [First Covenant](#)) and its sacrifices ([Constable](#)).

⁴⁴² Heb. 10:9 - in order to establish the second: i.e., the [New Covenant](#), ratified by the one superior sacrifice of the Messiah (similarly, [Constable](#)).

⁴⁴³ Heb. 10:10 - By this will we have been sanctified: By “will” (*thélêma*, [2307](#)), the author refers to God’s will wherein He desired the Messiah’s body to serve as a truly effective sacrifice for the sins of mankind. A literal rendering of Heb. 10:10 reads, “In this will we exist, having been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” “Having been sanctified” (author’s literal translation) renders the [Nominative](#) Plural Masculine Perfect Passive [Participle](#) of *hagiádzō* ([37](#)), to “make holy, consecrate, sanctify” ([Friberg](#)). By this will of God, believers in Christ have been permanently set apart as God’s own. This sanctification does not result in present sinlessness, but it will result in future sinless perfection and the redemption of the body.

⁴⁴⁴ Heb. 10:10 - through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ: Positional sanctification for the writer’s audience has come through the offering (*prosphorá*, [4376](#)) or sacrifice of Jesus’ body. This word does not occur frequently – only in Acts 21:26 (“sacrifice”); and in Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:16; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:5, 8, 10, 14, 18. Each of these latter times it is translated as either the singular or plural of “offering.” The author refers to the body (*sōma*, [4983](#)) that had been prepared for the Messiah (Heb. 10:5). This word will appear again in Heb. 10:22 (the bodies of believers); Heb. 13:3 (the human “body”); and in Heb. 13:11 (the “bodies” of animals).

⁴⁴⁵ Heb. 10:10 - once for all: These three words translate the compound word, *ephápax* ([2178](#)), from *epi* (upon) and *hápax*, [530](#) (once). Jesus’ death was sufficient to pay for all the sins of all the people of all time in the entire world. Once again, there is no need for the repeated sacrifices in the Mass implied by Roman Catholic dogma (Catechism, [1366](#), [1367](#)). The author uses the word *ephápax* in Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10.

stands daily ministering

G 2 Their repetitious, daily offerings: and offering time after time the same sacrifices,

G 3 The inability of their offerings to remit sins: which can never take away sins; ⁴⁴⁶

E 2 The Messiah's one offering under the [New Covenant](#) 10:12-18

G 1 The eternal sufficiency of His sacrifice: {12} but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, ⁴⁴⁷ 10:12a

G 2 His posture after His sacrifice: Sitting after having completed hministry 10:12b-13

H 1 His place of honor – seated on God's right hand: SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ⁴⁴⁸ 10:12b

H 2 His expectation – the subordination of His foes: {13} waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. ⁴⁴⁹ 10:13

⁴⁴⁶ Heb. 10:11 - the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: Once again, the purpose of [Old Testament](#) sacrifices was never to forgive sins, but only to cover them temporarily. That is what the Hebrew verb *kâphar* ([3722](#)) signifies (Lev. 17:11).

⁴⁴⁷ Heb. 10:12 - but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time: “but He” is actually, “but this one” – referring to this priest – Jesus – as opposed to the Levitical priests referenced in Heb. 10:11.

“having offered one sacrifice” refers to Jesus’ sacrificial death upon the cross.

“for all time” translates the word *diênêkê’s*, [1336](#). Strictly speaking, this word means “*stretched the whole length*; hence *continuous, uninterrupted*; idiomatically of time *eis to diênêkê’s* literally *to the whole length*, i.e. *continually* (Heb. 10:1)” ... ([Friberg](#)). Interestingly, this word is used only in Hebrews – Heb. 7:3; 10:1, 12, 14, and each time it is used in the time context – *eis to diênêkê’s*. Once again, there is no need for the repeated “unbloody” sacrifices in the Mass implied by Catholic dogma (Catechism, [1366](#), [1367](#)). Jesus’ one sacrifice is good for all time.

⁴⁴⁸ Heb. 10:12 - SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD: The author here quotes from Psalm 110:1, a great Messianic psalm, and one of the most oft-quoted OT passages. It is a mistake to hold that Jesus here began His Kingly rule. Psalm 110:1b-2 refutes that position. The point of much of Hebrews, however, is that Jesus is a Priest after the order of [Melchizedek](#). And what was [Melchizedek](#)? – a King/Priest. What the writer of Hebrews clearly teaches here (Heb. 10:12) is that Jesus’ having sat down at the right hand of the Father was a sign that His priestly work, in the sense of offering a sacrifice, *has been completed*. It is probably accurate to say that Jesus’ Priestly Kingdom has begun. When we trust in Jesus we are born again (John 3:3-8), and we immediately enter His *Priestly* Kingdom. But His Kingly Kingdom has not yet begun. Jesus is presently waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet, at which time He will rule from Mount Zion (Psalm 110:1-2). His priestly rule, however, has begun (Psalm 110:4).

⁴⁴⁹ Heb. 10:12 - waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET: The writer of Hebrews here completes his quotation from the last line of Psalm 110:1. According to the writer, Jesus was waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool when he (the author) penned the book of Hebrews. And indeed, Jesus is waiting yet today. Having completed the one offering for sin, He sat down at the Father’s right hand. There He waits until it is the Father’s time for Him to return to earth to conquer His foes (Isa. 63:1-6; Zech. 14:4-15; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-21) and rule over the nations with a rod of iron from Mount Zion (Psalm 2:8-9; 110:2). Thus, His kingdom has not yet begun. The Messiah was meant to rule upon earth, not up in heaven. His kingdom cannot begin until He arrives here upon earth and incapacitates His enemies.

G 3 The efficacy of His sacrifice 10:14-18

H 1 The need for only one: {14} For by one offering 10:14a

H 2 Its sufficiency to perfect people: He has perfected ⁴⁵⁰ 10:14bJ 1 The duration of perfection: for all time ⁴⁵¹J 2 The objects of perfection: those who are sanctified. ⁴⁵²

D 3 With regard to effectiveness in view of the commitment written in Scripture 10:15-18

E 1 The credibility of the commitment in Scripture – offered by the Holy

⁴⁵⁰ Heb. 10:14 - For by one offering He has perfected: “offering” is *prosphorá* (4376), used more often in Hebrews than in any other NT book, and appearing only in chapter 10 – Heb. 10:5, 8, 10, 14, 18. It refers here to Christ’s offering of His own body on the cross as the perfect, complete, and final sacrifice for human sins.

By one offering, this priest (see Heb. 10:11), Jesus, has perfected – the Perfect tense of the verb *teleiōō* (5048) – those who are in the process of being sanctified. *Teleiōō* is used more often in Hebrews than in any other NT book – Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23. The Perfect tense here in Heb. 10:14 indicates that, at the time of His offering – His death – He brought to a state of completion – a state that began at the cross and persists to the present moment – those who are presently, passively, being sanctified, or set apart (*hagiádzō*, 37). This statement is a mixture of positional truth as well as an ongoing present reality. At a point in time – the death of Christ – Jesus brought to a state of completion the ones who are passively being sanctified or made holy in their walk. This is a powerful statement of the efficacy of Christ’s single sacrifice. It is also a powerful statement of the [eternal security](#) of the believer in Christ. With the one sacrifice of Christ he has been brought to a state of completion in the process of his ongoing sanctification.

This passage illustrates the truth that, for those in Christ Jesus, there is therefore now no condemnation, or judgment (Romans 8:1). It also powerfully refutes the Catholic notion that the Mass constitutes a “bloodless” sacrifice of Christ that has merit in forgiving a participant’s sins (Catechism, 1366, 1367). We cannot have grace conferred upon us by participating in the Church’s sacraments (Catechism, 1119, 1121).

For a further discussion of *teleiōō* see the appropriate note at Heb. 10:1. For a further discussion of *hagiádzō* see the following footnote in this same verse (Heb. 10:14) on “those who are sanctified.”

⁴⁵¹ Heb. 10:14 - for all time: Once again, the writer uses the phrase *eis to diēnekê’s*, which means, literally, “to the stretched the whole length.” This phrase strongly reinforces the author’s statement that by Jesus’ one offering he has brought to a state of completion throughout the whole length of time – those who are being set apart by someone else, presumably God. This powerfully reinforces the truth of the believer’s [eternal security](#) in Christ.

⁴⁵² Heb. 10:14 - those who are sanctified: Literally, “the ones being sanctified.” Note that this occurrence of *hagiádzō* (37) is a Plural [Present](#) tense, Passive voice [participle](#). The [Present](#) tense indicates the action is ongoing. The passive voice indicates the beneficiaries are not sanctifying themselves – someone unnamed and outside themselves is doing the sanctifying. Presumably, that someone is God Himself. This whole verse is a powerful statement that, by Jesus’ offering of Himself on the cross, He has brought to a state of completion or perfection – throughout the whole length of time – the ones who are being sanctified or set apart by God. Yes, there is something we have to do – initially, we have to trust in Jesus. Moreover, the entire NT is filled with commands which we are to obey in our “holiness journey.” But in the end, it is God and Jesus who perfect us and bring about our ongoing sanctification. “Those who are being sanctified” means two things: (1) Throughout the passage of time, individuals are trusting in Christ and thus are being sanctified. (2) Throughout the passage of time in a particular believer’s life, he himself is constantly in the process of being sanctified or set apart by the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, our salvation is God’s doing, not our own. Of course, in time, we must cooperate. But our very desire to cooperate is secured, it would seem, by God’s doing not our own. Jesus paid it all, and God is in the ongoing process of sanctifying those who have trusted in Jesus.

Spirit Himself: {15} And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; ⁴⁵³ for after saying, 10:15

E 2 The explanation of the commitment 10:16-17

G 1 The nature of the commitment – a [new covenant](#): {16} "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM" ⁴⁵⁴ 10:16a

G 2 The fulfillment of the commitment: AFTER THOSE DAYS, ⁴⁵⁵

G 3 The guarantor of the commitment – Yahweh: SAYS THE LORD:

G 4 The content of the commitment 10:16b-17

H 1 Motivation: Yahweh to write His laws on their heart and mind 10:16b

⁴⁵³ Heb. 10:15 - the Holy Spirit: In referring to the Holy Spirit, the writer accomplishes at least three things. (1) He transitions from his quotation of Psalm 40:6-8a to quotations from Jeremiah 31:33, 34. (2) He identifies the Holy Spirit as the author of Scripture. (3) He identifies the Holy Spirit with *Yahweh*, or *Jehovah* ([3068](#)) (LORD) (Heb. 10:15-16; Jer. 31:33-34) and *Elohim* ([430](#)) (God) (Jer. 31:33) of the OT.

⁴⁵⁴ Heb. 10:16 - THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM: The writer begins his quotation of Jeremiah 31:33, which introduces the [New Covenant](#) Yahweh made with [Israel](#). His purpose will be to demonstrate that the [New Covenant](#) replaces the [Old Covenant](#), because there is no longer any need to sacrifice animals for human sin (Heb. 10:18). His purpose also will be to exhort his readers, who were evidently being pressured to return to Judaism, to draw near to God and to Christ in full assurance of faith, and not to forsake the Christian assembling together (Heb. 10:19-25). Lest the readers fail to capture the significance of the course of action which he is advocating, he proceeds to motivate them with a severe warning (Heb. 10:26-39). He seems confident they will follow his exhortation.

The reader should be aware that God made the [New Covenant](#) with [Israel](#), specifically, with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31). Jesus ratified this [New Covenant](#) on the cross (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). It has been partially, and incompletely implemented on behalf of the [Church](#), which consists of believing Israelis and Gentiles. But it has not, in any sense, yet been implemented with the Nation of [Israel](#). But the fact that it has been partially and incompletely implemented with Messianic Israelis and Gentiles is a sure sign that one day it will be implemented with the Nation of [Israel](#). If God cannot be trusted to keep this [New Covenant](#) with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, He cannot be trusted to keep, in any sense, the [New Covenant](#) for non-Israeli peoples. God's integrity is at stake. [Replacement Theology](#) is theologically bankrupt.

⁴⁵⁵ Heb. 10:16 - AFTER THOSE DAYS: The writer continues to quote from Jeremiah 31:33. Jeremiah has been predicting the exile of Judah in earlier chapters of his tome. In fact, In Jeremiah chapters 30-33, he announces to Judah and Israel the prospect of [future restoration despite present judgment](#). In the midst of these chapters, Jeremiah reveals God's promised [New Covenant](#) with [Israel](#) (Jer. 31:31-34) . What is the time frame of "after those days"?

Commentators are generally agreed that this refers to the return from exile and the repopulation of the land referred to in vv. 27-28 and not to something subsequent to the time mentioned in v. 30. ([Net Bible, note 75 on Jeremiah 31](#)).

The difficulty with the view of all those commentators is that Jeremiah's prediction cannot possibly have coincided with Judah's return from Babylonian exile. That is so because, *to this very day*, the terms of this [New Covenant](#) have not been fulfilled for the nation of [Israel](#). So "after those days" must refer to an indeterminate time *yet in the future*. Indeed, the [New Covenant](#) will not be implemented for [Israel](#) until *after* the [Tribulation](#). It will coincide with the [Second Coming](#) of Israel's [Messiah](#).

J 1 I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,

J 2 AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,⁴⁵⁶ *He then says,*

H 2 Acquittal: {17} "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."⁴⁵⁷ 10:17

E 3 The results of the forgiveness promised in the commitment 10:18

G 1 The existence of forgiveness: {18} Now where there is forgiveness of these things,⁴⁵⁸

G 2 The consequent obsolescence of offering: there is no longer *any* offering for sin.⁴⁵⁹

A 2 THE APPROPRIATION AND APPLICATION OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE MESSIANIC SON 10:19 - 13:25

⁴⁵⁶ Heb. 10:16 - I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM: The [Old Covenant](#) could only codify and regulate behavior, and punish transgressors. As Paul said, the [Law](#) became an instrument of death (Rom. 7:9-13). It had no ability to motivate the Israeli to obey, to love and to worship God. The genius of the [New Covenant](#) is that God guaranteed His unilateral molding of Israelis' hearts and minds, writing His laws on their hearts so they would *want* to obey Him. That [New Covenant](#) has not yet been put into effect for the nation of [Israel](#) as a whole. But individual believing Israelis, incorporated along with believing Gentiles into the [Church](#), have begun reaping partial benefits from the [New Covenant](#) ever since the descent of the [Spirit](#) on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11).

⁴⁵⁷ Heb. 10:17 - AND THEIR SINS (*hamartia*, [266](#)) AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS (*anomia*, [458](#)) I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE: The MT of Jer. 31:34c reads, literally, "because I will pardon their iniquity (*āvōn*, [5771](#)), and their sin (*ḥaṭṭā'āh*, [2403](#)) I will remember no more" (author's translation). The corresponding [LXX](#) (Jer. 38:34) reads, literally, "because I will be merciful in regard to their injustices (*adikia*, [93](#)) (or unrighteousnesses), and their sins (*hamartia*, [266](#)) I will not remember longer" (author's translation). As the reader can see, it is difficult to know whether the writer of Hebrews was quoting from the MT or from the [LXX](#), because his translation does not rigidly follow either one. Regardless, his quotation (or paraphrase) is inspired, and the meaning is clear – as part of His future [New Covenant](#) with Israel, Yahweh promised no longer to remember, in the sense of holding the people responsible for, their sins and their lawless deeds. God could promise this for (believing) Israel, and for all the believing readers of the writer, because Jesus, the Great High Priest, had paid the all-sufficient, never-to-be-repeated sacrifice for human sin. The repeated sacrifices under the [First Covenant](#) were silent, yet vociferous testimonies that the sins were not truly forgiven, and God still remembered them.

⁴⁵⁸ Heb. 10:18 - Now where there is forgiveness of these things: "Forgiveness" is *áphesis* ([859](#)). It means a release, liberation, or deliverance (Luke 4:18); or a cancellation or pardon of a debt; or specifically here in Hebrews, a removal from the mind of God (Heb. 10:17, contrast Heb. 10:3), a taking away of sins (adapted from [Friberg](#)). In the NASB, *áphesis* is, with the exception of Luke 4:18, universally translated, "forgiveness." The other occurrence in this letter is in Heb. 9:22.

⁴⁵⁹ Heb. 10:18 - there is no longer *any* offering for sin: With Christ's one supreme sacrifice, there no longer needs to be any offering (*prosphorá*, [4376](#)) for sin (*hamartia*, [266](#)). This means that, under the [New Covenant](#), sins are truly forgiven. There no longer needs to be any sacrifice for sins in a Jewish temple. That fact was borne out historically when the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70. There have been no sacrifices since. This means, furthermore, that the view that the Lord's Table involves a propitiatory, "unbloody" sacrifice (Catechism, [1366](#), [1367](#)) is simply untrue. The Lord's Table is memorial (Luke 22:19-20), not propitiatory. It also indicates that the sacrifices of the [Millennial Temple](#) (Ezek. 43:13-27) will also be memorial in nature.

B 1 Exhortations to Live in the Faith 10:19-39**C 1 Concerning the Great High Priest 10:19-23****D 1 Draw near to him 10:19-22****E 1 Because the way into the Holy of Holies is open 10:19-20**

G 1 Brethren can enter boldly: {19} Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place ⁴⁶⁰ 10:19a

G 2 The way is through the Messiah 10:19b-20

H 1 On the basis of His blood: by the blood of Jesus, ⁴⁶¹ 10:19b

H 2 It's a new and living way: {20} by a new and living way ⁴⁶² 10:20

H 3 It's consecrated for us by the Messiah: which He inaugurated for us through the veil, ⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ Heb. 10:19 - Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place:

“brethren” (*adelphós*, [80](#)) – The writer addresses his readers as fellow-believers as brothers. This is important to note as we proceed on to the warning passage of Heb. 10:26-31. Despite the attempt of so many modern translations (including [NetBible](#), for example) to be politically correct, the writer did not address “brothers and sisters,” but only “brothers.” Past civilizations have understood the masculine reference to include both sexes. Unfortunately, our society, afflicted with radical feminism, refuses to do so.

“confidence” (*parrhēsia*, [3954](#)) – this attribute reflects “an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear.” In relation to God, it can be translated “confidence, boldness, joyful sense of freedom” ([Friberg](#)).

“the holy place” (*tōn* [neuter plural] *hagion* [neuter plural of [39](#)]) – literally, “the holy places” or “the holy things.” The writer was referring to the “holy places” or “holy things” up in heaven, the abode of God.

⁴⁶¹ Heb. 10:19 - by the blood of Jesus: The shed blood of Jesus, resulting in His death, is of inestimable value in paying for the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36; 6:53; 1 Cor. 10:16; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 10:19; 12:24; 13:12, 20; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18-19; 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2; 5:6; Rev. 1:5). Jesus’ blood is the *only* thing that grants us believers (those who are “brothers”) access into the holy places of heaven, the abode of God.

⁴⁶² Heb. 10:20 - by a new and living way: The old way was the way of the blood of bulls and goats. And it was a “dead” way, because these animals were killed and remained dead. The word “new” is actually *prósphatos* ([4372](#)), meaning “freshly killed,” used only here in the NT. This “freshly killed” way, the way of the blood of Jesus, is actually a living ([present participle](#) of *dzáō*, [2198](#)) way (*hodós*, [3598](#)) since Jesus, having been resurrected, remains eternally and powerfully alive. He is the exclusive WAY (*hodós*, [3598](#)) to the Father (John 14:6).

⁴⁶³ Heb. 10:20 - which He inaugurated for us through the veil: “inaugurated” is the [Aorist](#) tense (point action) of *egkainidzō* ([1457](#)), a verb used only in Heb. 9:18 and here in Heb. 10:20. Both refer to the ratification of a covenant. Heb. 9:18 speaks of the ratification of the [First Covenant](#) with blood, and Heb. 10:20 speaks of the ratification of the [New Covenant](#) with blood. “Inaugurated” or “made new” or “put into effect” or “established” are all valid translations (see [Friberg](#)). In the case of the [New Covenant](#), at least, one must avoid the conclusion that all the terms of the Covenant have been implemented. Indeed, they have not, for the nation of Israel, with whom the [New Covenant](#) was made (Jer. 31:31-34), has not in any sense yet benefitted from the [New Covenant](#) as a nation. The day when Israel turns back to God and His Messiah as a nation is still coming (see Zech. 12:10-13:1; Rom. 11:25-27).

“through the veil” refers back to the veil (Exod. 26:31-35; 36:35-38) that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the ancient Israeli Tabernacle and Temple. The veil was meant to screen off the ordinary priests from gazing at the presence of God guarded by the Cherubim atop the Ark of the Covenant. And of course, if even the ordinary priests could not look upon God, no ordinary human ever could do so. The point of the writer of

H 4 His flesh is similar to the veil: that is, His flesh, ⁴⁶⁴

E 2 Because He is the great priest over the house of God: {21} and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ⁴⁶⁵ 10:21

E 3 The exhortation to draw near: {22} let us draw near ⁴⁶⁶ 10:22a

E 4 The method of drawing near 10:22b

G 1 With a true heart: with a sincere heart

G 2 In the security of faith: in full assurance of faith,

G 3 Devoid of guilty conscience by sprinkling: having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience

Hebrews here is that Jesus, in His substitutionary sacrifice upon the cross, has given us access through the veil into the very presence of God! Hallelujah!

⁴⁶⁴ Heb. 10:20 - that is, His flesh: “flesh” is *sárx* ([4561](#)), which means, without any ethical connotation as sometimes is implied in Paul’s writings, simply, Jesus’ body, crucified on our behalf. The veil of the ancient Tabernacle and Temple, which cordoned off the “Holy of Holies” was, according to the writer of Hebrews, in some way a symbol of the Body of Christ, crucified for us. At Christ’s death, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51), signifying that the way into the very presence of God had been made accessible for all who come to God through faith in Jesus. It is solely Jesus’ crucified body, spilling out His life’s blood, that enabled our access to God, into whose presence we can come boldly and confidently (Heb. 10:19-20). No human priest, no act of baptism, no sacrament, no Eucharist, no intervention by Mary or any other “saint” or human is needed to give us access to God. Jesus’ death, and His death alone is that which granted us access to God.

⁴⁶⁵ Heb. 10:21 - and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God: Actually, all three words, “since we have” do not appear in the Greek text. They were added by NASB editors to maintain the flow of thought for the English reader. The word “since” was imported as repeated from the English translation of Heb. 10:19, but, technically, “since” does not even appear there – it was added for stylistic purposes, for the Greek text there reads, literally, “Having, therefore, brothers, boldness into the entrance of the holy places through the blood of Jesus,” – Heb. 10:21 reads, simply, continuing the sentence from the previous verse, “and a great priest over the house of God,” –.

So the writer here acknowledges that his readers, all of whom he designates as “brothers” (Heb. 10:19), possess Jesus as a “great (mégas, [3173](#)) priest” (*hieréus*, [2409](#)) over the house of God. We do not, as the practice of the Roman Catholic Church maintains, need a human priest, complete with his incense and his confessional booth, to assist us in our access to God. Jesus is the only priest we need.

Jesus is a great priest “over the house of God.” The writer has already used “house” to refer to the “house of Israel” and the “house of Judah” (Heb. 8:8, 10). Here he most likely uses it to refer to Jesus’ efficacy as a great priest over all the peoples of God throughout time – believing Gentiles, believing Israelis, and believing Israelis and Gentiles who are members of the Church.

⁴⁶⁶ Heb. 10:22 - let us draw near: These four words translate the plural number, [present](#) tense, subjective mood of the verb *prosérchomai* ([4334](#)), meaning, to *come to* or *go to* or to *approach*. This usage is that which grammarians label a “hortatory subjunctive” – meaning that the writer is exhorting his readers – in this case, to approach continually ([present](#) tense) God in the heavenly holy places through our great priest, Jesus. But we are to do so with the attitudes next prescribed – sincere heart, full assurance of faith, pure conscience, and clean bodies (more about this last later). A hortatory subjunctive functions as an imperative. This verb is used in the identical construction in Heb. 4:16. Elsewhere in this document it appears in Heb. 7:25; 10:1,22; 11:6; 12:18, 22. Incidentally, it is used far and away most often in the Gospel of Matthew (51 X).

This is the first of three hortatory subjunctives in consecutive verses: (1) “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22); (2) “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (Heb. 10:23); and (3) “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24).

G 4 With clean body by washing: and our bodies washed with pure water.⁴⁶⁷

D 2 Remain true to your professed faith in Him 10:23

E 1 Not vacillating: {23} Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,⁴⁶⁸

E 2 But remembering His faithfulness: for He who promised is faithful;⁴⁶⁹

C 2 Concerning One Another: Encourage one another to love and good works 10:24-25

D 1 The exhortation for reciprocal motivation to perform good deeds: {24} and let us consider how to stimulate one another⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁷ Heb. 10:22 - and our bodies washed with pure water: This most likely refers to water baptism, which is an outward sign of an inner cleansing and commitment. Water, in and of itself, can never create or cause an inner or spiritual change. But it can signify it. Similarly, a wedding ring can never cause a bride or groom to be committed to one another, but it can certainly symbolize and advertise commitment. That is what water baptism does. It does not make us a Christian. It does not regenerate us. But, much like a basketball or football player who dons a jersey, it proclaims to everyone whose team we are on. Water baptism proclaims to the world that we have committed to “Team Jesus.”

⁴⁶⁸ Heb. 10:23 - Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering: This is the second of three hortatory subjunctives (functioning as imperatives) in three consecutive verses – Heb. 10:22, 23, 24. Here the writer exhorts his readers continually ([present](#) tense) to hold fast the confession of our hope (a hope he shares with them). “Let us hold fast” translates the plural number, subjunctive mood, [present](#) tense of *katéchō* ([2722](#)), here, to “hold fast, keep in possession, possess” ([Friberg](#)). It is used in this sense in 1 Cor. 7:30; 11:2; 15:2; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:21; Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:23.

“Confession” is *homología* ([3671](#)), used three times in Hebrews. The writer termed Jesus “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb. 3:1). Since his readers “have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,” the writer urges himself and them, “let us hold fast our confession” (Heb. 4:14). Here in Heb. 10:23, he exhorts the same readers, “let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” A confession is “a statement of allegiance expressing binding assent and public commitment” ([Friberg](#)).

“Hope” is *elpis* ([1680](#)), used in Heb. 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23. Hope is the confidence that God will surely make good on His promises and bring about the salvation and reward and useful ministry He has promised, both now, and in the future. See for example, in the next clause, the writer’s encouragement to hope – “for He who promised is faithful.”

The fact that the writer must continually urge his readers to “hold fast” – here, “without wavering,” suggests that, under duress, that is precisely what they were tempted *not* to do. They were being tempted to *give up* on their confession.

⁴⁶⁹ Heb. 10:23 - for He who promised is faithful: God’s faithfulness is the only component that makes the Christian’s confession of hope worth maintaining. Under duress, each of us is tempted to waver, but we must focus on God’s faithfulness, not our own resolve.

⁴⁷⁰ Heb. 10:24 - and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds: “let us consider” is the plural, [present](#) tense, subjunctive mood of *katanoō* ([2657](#)), which means scrutinize, study, notice, perceive, examine, think carefully about (adapted from [Friberg](#)). Once again, this verb is a hortatory subjunctive, carrying the force of an imperative. “How to stimulate” translates the preposition *eis* ([1519](#)), translated here, “how to,” and meaning, “for the purpose of,” along with the noun *paroxusmós* ([3948](#)), which means, in a positive sense, as here, “incitement, encouragement, stimulation” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). So in a very literal way, the phrase can be translated, “And let us scrutinize stimulation of one another to love and good works.” Instead of withdrawing under the threat of persecution or ostracism for their faith in Christ, these Jewish believers are encouraged, instead, to think very hard about ways they stimulate one another to do good works and serve King Jesus!

- E 1 to love
- E 2 and good deeds,
- D 2 The requirement of fellowship: {25} not forsaking our own assembling together,⁴⁷¹ 10:25
- D 3 The necessity of exhortation: as is the habit of some,
- D 4 The necessity of mutual encouragement: but encouraging *one another*;⁴⁷²
- D 5 The necessity increased by the approaching day: and all the more as you see the day drawing near.⁴⁷³
- C 3 Beware of Continued Sinning after Receiving the Knowledge of the Truth 10:26-31
 - D 1 The analysis of the sin 10:26-27
 - E 1 The nature of the sin – deliberate and persistent: {26} For if we go on sinning willfully⁴⁷⁴ 10:26a

⁴⁷¹ Heb. 10:25 - not forsaking our own assembling together: “assembling together” is the noun *episunagōgē*’ (1997), used only here and in 2 Thess. 2:1, where it refers to “our gathering together” to Christ at the [Rapture](#) of the Church. Here in Heb. 10:25 it refers to the regular assembling of believers together at meetings of the local church. The writer indicates, in the next phrase, that it was the habit of some to forsake the assembling together of believers. In the context of Hebrews this forsaking may have taken place because the brothers were being pressured to give up their Christianity and revert to Judaism. In today’s world, where persecution is not an issue, forsaking the assembling of ourselves together may occur because of worldly priorities, or growing disinterest. For myself as a pastor, my observation is that one of the telltale signs of falling out of fellowship with Jesus is the falling out of fellowship with other believers.

⁴⁷² Heb. 10:25 - but encouraging *one another*: It is difficult, if not nigh impossible, for Christians who do not assemble together to encourage one another, and to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24).

⁴⁷³ Heb. 10:25 - and all the more as you see the day drawing near: In the context, the writer was probably anticipating the return of Christ (see Heb. 10:37). It is best to understand the [Second Coming](#) of Christ as arriving in two stages – His return for [Reunion](#), and His return for [Retribution](#) upon an unbelieving world. It was beyond the purpose of the writer to distinguish between the two in this discourse.

⁴⁷⁴ Heb. 10:26 - For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth: Two questions arise – (1) What is the truth he states his readers have received? (1) What does the writer have in mind by “sinning willfully”? Answers to both these questions must be derived, first, from the immediate context and, second, from the context of the entire book of Hebrews. Let us address the first question.

(1) What is the truth he states his readers have received? The writer, after extolling the virtues of Christ’s perfect sacrifice of His own body for human sin (Heb. 10:1-18), concludes that he and his readers have confidence to enter the holy places (up in heaven) by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19-20). He also concludes that he and his readers possess a great high priest over the house of God (Heb. 10:21). There is more that could be added, but that is sufficient to explain the truths his readers have received.

(2) What is willful sin in this context? Next, the writer appeals to his audience with three hortatory subjunctives: [a] “Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22); [b] “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (Heb. 10:23); and [c] “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Heb. 10:24). To sin willfully is to fail to carry through on the writer’s three exhortations. You see, those three hortatory subjunctives were the very things his readers were thinking about violating. They were under pressure to revert to Judaism, to ignore Jesus as the great high priest, to renege on the previous confession of faith they had

- E 2 The condition of the sinner – informed: after receiving the knowledge of the truth,
- E 3 The effect of the sin 10:26b-27
 - G 1 Sacrifice no longer available: there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ⁴⁷⁵ 10:26b
 - G 2 A fearful expectancy 10:27
 - H 1 Of judgment: {27} but a terrifying expectation of judgment
 - H 2 Of furious fire: and THE FURY OF A FIRE ⁴⁷⁶
 - H 3 Akin to the fire which will devour adversaries: WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. ⁴⁷⁷
- D 2 The punishment of the sin 10:28-31
 - E 1 Punishment under Moses' law 10:28

made, and to withdraw from the fellowship of the church, thus failing to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. That is the willful sin of which they were contemplating, and which the author of Hebrews implores them to eschew.

⁴⁷⁵ Heb. 10:26 - there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins: To revert back to Judaism and its sacrificial system of lambs, bulls, and goats, to back down from the confession of faith in Jesus, to forsake assembling together in the Christian community is to turn one's back on the only sufficient sacrifice. Animal blood can never pay for human sin.

⁴⁷⁶ Heb. 10:27 - THE FURY OF A FIRE: The writer is very careful in what he says and in what he does not say. He says that these Christians, if they apostatize, renounce their faith in Jesus, and turn back to Judaism, have rejected the only sacrifice for sins that exists. They face terrifying judgment and the fury of a fire. This fire is the fire of judgment that awaits Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ, according to 1 Cor. 3:10-15. Christians can build upon the foundation of Christ with either gold, silver, or precious stones, or they can build upon the foundation with wood, hay or stubble. To revert to Judaism is to build with wood, hay, and stubble. The first triad of materials will survive the fiery judgment. The second triad will not survive. This latter result of the Judgment Seat of Christ will leave many Christians shaken. They themselves will be saved, but saved as if they had run through a fire which burned up all their possessions and even the clothes on their back. This is the fire of 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, not the fire of the Great White Throne in Revelation 20:11-15. With this interpretation Thomas Constable agrees <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#p1417>:

Willful sin in the context of Hebrews is deliberate apostasy, turning away from God (2:1; 3:12; 6:4-8). If an apostate rejects Jesus Christ's sacrifice, there is nothing else that can protect him or her from God's judgment (cf. 6:6). The judgment in view will take place at the judgment seat of Christ, not the great white throne. It is the judgment of Christians (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10), not of unbelievers (cf. Rev. 20:11-15). It will result in loss of reward, not loss of salvation. The same fire that will test believers will also consume unbelievers. Fire is a frequent symbol of God and His work in Scripture (Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Deut. 4:24; Ps. 18:8-14; Isa. 33:14; Ezek. 1:4; Mal. 3:2), and it often indicates His judgment (Mal. 3:2; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16).

⁴⁷⁷ Heb. 10:27 - WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES: The writer of Hebrews does not count his readers among the adversaries. He calls them "brothers" (10:19). He concludes in 10:39, "But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." The fire of which he speaks in 10:27 will purify and refine Christians, but it will consume the adversaries. That latter fire is the fire of Rev. 20:11-15.

- G 1 Offenders were killed: {28} Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy
- G 2 Only two or three witnesses required: on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses.
- E 2 Punishment for this offence 10:29
 - G 1 The offender will be worthy of greater punishment: {29} How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve
 - G 2 The seriousness of the sin
 - H 1 It is stomping over the Messianic Son: who has trampled under foot the Son of God,⁴⁷⁸
 - H 2 It is counting as worthless the blood of the covenant: and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant⁴⁷⁹ by which he was sanctified,⁴⁸⁰
 - H 3 It is insulting the Spirit: and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
- E 3 God's just character demands judgment 10:30-31
 - G 1 God's claim 10:30
 - H 1 Vengeance is His: {30} For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE,
 - H 2 He will repay: I WILL REPAY."⁴⁸¹
 - H 3 He will judge His people: And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."⁴⁸²
 - G 2 The conclusion – the fearfulness of falling under God's judgment: {31} It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 10:31

⁴⁷⁸ Heb. 10:29 - who has trampled under foot the Son of God: This description is very similar to that which the author gave in Heb. 6:6 – "...since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame."

⁴⁷⁹ Heb. 10:29 - the blood of the covenant: This is Jesus' blood that ratified the [New Covenant](#) (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 59:20-21; Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15).

⁴⁸⁰ Heb. 10:29 - by which he was sanctified: This verb is the [Aorist](#) tense, Passive voice of *hagiádzō* (37). There is no evidence here that sanctification can be undone, but the consequences to the retreating believer would be terrifying.

⁴⁸¹ Heb. 10:30 - VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY: The writer quotes from the first line of Deut. 32:35.

⁴⁸² Heb. 10:30 - THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE: The writer quotes from the first line of Deut. 32:36.

C 4 Remember Your Former Endurance 10:32-34

D 1 The call to remember: {32} But remember the former days, 10:32a

D 2 Their prior illumination: when, after being enlightened,⁴⁸³ 10:32aD 3 Their endurance of afflictions: you endured a great conflict of sufferings,⁴⁸⁴ (10:32b) 10:32b-34

E 1 By being a "laughing stock": {33} partly by being made a public spectacle 10:33a

G 1 through reproaches

G 2 and tribulations,

E 2 By exercising compassion 10:33b-34a

G 1 By siding with others afflicted: and partly by becoming sharers⁴⁸⁵ with those who were so treated. (10:33b)

G 2 As illustrated by their compassion for those imprisoned: {34} For you showed sympathy to the prisoners 10:34a

E 3 By maintaining a heavenly perspective 10:34b

G 1 By allowing confiscation of their goods: and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property,

G 2 Their knowledge of their superior and secure future possessions: knowing that you have for yourselves

H 1 a better possession

⁴⁸³ Heb. 10:32 - after being enlightened: literally, "having been enlightened," the [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *phōtízō* ([5461](#)), used only here and in Heb. 6:4 in this letter. "Enlightened," in both these contexts in Hebrews, means they had responded to the light of the gospel and accepted Jesus, the source of enlightenment (John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35).

⁴⁸⁴ Heb. 10:32 - you endured a great conflict of suffering: These believers had already endured much persecution for the cause of the Messiah. The ensuing verses detail the extent of the suffering they had previously endured. Someone must have crept into their midst and begun persuading them that Judaism is a more authentic expression of one's devotion to God. Somehow they were being intimidated and persuaded that reversion was theologically correct. I personally have witnessed devout Christians being persuaded to embrace what was presented as being a more original and thus more authentic version of their Christian faith despite its clearly unbiblical teachings. Sometimes voices can seem so logical and be so persuasive.

⁴⁸⁵ Heb. 10:33 - partly by becoming sharers: "sharers" is the plural of the noun *koinōnós* ([2844](#)). It speaks of "one who fellowships and shares something in common with another partner (Luke 5:10); 1 Cor. 10:18); fellow participant, companion (Heb. 10:33)" ([Friberg](#)). It is used only here in Hebrews, but is similar to "partakers" (*métachos*, [3353](#)), used in Heb. 1:9; 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8).

H 2 and a lasting one.⁴⁸⁶

C 5 Retain Your Faith 10:35-39

D 1 The command to retain their confidence 10:35

E 1 The command of confidence: {35} Therefore, do not throw away your confidence,⁴⁸⁷

E 2 The reward of confidence: which has a great reward.

D 2 Their need of endurance 10:36-37

E 1 Their need of endurance: {36} For you have need of endurance,⁴⁸⁸

E 2 The evidence of endurance – obedience: so that when you have done the will of God,⁴⁸⁹ 10:36

E 3 The benefit of endurance – subsequent receiving of the promise: you may receive what was promised.⁴⁹⁰

E 4 The incentive to endurance – the return of Messiah 10:37

G 1 A brief passage of time forthcoming: {37} FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,

G 2 The return of the Messiah: HE WHO IS COMING WILL

⁴⁸⁶ Heb. 10:34 - a better possession and a lasting one: We believers can be assured that the Messiah is preparing marvelous dwelling places for us in the Father's house (John 14:2-3), which I take to be [New Jerusalem](#). Unfortunately, these Jewish Christians to whom the writer of Hebrews was writing were in danger of trading what they knew by faith for the safety of unharrassed life back in the Judaic community. I never cease to be amazed out apparently strong Christians who are deceived into giving up the confession of faith they once embraced.

⁴⁸⁷ Heb. 10:35 - do not throw away your confidence: (do not) "throw away" is an [Aorist](#) Plural Subjunctive Mood of *apobállō* ([577](#)), used here as an Imperative. The only other occurrence in the NT is in Mark 10:50, where a blind man threw aside his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus to ask that his vision be restored. Here the writer commands his readers *not* to do what the blind man did – they are *not* to cast aside their (*parrêsia*, [3954](#)), their confidence, their boldness, their joyful sense of freedom (adapted from [Friberg](#)) in Jesus as their Messiah. The writer is doing everything he can to will his readers away from the brink of apostasy.

⁴⁸⁸ Heb. 10:36 - you have need of endurance: His readers needed *hupomonê*' ([5281](#)), a "steadfast adherence to a course of action in spite of difficulties and testings *perseverance, endurance, fortitude* (Rom. 5:3, 4; probably Heb. 10:36; perhaps 2 Thess. 3:5)" ([Friberg](#)),

⁴⁸⁹ Heb. 10:36 - when you have done the will of God: Obedience is absolutely essential to benefitting from all that God has for us. This benefit is the "reward" spoken of in Heb. 10:35, and the receipt of "what was promised" in Heb. 10:36. Works validate our faith (James 2:18, 21, 25).

⁴⁹⁰ Heb. 10:36 - you may receive what was promised: What does the writer have in mind here? He elucidates in Heb. 10:37-38.

COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.⁴⁹¹

D 3 The documentation of faith 10:38

- E 1 Faith the way of life for the just: {38} BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;⁴⁹²
- E 2 Lack of faith displeases God: AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.⁴⁹³

D 4 The assurance of the author 10:39

- E 1 The readers will not draw back in faithlessness: {39} But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction,⁴⁹⁴
- E 2 They will persevere in faith leading to final salvation: but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ Heb. 10:37 - FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY: "These words and those that follow were adapted by the author from the [Septuagint](#) of Isaiah 26:21 and Habakkuk 2:3-4" (Hodges, [TBKC NT](#), p. 806). Actually, Heb. 10:37 is a quotation that mixes together Isa. 26:21 and a portion of Hab. 2:3. He is quoting ([as in all cases in this letter](#) except for Heb. 10:30) from the [Septuagint](#). The writer refers to the [Second Coming](#) of Christ in power for the purpose of [retribution](#) against the wicked of the earth (Isa. 26:21; 2 Thess. 1:4-9; Rev. 19:11-21) and against the proud of the earth (Hab. 2:3-4a). Meanwhile, the righteous must live by faith (Hab. 2:4b; Heb. 10:38) in the glorious future awaiting them in Christ's coming kingdom (Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-16; 60:1-22; Zech. 14:9; Matt. 25:31-34, 46; 2 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 20:1-6).

⁴⁹² Heb. 10:38 - BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH: This clause quotes from the last line of Hab. 2:4. Hab. 2:4 is quoted three times in the NT – in Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; and Heb. 10:38. In each case, the NT author makes a different application. Here, the author of Hebrews is desperately attempting to persuade his readers not to renege on their previously confessed faith in Jesus as their Messiah.

⁴⁹³ Heb. 10:38 - AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM: Here, the writer of Hebrews quotes exceedingly loosely from the first two lines of Hab. 2:4, which read (NASB translated from the MT), "Behold, as for the proud one, His souls is not right within him." In the context of Habakkuk, the author referred to the proud Babylonians, who would conquer Judah. In Heb. 10:38, the author applies the "proud one" to the Christian who apostatizes from his faith in the Messiah. "Shrinks back" is the [Aorist](#) tense, Subjunctive Mood, Middle voice of *hupostellō* ([5288](#)). This verb is used by Paul in Acts 20:20, 27 and in Gal. 2:12, and by the writer of Hebrews, only here in Heb. 10:38. In the Middle voice it expresses "fear and lack of faith *draw back*, *shrink back* from a commitment (Heb. 10:38)" ([Friberg](#)).

⁴⁹⁴ Heb. 10:39 - But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction: It cannot be emphasized enough that the writer is convinced his readers will respond to his admonitions and not apostatize. "Shrink back" is the noun *hupostolē* ([5289](#)), a direct reference to the corresponding verb in Heb. 10:38. This noun is used only here in the NT. It means, "strictly *lowering of sails*; hence *lack of steadfastness*, *shrinking back*, *giving up* (Heb. 10:39)" ([Friberg](#)).

Those who "shrink back" do so to "destruction" (*apō'leia*, [684](#)), used here "intransitively, of the destruction that one experiences (*utter*) *ruin*, (*complete*) *loss* (1 Tim. 6:9)" ([Friberg](#)). This destruction must be described not as eternal punishment in the [Lake of Fire](#), but as ruin of that which one could have experienced in fully serving the Messiah in His [Kingdom](#) (cf. Luke 19:11-26).

⁴⁹⁵ Heb. 10:39 - but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul: The writer identifies both his audience and he himself as being of those who possess faith (*pístis*, [4102](#)) to the preservation or possession (*peripoiēsis*, [4047](#)) of soul (*psuchē*, [5590](#)). This is a "many-sided word with the meaning derived from the context" ([Friberg](#)). Here, "soul" ... should be understood in the Hebraic sense of the person himself, or his life, and refers in this context to the way in which persistence in the faith preserves an individual from the calamities that overtake those who "shrink back" (Hodges, [TBKC NT](#), p. 807). [Constable](#) appropriately concludes, "This is the most direct and severe of all the

B 2 Examples of People Who Lived by Faith Despite Insurmountable Odds 11

C 1 The Definition of Faith 11:1-3

D 1 Its make-up 11:1

E 1 The essence of hoped-for things: {1} Now faith⁴⁹⁶ is the assurance⁴⁹⁷ of things hoped for,⁴⁹⁸

E 2 The realization of unseen things: the conviction⁴⁹⁹ of things not seen.⁵⁰⁰

warnings in Hebrews. In view of the Son's priestly ministry (5:1—10:18), apostasy is a sin that will draw terrible consequences for the believer. It will not result in the loss of eternal salvation, but the loss of some, or possibly a major portion of, one's eternal reward."

⁴⁹⁶ Heb. 11:1 - faith: The whole purpose of Hebrews was to goad believers who were being tempted to apostatize from their faith in Jesus, to hold fast to their faith. How fitting it is in this letter, then, for the writer to pen the longest single discourse in the whole Bible on the subject of faith. Hebrews 11 is the "Faith Hall of Fame." The noun faith (*pistis*, [4102](#)) appears 243 X in the NT, and 32 X in 31 verses in the letter to the Hebrews, 24 X in Heb. 11 alone! "Faith," as used in Hebrews 11, is trust in God and His ability to make good on His promises in this life and the life to come, even, in some cases, despite extreme hardship and adversity. Only the letter to Romans, which details, in chapters 1-11, God's plan of salvation through Jesus for both Jews and Gentiles, uses *pistis* more frequently – 40 X in 35 verses.

⁴⁹⁷ Heb. 11:1 - assurance: The NASB footnote here reads "Or *substance*." The noun *hupóstasis* ([5287](#)) refers to "...the objective aspect and underlying reality behind anything, with the specific meaning derived from the context" Here it means "...the objective reality that gives a firm guarantee and basis for confidence or assurance *substance, ground of hope, foundation* (Heb. 3:14; 11:1)" ([Friberg](#)). This noun is used but 5 X in the NT – 2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17; Heb. 1:3; 3:14; 11:1.

⁴⁹⁸ Heb. 11:1 - of things hoped for: The NASB footnote: "Or *expected*." The single Greek verbal form is the Genitive, Plural, Neuter gender, [Present](#) tense, Passive voice [Participle](#) of *elpízō* ([1679](#)), which means, generally, to "hope," or to "hope for." It can mean merely to "expect" (Luke 6:34), to "hope for" (but without any assurance of reward) (Luke 23:8). Here it means "...relying on a basis of confidence *hope in, trust in, confide in* (1 Cor. 15:19)" ([Friberg](#)).

⁴⁹⁹ Heb. 11:1 - conviction: The NASB footnote: "Or *evidence*." The noun is *élegchos* ([1650](#)), which appears only here in the Greek text behind the NASB. (It appears also in the [Textus Receptus](#) behind the KJV in 2 Tim. 3:16, where it is translated "reproof.") Its sibling verb is *eléchō* ([1651](#)), which is translated in the NASB variously as some form of "convict" 5X; some form of "reprove" 5X; some form of "expose" 3X; "rebuke" 1X; "refute" 1X; "reprimanded" 1X; "show ... fault" 1X. It is translated "reproved" in Heb. 12:5. [Friberg](#) lists the possible meaning of *élegchos* as "... (1) objectively *proof, means of proof, evidence* (possibly Heb. 11:1); ... (2) subjectively *inner conviction, confident assurance* (possibly Heb. 11:1)." In my judgment, the translation "evidence" or "proof" is superior to that of "conviction," unless one understands the latter term in the sense of the result of a successful prosecution (reproof) in a court of law (rather than an inner assurance). The writer is conveying the idea that faith is the proof of deeds unseen. The objective reality is, for example, that, though no human was there to witness it, God really did create the earth and the universe in six days (Gen. 1:1-2:4; Ex. 20:8-11). Faith is the proof of these unseen deeds.

⁵⁰⁰ Heb. 11:1 - of things not seen: "of things" translates the Genitive, Neuter Plural of *pragma* ([4229](#)). That is certainly an allowable translation, but what the writer of Hebrews meant was more than that. He referred, I believe, to actual events and realities that have occurred in the past, whether humans were there to observe them or not. This is proven by what the author states in Heb. 11:3, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." Let me further document by citing [Friberg](#), which denotes *pragma* (1) as the result of activity *what has been done, deed, act, event* (Acts 5:4)" Four other definitions are offered, but none of them fit the context here. So a better translation would be "of acts not seen"

D 2 Its use by the men of old – it obtained approbation: {2} For by it the men of old ⁵⁰¹ gained approval. ⁵⁰² 11:2

D 3 Its use concerning creation 11:3

E 1 The origin of the universe

G 1 Taken by faith: {3} By faith ⁵⁰³ we understand that the worlds ⁵⁰⁴ were prepared

G 2 Accomplished by God's word: by the word of God, ⁵⁰⁵

or “of events not seen.”

“not seen” translates the negative “not” (*ou*, [3756](#)) “seen” – the Plural Neuter [Present](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *blépō* ([991](#)). Literally, the text reads, “of events (or acts, or activities, or realities) not being seen.” As I have already indicated, these events or activities include, among other things, the creation of the totality of the universe, unseen by human eye. Lest evolutionists accuse us of belief in the impossible, let me say that they, not we, are the ones believing in the impossible. There is insufficient scientific evidence to conclude that this massive, incredibly complex universe, replete with the unimaginably complex engines programmed to operate in the simplest cells of life, can possibly be replicated with, of all things, a massive explosion – the “Big Bang.” That is the most ludicrous explanation of the facts I have ever heard of. All explosions destroy. None of them create.

⁵⁰¹ Heb. 11:2 - men of old: These three words in English translate but one in Greek, the plural of *presbuteros* ([4245](#)), typically translated, “elders.” As the context reveals, it does not refer to the elders of the churches, nor even the elders of Israel as officials, but to the early men of earth – men like Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. The writer even includes women, such as Sarah and Rahab. NASB’s translation, “men of old,” is entirely appropriate.

⁵⁰² Heb. 11:2 - gained approval: The word is actually the [Aorist](#) Passive Plural of *marturéō* ([3140](#)), used in Heb. 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39. A more literal translation here would be “gained testimony” or “gained witness” or “obtained testimony” or “obtained witness.” The tacit understanding from the context is that the witness gained by the men of old is favorable. This word is also, for example, used in the Passive Voice with a positive connotation in Acts 6:3 of potential deacons; in Acts 10:22 of Cornelius; in Acts 16:22 of Timothy; and in Acts 22:12 of Ananias. A related word is used in Heb. 2:4, the [Present Participle](#) of *sunepimarturéō* ([4901](#)), “confirming” or “testifying alongside of.”

⁵⁰³ Heb. 11:3 - By faith: These words translate the single Greek noun, *Pistei*, the Dative Feminine Singular of *pístis* ([4102](#)). It occurs here at the beginning of the sentence, thus the initial capital. This configuration begins each of the sentences of Heb. 11:3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. Clearly Heb. 11 is the “Faith Hall of Fame.” The writer, by all these examples he cites, strives to convince his readers to duplicate their “by faith” actions, not giving up on their previous confessions of faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

⁵⁰⁴ Heb. 11:3 - worlds: The word is the plural of *aiōn* ([165](#)), ages. Though to the thinking of Westerners, “ages” has a chronological and thus immaterial connotation, that was not true for the writer of Hebrews, as the subsequent phrase “that which is seen” reveals. The author used *aiōn* three times, evidently using “a spatial concept ... of the creation as having a beginning and moving forward through long but limited time *universe, world* (Heb. 1:2; 9:26; 11:3)” ([Friberg](#)).

⁵⁰⁵ Heb. 11:3 - by the word of God: Eleven times in Genesis 1 we read that “God said” during the Creation Week – Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29. Some commentators, such as Allen P. Ross, [TBKC, OT, p. 28](#), presume that Gen. 1:1-2 is not part of the Creation Week. Unfortunately, he subscribes to the “[Chaos Theory of Origins](#).” This countermands the clear words of Moses, who said, “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy” (Exod. 20:11). God created the entire universe by the word of His mouth (Genesis 1:1-2:3; Psa. 33:6, 9; 2 Pet. 3:5). And by God’s word “the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Pet. 3:7).

Ross is not the only one who believes in “primordial chaos.” So does the Roman Catholic Church. According to [footnote 1 at Genesis 1:1](#), Genesis 1:1-2:4a “introduces the whole Pentateuch” and “...shows how God brought an

E 2 The principle involved

G 1 The existence of tangible objects: so that what is seen

G 2 Their creation by an intangible entity: was not made out of things which are visible.⁵⁰⁶

C 2 Antediluvian Illustrations of Faith 11:4-7

D 1 Abel 11:4

E 1 His offering by faith: {4} By faith Abel offered to God⁵⁰⁷E 2 His offering better than Cain's: a better sacrifice than Cain,⁵⁰⁸

E 3 The results of his offering

G 1 Righteousness: through which⁵⁰⁹ he obtained the testimony that

orderly universe out of primordial chaos.” But there was nothing chaotic about God’s creation of the Earth and the Universe. He did so in a very orderly fashion. And He created it in six solar days, not through a [gargantuan explosion 15 billion years ago](#), as the Roman Catholic Church believes.

⁵⁰⁶ Heb. 11:3 - was not made out of things which are visible: This phrase is additional support for the truth of creation *ex nihilo* – “out of nothing.” This makes the “Big Bang” theory untenable. It is one of the myths of modern science, [though many Christians subscribe to it](#).

⁵⁰⁷ Heb. 11:4 - By faith Abel offered to God: The words “by faith” translate but one Greek word, *pístis* ([4102](#)), which appears here as a Dative case, Feminine gender noun, occupying the emphatic, first place in the word order of this sentence. So the writer of Hebrews is emphasizing the “by faith” quality of Abel’s offering, as opposed to the content of the offering. In fact, the writer of Hebrews does not even mention the content of the offering as being the reason why Abel’s sacrifice was better. We conclude that Abel’s sacrifice was better because he offered it “by faith,” whereas apparently Cain did not.

⁵⁰⁸ Heb. 11:4 - a better sacrifice than Cain: The competing offerings of the first brothers are described briefly in Genesis 4:1-5. To be candid, Moses did not tell his readers why God had regard for Abel and his offering, but had no regard for Cain and his offering. There is, in fact, no record in Genesis 3 or 4 of any obligation regarding an offering. To speculate that Abel’s offering was accepted because it was a bloody offering and Cain’s was rejected because it was not goes beyond the evidence. It seems more likely that God accepted Abel and not Cain. That would have to do with heart matters, it would appear, not the content of the respective offerings. The writer of Hebrews concurs. He states that Abel offered a better offering *by virtue of his faith*. Evidently Abel had a relationship with God through faith. Evidently Cain did not. If we are going to speculate on God’s acceptance of one brother and his offering and not the other, we could as easily speculate that it was Abel’s idea in the first place to offer a grateful sacrifice to God. He did so by faith. Perhaps Cain, unwilling to be outdone by his younger brother, offered up his offering as a peremptory, “keeping up with the Joneses” gesture, and without a heart-felt attitude of gratefulness or faith. At any rate, the application to the readers of this epistle is that *they must not give up* on trusting in God and Jesus, the Messiah!

⁵⁰⁹ Heb. 11:4 - through which: “through” is the Genitive case of the Preposition *diá* ([1223](#)), and “which” is the Genitive case, Feminine gender Adjective serving as a Relative Pronoun of *hós* ([3739](#)). The nearest antecedent of “which” (*hós*) is the Feminine gender noun “sacrifice” (*thusía*, [2378](#)). But the more remote “By faith,” the Dative case noun *pístis* ([4102](#)) is also Feminine in gender. So “By faith” is also a potential antecedent, though admittedly more remote. It occurs, however, in the emphatic initial position in the word order of the sentence. Therefore, we cannot separate the two as antecedents. It is because Abel’s *sacrifice was by faith* that he obtained the testimony that he was righteous.

he was righteous,⁵¹⁰

G 2 God's approval: God testifying about his gifts,

G 3 An unending testimony: and through faith,⁵¹¹ though he is dead, he still speaks.

D 2 Enoch 11:5

E 1 The result of his faith

G 1 Translation: {5} By faith Enoch was taken up⁵¹²

G 2 Apart from death: so that he would not see death;

E 2 His consequential absence: AND HE WAS NOT FOUND

E 3 ⁵¹³The explanation of his absence: BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP;

E 4 The reason for his absence: for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

D 3 The application about faith 11:6

E 1 Faith a prerequisite for pleasing God: {6} And without faith it is

⁵¹⁰ Heb. 11:4 - he obtained the testimony that he was righteous: It was because Abel offered his sacrifice *by faith* that “he obtained the testimony” (the [Aorist](#) tense, Passive voice of *marturéō*, [3140](#)) from God that he was “righteous” (*dikaïos*, [1342](#)). This is [imputed](#) righteousness, not [personal](#) righteousness, for Abel, son of his sinful parents, was himself a sinner. No sinner can earn righteousness by good works, even the good work of offering a sacrifice – Cain offered a sacrifice, but it did him no good. For sinners, righteousness has always been [imputed](#) on the ground of our faith. In this life we strive for [personal](#) righteousness, but never ultimately obtain it. [Permanent](#) righteousness will be the blessed gift we are given after the resurrection of our mortal bodies. Then, like Jesus, we can never again be successfully tempted to sin. We will have been granted a permanent and complete immunity from sinning! What a grand and glorious state of affairs that will be!

⁵¹¹ Heb. 11:4 - through faith: NASB footnote: “Lit *it*.” The footnote is correct. The word “faith” does not appear here in the Greek text. Rather it is the Feminine gender pronoun *autós* ([846](#)), “it.” The NASB editors have surmised that the feminine pronoun “it” refers back to the feminine noun “by faith” (*pístis*, [4102](#)) at the very beginning of the sentence. That may or may not be true. There is a slightly nearer feminine noun, “sacrifice” (*thusía*, [2378](#)), though it also is nearly at the beginning of the sentence, separated from “by faith” by only one word. The NASB editors may, indeed, be correct, but even if they are not, and the writer was referring back to the “sacrifice” Abel offered, the result is the same, for the important point about his sacrifice is that Abel offered it “by faith.”

⁵¹² Heb. 11:5 - was taken up: The verb is the [Aorist](#) Passive of *metatithêmi* ([3346](#)), which means, literally, to be transferred from one place to another ([Friberg](#)). It is used 6 X in the NT, twice in this verse. Here, God transferred Enoch from Earth presumably to heaven, the abode of God. The writer is referring to the incident in Gen. 5:24, where Moses recorded, “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” The writer of Hebrews has (correctly) determined that Enoch’s “walking with God” was a life of perpetual faith. This so pleased God that He transferred Enoch from earth to be with Himself up in heaven.

⁵¹³ Heb. 11:5 - BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP: Here the writer is actually quoting Gen. 5:24. He uses *metatithêmi* ([3346](#)) here in the [Aorist](#) Active.

impossible to please *Him*,⁵¹⁴

E 2 The elements of pleasing God

G 1 Belief in His existence: for he who comes to God must believe that He is⁵¹⁵

G 2 Belief in His rewarding nature: and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.⁵¹⁶

D 4 Noah 11:7

E 1 His preparation of the ark by faith

G 1 The influence of God's warning: {7} By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen,⁵¹⁷

G 2 The response in fear: in reverence prepared an ark⁵¹⁸

G 3 The purpose of family preservation: for the salvation of his household,⁵¹⁹

E 2 The effects of his action

G 1 Condemnation of the world: by which he condemned the world,

⁵¹⁴ Heb. 11:6 - without faith it is impossible to please *Him*: This analysis by the writer encapsulates the indispensable crux of a successful human relationship not only with God, but with any human being. If you are going to get along well with another human, you must trust him. If you don't trust someone else, it is impossible to have a meaningful, intimate relationship with him (or her). If you lose faith in someone, the relationship is irreparably damaged. I have seen parishioners who have lost faith in me as a pastor. They have left my church. And they do not please me. If the author's readers deny faith in Jesus as Messiah, they deny faith in God. It is impossible to please someone, in this case God, if you don't trust Him.

⁵¹⁵ Heb. 11:6 - believe that He is: It is necessary for the one coming to God to believe that He exists. An atheist can never be pleasing to God, nor can an agnostic. That is basic and essential, but it is insufficient. As James points out, demons have a certain level of faith in the existence of God. But the thought of God makes them shudder (James 2:19). Belief in God's existence is fundamental, but if it stops there, that faith is insufficient.

⁵¹⁶ Heb. 11:6 - and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him: We humans must not only believe in God's existence. We also must believe that it makes a positive difference if we go to Him for help. Why establish a relationship with God if it makes no difference one way or the other?

⁵¹⁷ Heb. 11:7 - about things not yet seen: There are hints in Genesis that, prior to Noah's Flood, it had never rained (Gen. 2:5-6). Noah had no way to understand the cataclysmic global flood that was to come upon the earth (Gen. 7:6-24). But he believed God, and built the ark (Gen. 6:13-22).

⁵¹⁸ Heb. 11:7 - ark: The word is *kibōtós* (2787), which means, simply, a box or chest (Friberg). The writer of Hebrews uses it to refer to the "box" of the covenant in which the Ten Commandments were placed (Heb. 9:24), and to the prodigious "box" Noah built for his family and for the representative animals (Gen. 6:14-16; Heb. 11:7). This was no streamlined ocean-going vessel. It was a box measuring 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. God designed it to be model of stability in the surging waters.

⁵¹⁹ Heb. 11:7 - for the salvation of his household: "Salvation" here is [physical](#) salvation.

G 2 Inheritance of righteousness: and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.⁵²⁰

C 3 Abrahamic Family Illustrations of Faith 11:8-22

D 1 Abraham and Sarah 11:8-19

E 1 Abraham and the promise of the land 11:8-10

G 1 Abraham's departure by faith 11:8

H 1 The call of God: {8} By faith Abraham, when he was called,

H 2 The circumstances of his departure

J 1 A physical place: obeyed by going out to a place

J 2 A place to be inherited later: which he was to receive for an inheritance;⁵²¹

H 3 The “blind” nature of his faith: and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

G 2 Abraham's sojourning by faith 11:9

H 1 His living as an alien: {9} By faith he lived as an alien⁵²² in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*,

H 2 The mode of his existence

J 1 The use of tents: dwelling in tents

J 2 The compliance of his co-heirs: with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;⁵²³

⁵²⁰ Heb. 11:7 - became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith: The righteousness (*dikaíosunê*, [1343](#)) which is according to faith is [imputed](#) righteousness.

⁵²¹ Heb. 11:8 - inheritance: The inheritance (*kléronomía*, [2817](#)) was the physical land of Israel, first promised to Abram in general terms (Gen. 12:1), then more specific, eternal terms (Gen. 13:14-17), then reinforced with Yahweh's unilateral, thus unconditional, covenant (Gen. 15:7-21), the [Abrahamic Covenant](#). The [Church](#) has, by faith, inherited many blessings from Abraham. These blessings are in accordance with God's promise to Abram that through him He would bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). Some of these blessings are described in Eph. 1:3-23. But the [Church](#) has never inherited the land promised. It is my belief that, even on [New Earth](#), there will be a specific land of Israel, easily identifiable and known to all the saints throughout eternity.

⁵²² Heb. 11:9 - alien: So true was this that when Abraham wished to bury the body of Sarah, he was forced to purchase a burial plot (Gen. 23:1-20) in the land that God had promised him in perpetuity!

⁵²³ Heb. 11:9 - Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise: The promises and covenant God made with Abraham he also made specifically with Isaac (Gen. 26:1-6) (and not Ishmael – Gen. 17:15-22) and with Jacob (Gen. 28:1-4, 10-15) (and not Esau – Gen. 27:1-40; Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:11-13). These inclusions and exclusions have been

G 3 Abraham's concept of faith 11:10

H 1 He looked for a permanent city: {10} for he was looking for the city which has foundations,⁵²⁴

H 2 He anticipated God's action: whose architect and builder is God.

E 2 Sarah and the promise of the seed 11:11-12

G 1 The factors in Sarah's faith in the promise 11:11

H 1 The miracle of conception

J 1 The power for conception while barren: {11} By faith even Sarah herself⁵²⁵ received ability to conceive,⁵²⁶

J 2 The time of her conception – after menopause: even beyond the proper time of life,⁵²⁷

H 2 The basis for conception – her faith in the faithfulness of God: since she considered Him faithful who had promised.⁵²⁸

at the heart of the animosity between the sons of Israel (Jacob) and the sons of Ishmael and Esau ever since.

⁵²⁴ Heb. 11:10 - city which has foundations: "To cultured men in the first century, the city was the highest form of civilized existence." (Thomas Constable, quoting [Leon Morris](#), viewed Jan. 26, 2016). Abram had lived in a sophisticated city, Ur of the Chaldees. He left to become a pastoral nomad without a city. He was out of his element, but he did so by faith. Hebrews 11:10 must be understood on two levels. On the first level, what Abraham was looking for and believed God would eventually give his descendants, was a city in the promised land – a city that God would eventually provide. He did not know what that city was or where it would be situated, but he knew that God would engineer it. That city turned out to be Jerusalem, the capital city of the nation [Israel](#), the inheritance of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. On the second level, the city which will more than fulfill Abram's expectations (and ours) is none other than [New Jerusalem](#), an incredibly large and beautiful city with enormous foundations – a city built by God (Rev. 21:1-22:5). It too is the capital city of redeemed [Israel](#) in connection with [New Earth](#), and it is, as well, the home of the [Church](#), the [Bride of Christ](#).

⁵²⁵ Heb. 11:11 - even Sarah herself: The NASB text omits the feminine adjective "barren" (from *steiros*, [4723](#)) found in the Greek NT [UBS4](#). The text should read, "By faith even barren Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life" Obviously, we derive our English word "sterile" from this Greek word. Sarah was infertile, and unable to conceive and bear a child. This had been proven over decades of marriage to Abraham.

⁵²⁶ Heb. 11:11 - received ability to conceive: The NASB footnote reads, "Lit *power for the laying down of seed*."

⁵²⁷ Heb. 11:11 - even beyond the proper time of life: Sarah had two strikes against her. She was barren, and she had now reached the age of menopause. Medically speaking, it was impossible for her to bear a child. Technically, the word "proper" does not appear in the Greek text. It was added by the NASB editors to convey the proper (pardon the pun) thought.

⁵²⁸ Heb. 11:11 - since she considered Him faithful who had promised: There is no explicit evidence in the Hebrew text of Genesis 18 or Genesis 21 that Sarah considered God faithful. In Gen. 18:9-15, God had appeared to Abraham and specifically promised that Sarah, whom Yahweh singled out by name, would bear a son next year.

G 2 The result of Sarah's faith in the promise 11:12

H 1 Reproduction by "dead" Abraham: {12} Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that,

H 2 Numberless progeny

J 1 Like the stars: *as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER*,

J 2 Like the sand: AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE. ⁵²⁹

E 3 Parenthetical: The temporal nature of the faith heroes 11:13-16

G 1 The postponed fulfillment 11:13

H 1 Their deaths preceded fulfillment: {13} All these died in faith, without receiving the promises,

H 2 Their gaze was fixed on distant realities: but having seen them and having welcomed ⁵³⁰ them from a distance,

H 3 The implication of their faith – their entire lives on earth would be lived out in the Land of Promise as foreigners and aliens: and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ⁵³¹

Sarah had laughed. Yahweh took offense at her lack of faith and asked, "Is anything too difficult for Yahweh?" (Gen. 18:14). He then repeated His promise. Sarah then denied she had laughed (Gen. 18:15), to which Yahweh had retorted, "No, but you did laugh." Nothing more is stated about Sarah's change of heart. All we know is that, in Gen. 21:1, we are told that Yahweh took note of Sarah and did for her as He had promised. In the next verse (Gen. 21:2) we read that Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time. "Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.' And she said, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age'" (Gen. 21:6-7). Either the writer of Hebrews simply deduces that Sarah believed God, or it was revealed to him by special revelation. Appropriately, Abraham named his son, "He Laughs" or "He Laughed" (*Yitschaq*, [3327](#)) (Gen. 21:3). The adjective "faithful" (Heb. 11:11) (*pistós*, [4102](#)), in its active sense designates one who is trusting, believing, or full of faith. Here it is used in its passive sense, designating God, who is faithful, trustworthy, reliable (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

⁵²⁹ Heb. 11:12 - as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE: The author quotes here from Gen. 15:5; 22:17, where God promised to Abraham a multitude of descendants, and from Gen. 32:11-12, where Jacob quotes the promise as a basis for securing protection from his brother Esau.

⁵³⁰ Heb. 11:13 - having welcomed: These two words translate the [Aorist](#) Plural [Participle](#) of *aspázomai* ([782](#)), meaning, "strictly *embrace*; hence *greet, salute, express good wishes*; ... figuratively, ... of things *be happy about, welcome, anticipate* (Heb. 11:13)" ([Friberg](#)).

⁵³¹ Heb. 11:13 - strangers and exiles upon the earth:
 "Strangers" is the plural of *xénos* ([3581](#)), used substantively as "stranger, foreigner, exile" ([Friberg](#)). We derive our word "xenophobic" from this word.
 "Exiles" is the plural of *parepidēmos* ([3927](#)), "of one who stays for a while as an alien in a place ...; substantively *temporary resident, sojourner, stranger*" ([Friberg](#)). My wife and I lived for a time in South

G 2 Their actions of faith indicate their aspirations toward a heavenly country 11:14-16

H 1 Their search for a homeland: {14} For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 11:14

H 2 Their rejection of their country of origin 11:15

J 1 If they had wanted to return to Ur: {15} And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out,⁵³²

J 2 They had the opportunity: they would have had opportunity to return.

H 3 Their desire for a heavenly country: {16} But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one.⁵³³ 11:16

J 1 God's approval of their desire: Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God;⁵³⁴

J 2 God's preparation of a city: for He has prepared a city for them.⁵³⁵

Australia as temporary residents.

“On the earth” – “earth” is *gē’* (1093), which, like its OT counterpart, *erets* (776), can mean either “earth” or “land.” Here it means the latter, with specific reference to the Land of Canaan, which the patriarchs never possessed, though they had been promised it. They lived there as foreigners and temporary residents, but with their eyes of faith, they continually embraced the land which they had been promised as their own, even though they possessed nothing except the burial plots they purchased. Even today Israelis possess only about half the land that has been promised them. The rest is occupied by Arabs. That will all change during the Messiah’s [Millennial Reign](#), and also, I believe, upon [New Earth](#).

⁵³² Heb. 11:15 - that country from which they went out: i.e., Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11:28, 31; 15:7).

⁵³³ Heb. 11:16 - a heavenly one: We must not take this as meaning that Abraham always expected a country up in heaven, and never upon earth. Rather, the country he expected would originate from heaven. Similarly, when John the Baptist and Jesus himself announced that “the kingdom of the heavens had drawn near” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17) their listeners expected the Messianic Kingdom *upon earth*. The word for “heavenly” – *epouranios* (2032) is used six times in Hebrews: Heb. 3:1; 6:4; 8:5; 9:23; 11:16; 12:22.

⁵³⁴ Heb. 11:16 - Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: literally, the text reads, “Therefore God is not ashamed of them – to be called their God.”

⁵³⁵ Heb. 11:16 - He has prepared a city for them: On the first level, that city is earthly Jerusalem, [Zion](#), first captured by David from the Jebusites about 1000 B.C. It remained in possession of [Israel](#) on and off during the [subsequent centuries](#). It was [recaptured by Israel](#) from the Arabs in 1967, and remains in Jewish hands, despite great international consternation. Moreover, the Temple Mount is defiled by an Islamic shrine and mosque. Jerusalem will be restored completely under Israeli and [Messianic](#) control in the [Millennial Age](#) (e.g., Isaiah 60-61; 65:18-25; 66:10-24).

On the second level, that city is [New Jerusalem](#), the holy capital city of [Israel](#) and [New Earth](#) in the Eternal Age (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

How much of this Abraham understood is impossible to ascertain. But according to this text (Heb. 11:16), he had expectations of a situation that would certainly supersede his experience living as an exile and a foreigner here in

E 4 Abraham and the promise of the seed 11:17-19

G 1 Abraham's act of faith 11:17

H 1 His trial by God: {17} By faith Abraham, when he was tested,

H 2 His offering up of Isaac: offered up Isaac,⁵³⁶

J 1 Though Isaac was the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham God had made: and he who had received the promises

J 2 Yet he offered up his only son [of promise]: was offering up his only begotten *son*;⁵³⁷

G 2 The implications of the act – destruction of the line of promise: {18} *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."⁵³⁸ 11:18

G 3 Abraham's concept of faith 11:19

H 1 He believed God would raise up Isaac: {19} He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead,⁵³⁹

H 2 In a sense God did so: from which he also received him back as a type.

D 2 Isaac 11:20

E 1 His blessing of Jacob and Esau by faith: {20} By faith Isaac blessed

a land he did not yet possess.

It is my expectation that there will be a Land of Promise, the country of [Israel](#), that exists upon [New Earth](#). God made promises to Abraham about land in perpetuity. In my opinion, there *has* to be a land of promise for Abraham's descendants upon [New Earth](#). Gentiles will pasture the flocks of the [Israelis](#) and farm their fields (Isa. 61:5), but the land of [Israel](#) will exist on [New Earth](#), as well as during the [Millennium](#).

⁵³⁶ Heb. 11:17 - offered up Isaac: This refers to the incident narrated in Gen. 22:1-19. God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son of promise. God provided a substitute ram. This, of course, anticipated God's sacrificing of His own Son, who was our substitute ram.

⁵³⁷ Heb. 11:17 - only begotten: The term is *monogenês*'s ([3439](#)), the same term used of the Messiah in relation to God (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).

⁵³⁸ Heb. 11:18 - IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED: The author quotes Gen. 21:12. A more literal rendering is "in Isaac shall be called your seed" (singular *spërma*, [4690](#)).

⁵³⁹ Heb. 11:19 - to raise *people* even from the dead: Although we are not told this in the Gen. 22:1-19 account, evidently Abraham believed that, based on God's promise that his seed had been designated to be called through Isaac, if he took his life, God would necessarily raise him back to life. What a remarkable faith!

Jacob and Esau,⁵⁴⁰

- E 2 His blessing was prophetic – a predictive act of faith: even regarding things to come.

D 3 Jacob 11:21

- E 1 His dying blessing of Joseph's sons: {21} By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph,⁵⁴¹
- E 2 His blessing indicative of worship: and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

D 4 Joseph 11:22

- E 1 His belief in Israel's return to the land of Canaan: {22} By faith Joseph,⁵⁴² when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel,
- E 2 His act of faith concerning the transfer of his remains: and gave orders concerning his bones.

C 4 Exodus-Era [Israeli](#) Illustrations of Faith 11:23-31

D 1 Moses' parents 11:23

- E 1 Their hiding Moses by faith: {23} By faith Moses,⁵⁴³ when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents,
- E 2 Their awareness of his worth: because they saw he was a beautiful child;

⁵⁴⁰ Heb. 11:20 - By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come: This is all the more remarkable in that Isaac thought he was blessing Esau, but he was actually blessing Jacob (Gen. 27:1-29). When it came time to bless his preferred son, Esau, he prophetically blessed him with an inferior blessing (Gen. 27:30-40).

⁵⁴¹ Heb. 11:21 - Jacob ... blessed each of the sons of Joseph: The writer refers to the historical incident in Gen. 48:1-22. The blessing was prophetic, and it was by faith. As a result of his prophetic, "by-faith" blessing, Ephraim, the younger son, precedes Manasseh, and becomes greater than he (Gen. 48:17-20).

⁵⁴² Heb. 11:22 - By faith Joseph: It is interesting that three of these "by faith" episodes deal with speeches of patriarchs: (1) "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau" (Heb. 11:20); (2) "By faith Jacob ... blessed each of the sons of Joseph" (Heb. 11:21); and now (3) "By faith Joseph ... made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones" (Heb. 11:22 cf. Gen. 50:22-26). It is interesting that the writer omitted any mention of the lengthy account of Jacob's blessing of each of his twelve sons (Gen. 49:1-28).

⁵⁴³ Heb. 11:23 - By faith Moses: Here, in contrast to the other "By faith's," which apply to the person named, the named person's unnamed parents are the ones who had the faith. Moses is singled out because he is the one who has the name recognition. Most people could not name his parents. The phrases "when he was born" and "was hidden" are, respectively, the [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *gennāō* (1080), "having been born," and the [Aorist](#) Indicative Passive of *kríptō* (2928). Moses was hidden by his parents (the word is actually the plural of *patēr*, 3962), which, in the singular, is the word for "father." Ordinarily, the plural would be "fathers," but here, obviously, "parents" is an appropriate translation.

E 3 Their defiance of law: and they were not afraid of the king's edict.⁵⁴⁴

D 2 Moses 11:24-28

E 1 His initial choice by faith 11:24-26

G 1 The explanation of his choice 11:24

H 1 When he was an adult: {24} By faith Moses,⁵⁴⁵ when he had grown up,

H 2 His abdication of the line of Pharaoh: refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

G 2 The implications of his choice 11:25

H 1 Willingness to suffer with God's people: {25} choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God

H 2 Denial of momentary sinful pleasure: than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

G 3 The rationale of his choice 11:26

H 1 The reality that reproach for Christ is more valuable than the riches obtainable by remaining in Egypt: {26} considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ Heb. 11:23 - and they were not afraid of the king's edict: Here is one of the few times civil disobedience is applauded by a NT writer. It was applauded because it adhered to God's higher law, "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). Another instance was when the Apostles chose to defy their civil/religious government and preach the gospel in order to obey God (Acts 4:18-20). When believers choose to defy the civil government in order to obey God's higher law, they must sometimes suffer potentially disastrous consequences (Dan. 6:1-18). Ordinarily, believers must submit to every ordinance of man (Rom. 13:1-7).

⁵⁴⁵ Heb. 11:24 - By faith Moses: This is the second verse in a row that starts out, "By faith Moses," the first being Heb. 11:23. In the preceding verse, it was actually Moses' parents who demonstrated faith. In this instance, it is Moses himself who exhibits faith. He did so by refusing to identify with his Egyptian upbringing, and opted instead to endure ill-treatment with the people of God. The crisis point in Moses' identification with his Hebrew kinsmen is recorded in Exod. 2:11-12, which cites his rescue of a Hebrew slave being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster.

⁵⁴⁶ Heb. 11:26 - considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: First, the Greek text here is titular - "the Christ." It may be a bit baffling to the reader, as it was initially to me, personally, to attempt to understand how Moses could have had any inkling that there would ever be a Messiah for his people, much less be willing to accept insults on behalf of the Messiah. This is particularly true when the development of an anointed king for Israel would take nearly four centuries - until the time of Samuel, Israel's first king-maker.

But in response to my question, Robert and Ruth Seth, relatives of mine, have pointed out [in an unpublished email] that Moses probably had access to the prophetic blessing of Jacob to his son Judah, recorded in Gen. 49:9-10:

{9} "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? {10} "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

H 2 His view of the final returns of the reward: for he was looking to the reward.

E 2 His flight from Egypt by faith 11:27

G 1 His contempt for the king: {27} By faith he left Egypt,⁵⁴⁷ not fearing the wrath of the king;⁵⁴⁸

G 2 His reliance upon the invisible God: for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

E 3 His keeping of the Passover by faith 11:28

G 1 His observation of the Passover and the blood sprinkling: {28} By faith he kept the Passover⁵⁴⁹ and the sprinkling of the blood,

G 2 His obedience as an act of preservation: so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

D 3 The [Israeli](#) people 11:29-30

E 1 The Red Sea incident 11:29

G 1 Their passing through the Red Sea by faith: {29} By faith they passed through the Red Sea⁵⁵⁰ as though *they were passing*

So Moses understood that a kingly figure would arise from among the sons of Judah. Moreover, Moses chose to identify with and suffer with the people of this coming king of Judah rather than to partake of the fabulous wealth of being associated with the king of Egypt. A friend of mine, Arlie Rauch, who is a bit of a wag, also offered a second explanation [in an unpublished email]:

Someone pointed out that Moses had prophesied of Christ, and he did, but his prophesying doesn't in itself produce the clarity that we could now have concerning the Messiah and it seems to not require that Moses understood his experience to be like Christ's or even that they were a part of Christ's. It's just that Apollos sees that similarity and uses it to properly elevate Moses' experience. (Oh, excuse me, we don't really know who wrote Hebrews!)

Both explanations are possible. I give a slight edge to the first explanation.

⁵⁴⁷ Heb. 11:27 - By faith he left Egypt: The author still is still speaking of Moses. The departure from Egypt is probably Moses' own personal departure in Heb. 2:15, rather than the Exodus, some forty years later. This view fits in better with the chronology of the Exodus narrative. (So also [Constable](#).)

⁵⁴⁸ Heb. 11:27 - not fearing the wrath of the king: If Moses' own personal departure is in view here, this phrase seems counterintuitive (Ex. 2:14-15). However, as [Constable](#) points out, citing P. E. Hughes, the writer of Hebrews understood Moses' departure from Egypt motivated not primarily out of fear of the king, but out of a desire to protect the destiny he felt God had for him.

⁵⁴⁹ Heb. 11:28 - By faith he kept the Passover: The NASB note correctly observes, "Lit *has kept*." The Passover and its historical significance is recorded in Exod. 12:21-32.

⁵⁵⁰ Heb. 11:29 - By faith they passed through the Red Sea: This mighty salvation is recorded in Exod. 14:1-31. There is [intriguing evidence](#) that the arm of the Red Sea (Sea [*yâm*, [3220](#)] of Reeds [*sûph*, [5488](#)] in Hebrew, e.g., Exod. 15:4) was the Gulf of Aqaba, not the Gulf of Suez. If the Gulf of Aqaba is the correct crossing, Mt. Sinai was

through dry land;

G 2 The drowning of the Egyptians: and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.⁵⁵¹

E 2 The Jericho incident 11:30

G 1 The result of faith – the destruction of the walls: {30} By faith the walls of Jericho fell down⁵⁵²

G 2 The act of faith – marching around the walls: after they had been encircled for seven days.

D 4 Rahab 11:31

E 1 The result of faith – self-preservation: {31} By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient,⁵⁵³

E 2 The act of faith – receiving the spies: after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

C 5 Later [Israeli](#) Illustrations of Faith 11:32-40

D 1 The people of faith cited: {32} And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell 11:32

located in Arabia, not in the Sinai peninsula.

⁵⁵¹ Heb. 11:29 - and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned: There are many skeptics of the Bible, who, after acknowledging that *Yam Suph* means “Sea of Reeds,” not “Red Sea,” scoff at the miracle of Israel crossing the body of water (Ex. 14:1-22), implying that they could have waded across. If their theory is correct, then how do they explain the fact that the entire Egyptian army drowned in the Sea (Ex. 14:23-31)? In their efforts to “de-miraculize” the narratives of the Bible, they shoot themselves in the foot.

A far better explanation is to acknowledge that even the mighty Nile River had reeds along its banks (Ex. 2:3, 5). Consequently, “Sea of Reeds” need only suggest that there were many reeds along the banks of the Sea, not that it was a shallow, fordable inlet. I myself have swum in ocean waters that contained so many sea weeds close to the shore that it was an unpleasant swim. Yet I was under no illusion that the water farther out was not deep enough to drown in and to float vast ships. The skeptic searches for reasons to disbelieve God’s Word, not for reasons to believe it and obey it. The Biblicist takes God at His word, searches for reasons to harmonize apparent conflicts, and endeavors to obey it.

⁵⁵² Heb. 11:30 - By faith the walls of Jericho fell down: This historical event is recorded in Joshua 6:1-27. Of course, it was not the walls which had faith, it was the people who encircled them for seven days. One might have expected the passive voice of *piptō* (4098) – “were caused to fall down,” but it is the active voice, “fell down.” The passive voice is reserved for the next word, “having been surrounded,” the [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *kuklōō* (2944).

⁵⁵³ Heb. 11:31 - By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient: It is more than fascinating that this prominent prostitute (*pōrnē*, 4204) in Jericho is singled out in the “Faith Hall of Fame” of Hebrews 11. It was Rahab’s faith that led her to shelter the two Israeli spies (Josh. 2:1-21). Her faith led to her eternal salvation and to her eventual physical salvation (Josh. 6:1-25). On account of her faith, the Gentile prostitute-turned-convert-to-Israel-and-Israel’s-God received another blessing – she was included in the family line of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5)! To understand the use the author James makes of Rahab and faith and works, see the [footnote on Rahab](#) at James 2:25.

- E 1 of Gideon,⁵⁵⁴
- E 2 Barak,⁵⁵⁵
- E 3 Samson,⁵⁵⁶
- E 4 Jephthah,⁵⁵⁷
- E 5 of David,⁵⁵⁸
- E 6 and Samuel⁵⁵⁹
- E 7 and the prophets⁵⁶⁰
- D 2 The exploits done by faith 11:33-38
 - E 1 Acts of overcoming 11:33-35a
 - G 1 In subduing kingdoms: {33} who by faith conquered kingdoms, 11:33
 - G 2 In the area of right living
 - H 1 Performance of righteousness: performed *acts of* righteousness,
 - H 2 Obtaining of promises: obtained promises,
 - G 3 In the area of deliverance from trials

⁵⁵⁴ Heb. 11:32 - Gideon: His acts of faith as a judge of Israel are recorded in Judges 6-8. (See [Brief Outlines of Judges.](#))

⁵⁵⁵ Heb. 11:32 - Barak: Another judge, his exploits are actually recorded before those of Gideon – in Judges 4-5. (See [Brief Outlines of Judges.](#))

⁵⁵⁶ Heb. 11:32 - Samson: Still another judge of Israel, whose mercurial career is recorded in Judges 13-16. (See [Brief Outlines of Judges.](#))

⁵⁵⁷ Heb. 11:32 - Jephthah: His career, including his cryptic sacrifice of his daughter is recorded in Judges 10:6-12:7. (See [Brief Outlines of Judges.](#))

⁵⁵⁸ Heb. 11:32 - David: David is the first king mentioned. His amazing and, at times, disappointing career is recounted in 1 Samuel 16-31 (see [Brief Outlines of 1 Samuel](#)).

⁵⁵⁹ Heb. 11:32 - Samuel: Samuel was Israel's last judge, and also a prophet. He was Israel's first king-maker. His career is recorded in 1 Sam. 1-19; 25; and even makes a macabre appearance after his death in 1 Sam. 28 (see [Brief Outlines of 1 Samuel](#)).

⁵⁶⁰ Heb. 11:32 - the prophets: These unnamed prophets would include men like Elijah and Elisha, those we have designated as the "Major Prophets" and the "Minor Prophets."

- H 1 Immobilized lions: shut the mouths of lions, ⁵⁶¹
 - H 2 Disarmed fire: {34} quenched the power of fire, ⁵⁶² 11:34
 - H 3 Escaped destruction: escaped the edge of the sword,
 - H 4 Made strong: from weakness were made strong,
- G 4 In the area of warfare
 - H 1 Valiant fighting: became mighty in war, ⁵⁶³
 - H 2 Defeating of enemies: put foreign armies to flight.
- G 5 In the area of death: {35} Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; ⁵⁶⁴ 11:35a
- E 2 Acts of enduring 11:35b-38
 - G 1 Enduring general torture: and others were tortured, 11:35b
 - H 1 Their refusal of deliverance: not accepting their release,
 - H 2 Their hope of greater reward in resurrection: so that they might obtain a better resurrection;
 - G 2 Enduring civil punishment 11:36
 - H 1 Trials with mocking and scourging: {36} and others experienced mockings and scourgings,
 - H 2 Imprisonments: yes, also chains and imprisonment. ⁵⁶⁵
 - G 3 Enduring public persecution 11:37a

⁵⁶¹ Heb. 11:33 - shut the mouths of lions: The author certainly is alluding to the harrowing deliverance of the statesman Daniel (Dan. 6).

⁵⁶² Heb 11:34 - quenched the power of fire: The author is probably referring to the experience of Daniel's three friends in exile, who refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, were cast into a blazing furnace, but miraculously emerged unharmed (Dan. 3).

⁵⁶³ Heb. 11:34 - became mighty in war: David's amazing underdog victory over Goliath (1 Sam. 16) and his subsequent exploits on the battlefield come to mind, for example, those related in 2 Sam. 8-10.

⁵⁶⁴ Heb. 11:35 - Women received *back* their dead by resurrection: Elijah the prophet raised back to life the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24). The prophet Elisha brought back to life the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37).

⁵⁶⁵ Heb. 11:36 - chains and imprisonment: The prophet Micaiah was imprisoned by King Ahab for predicting the king's demise in battle (1 Kings 22:1-40). Micaiah was correct, by the way.

H 1 Stoning: {37} They were stoned,⁵⁶⁶

H 2 Sawing asunder: they were sawn in two,⁵⁶⁷

H 3 Temptation: they were tempted,

H 4 Murder: they were put to death with the sword;

G 4 Enduring deprivations 11:37b-38

H 1 Insufficient clothing: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, 11:37b

H 2 Devoid of material goods: being destitute,

H 3 Suffering affliction and torment: afflicted, ill-treated

H 4 Devoid of proper esteem: {38} (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), 11:38

H 5 Devoid of sufficient housing: wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

D 3 The future application 11:39-40

E 1 Their future destiny 11:39

G 1 They gained God's approval through their faith: {39} And all these, having gained approval through their faith,⁵⁶⁸

G 2 God did not fulfill His promises to them in their lifetime: did not receive what was promised,⁵⁶⁹

E 2 God's provision 11:40

G 1 Of something better for us: {40} because God had provided

⁵⁶⁶ Heb. 11:37 - They were stoned: King Joash ordered the stoning of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest for berating Israel on account of their forsaking the LORD and pursuing idolatry (2 Chron. 24:1-27).

⁵⁶⁷ Heb. 11:37 - sawn in two: [Rabbinic tradition](#) has it that the evil King Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawn in two because he had hidden from the king in the trunk of a cedar tree. King Manasseh had sought for Isaiah because the latter had predicted the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem.

⁵⁶⁸ Heb. 11:39 - having gained approval through their faith: Literally, "having obtained testimony through their faith" The verbal form is the Plural [Aorist](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *marturéō* ([3140](#)).

⁵⁶⁹ Heb. 11:39 - did not receive what was promised: I.e., all that was included in the actual coming of the Messiah (*RSB*). Of course, they will eventually receive everything promised them, but by the time they had died, they had not yet received what they had been promised. The faith of a believer must be a life-long faith. One must never give up his faith. The believers to whom the author of Hebrews was writing were being tempted to give up their faith in Messiah and revert to Judaism.

something better for us,⁵⁷⁰

G 2 The inclusive perfection: so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.⁵⁷¹

B 3 The Application of Past Lessons to the Present Time 12

C 1 The Lesson from Past Witnesses 12:1-2

D 1 The existence of many witnesses: {1} Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,⁵⁷² 12:1a

D 2 The ensuing command 12:1b

E 1 The command of self-divestment

G 1 Of weights: let us also lay aside every encumbrance⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰ Heb. 11:40 - because God had provided something better for us: more literally, “God – on our behalf – something better having foreseen for Himself” The verbal form is the [Aorist](#) Singular Masculine Middle [Participle](#) of *problēpō* (4265), which occurs only here in the NT. In other words, God had foreseen for Himself something better on our behalf. The indefinite “something better” is not spelled out by the author. Both the OT heroes of the “Faith Hall of Fame” and we [Church Age](#) believers will participate in that “something better.” It does not appear that the readers had yet participated in it, for neither they (the OT saints) nor we (NT saints) have been made “perfect.” That “something better” does not, evidently, refer to the [First Coming](#) of the Messiah, so it evidently refers to His [Second Coming](#), at which time He will establish His [Kingdom](#) here upon Earth.

⁵⁷¹ Heb. 11:40 - so that apart from us they would not be made perfect: The OT saints will be resurrected to take part in Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. We participants in the [Church](#) will appear with Christ in His [Kingdom](#) as His [Bride](#). That appears to be the “perfected” or, better, “completed” stage to which the author refers. The verb is the [Aorist](#) Subjunctive Passive Plural of *teleiōō* (5048). That dual participation will carry over in the [Eternal State](#). Both the [Church](#), represented by the “twelve [Apostles](#) of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:14), and redeemed [Israel](#), represented by “the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (Rev. 21:12) will enjoy completed fellowship and participation in [New Jerusalem](#), our jointly-shared Eternal Capital City.

⁵⁷² Heb. 12:1 - so great a cloud of witnesses: The writer refers to such witnesses as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, etc. The writer is not necessarily suggesting that these witnesses (plural of *mártus*, 3144) are ensconced in a celestial grandstand, peering down at us Christians below on the track of life and alternately applauding our successes or bemoaning our failures. Rather, they are witnesses in the sense that their lives vigorously proclaim the steadfast perseverance necessary to live by faith (adapted from [Friberg](#)). Nevertheless, the word “witness” can imply a spectator (Heb. 10:28; 1 Tim. 6:12) (so [Constable](#)). I have often wondered how much the saints above know what is happening on earth. I suspect they know that which, and only that which God permits them to know or observe. I also am confident that, depending on what they observe, they are sometimes gratified by our progress. At other times, they must be enormously dismayed.

There is no Biblical evidence for praying to the departed saints (such as prayers to Mary, the mother of Jesus and His siblings, [Catechism, paragraph 971](#)). Nor is there any Biblical evidence for praying on behalf of the dead (Catholic Encyclopedia, [Prayers for the Dead](#)) nor of paying money to make atonement for the dead in order to free them from their sin (as is claimed by Rome, and justified on the basis of [2 Maccabees 12:40-46](#)). (2 Maccabees cannot be Scripture because it is not included in the Hebrew Bible. It was written in Greek, not Hebrew, a fact which even the [Introduction](#) to 2 Maccabees freely admits.)

⁵⁷³ Heb. 12:1 - let us lay aside every encumbrance: “encumbrance” is *óngkos* (3591), appearing only here in the NT. It means a “weight, encumbrance, impediment; figuratively *hindrance* (Heb. 12:1)” ([Friberg](#)). There are some things that may not be sins in the life-long marathon race of the Christian life, but they will slow us down. These we need to jettison.

- G 2 Of pet sins: and the sin which so easily entangles us,⁵⁷⁴
 - E 2 The command to live steadfastly: and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,⁵⁷⁵
- D 3 The ensuing object of attention 12:2
 - E 1 The command to focus on the Messiah: {2} fixing our eyes on Jesus,
 - E 2 The role of the Messiah in regard to our faith
 - G 1 Founder: the author⁵⁷⁶
 - G 2 Perfecter: and perfecter⁵⁷⁷ of faith,⁵⁷⁸
 - E 3 The past action of the Messiah
 - G 1 His motivation – future joy: who for the joy set before Him⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁴ Heb. 12:1 - and the sin which so easily entangles us: “sin” is *hamartía* (266); “which so easily entangles us” translates the single adjective *euperístatos* (2139), used only here in the NT. Strictly speaking, this adjective means *cleverly placing itself around, to exert tight control*; hence *easily entangling, controlling tightly* (Heb. 12:1)” (Friberg). I suspect that the entangling sin may well be different for each Christian. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses, our own susceptibilities, our own deficiencies in our spiritual immune systems.

⁵⁷⁵ Heb. 12:1 - let us run with endurance the race that is set before us: I have often said that the Christian life is a life-long marathon, not a sprint. Endurance is the key, and so is perseverance. The word “endurance” (*hupomonê*, 5281) appears early in this clause, and is thus a key element. It conveys “(1) as a basic attitude or frame of mind *patience, steadfastness* (2 Cor. 12:12; probably 2 Thess. 3:5); (2) as steadfast adherence to a course of action in spite of difficulties and testings *perseverance, endurance, fortitude* (Rom. 5:3, 4; probably Heb. 10:36; perhaps 2 Thess. 3:5)” (Friberg). Both these flavors appear here in Heb. 12:1.

The author uses an athletic metaphor here. He urges, “let us run,” the [Present](#) tense, Subjunctive mood of *tréchō* (5143). It is what we call a “hortatory subjunctive.” The author urges us to action. The word translated “race” is actually the noun *agōn* (73), from which we derive our word “agony.” This is a tough, life-long race. And we need to agonize with endurance as we run this marathon that God has set before us! This seldom-used word, elsewhere employed by Paul, is translated as “conflict” (Php. 1:30); “struggle” (Col. 2:1); “opposition” (1 Thess. 2:2); “fight” (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). Connecting it with the exhortation, “let us run” by the author of Hebrews, the translators have appropriately translated *agōn* (73) as “race.”

⁵⁷⁶ Heb. 12:2 - author: *archêgós* (747) – “(1) strictly *one who goes first on the path*; hence *leader, prince, pioneer* (Heb. 2:10); (2) as one who causes something to begin *originator, founder, initiator* (Heb. 12:2)” (Friberg). In my opinion, “originator” or “founder” would be a better translation here than “author.” We generally think of an author as one who writes books. That certainly is not the meaning here. Jesus is the founder of “the faith” we follow.

NASB translates this word as “Prince” in Acts 3:15 and 5:31. That translation is certainly appropriate for the latter passage, but the former would be better translated as “Originator” (of life) – so [Net Bible](#).

⁵⁷⁷ Heb. 12:2 - perfecter: *teleiōtês* (5051), used only here in the NT. It means “perfecter, finisher,” used of “Jesus, the one who brings faith to its highest attainment” (Friberg). Another synonym would be “completer.”

⁵⁷⁸ Heb. 12:2 - of faith: more literally, “of the faith.” There is an article in front of *pístis* (4102). So it is speaking about “the faith” as a body of belief, and a way of life. A paraphrase of this entire phrase would be, “looking to Jesus, the architect and finish carpenter of the belief (system to which we subscribe).”

⁵⁷⁹ Heb. 12:2 - the joy set before Him: Jesus, I am confident, was not only looking forward to the joys of return to majesty and glory with His Father, but also to the joy of His having secured the redemption of millions upon millions of believers. These would all be related to Him in some way as the Messiah, the Anointed King of Israel and

G 2 His endurance – shameful crucifixion

H 1 endured the cross,⁵⁸⁰H 2 despising the shame,⁵⁸¹E 4 The present position of the Messiah – seated at God's right hand: and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.⁵⁸²

C 2 The Lesson from the Messiah's Actions 12:3-4

D 1 The call to consider the endurance of the Messiah: {3} For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, 12:3a

D 2 The purpose of the consideration 12:3b-4

E 1 To ward off weariness and weak resolve: so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.⁵⁸³ 12:3b

E 2 To reveal their lack of resolve to fight sin fiercely: {4} You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 12:4

C 3 The Lesson Concerning Discipline 12:5-13

the world. Jesus was anticipating millions of “companions” (Heb. 1:9) and “brothers” (Rom. 8:29).

⁵⁸⁰ Heb. 12:2 - cross: *staurós* ([4716](#)), the instrument of torture and capital punishment employed by the Roman government (Matt. 27:40, 42); but the means of reconciliation (Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20) and deliverance from the Law of God (Col. 2:14). The cross also symbolizes a message that is foolishness to those who are perishing, but the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 5:11).

⁵⁸¹ Heb. 12:2 - despising the shame: The Greek text states, “shame despising” “Shame” is *aischúnê* ([152](#)), “shame, embarrassment, humiliation” ([Friberg](#)). God-come-in-the-flesh, the Creator of the Universe, came to earth to be Israel's Prophet, Priest, and King. Israel was contemptuous of Jesus, and, through the agency of the Roman government, had him flogged, stripped practically naked, tortured, humiliated, and put to death; “despising” is the *Aorist Participle* of *kataphronéō* ([2706](#)). The sense here is that Jesus disparaged or disregarded shame connected with His crucifixion and ill-treatment by His nation (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

⁵⁸² Heb. 12:2 - and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God: The fact that Jesus has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God (Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12) demonstrates that a certain portion of His work has been completed. He has, for the time being, completed His ministry as a Prophet. This He carried out during His life upon earth. When He allowed Himself to be sacrificed as God's ultimate offering for sin, He was serving as Priest. Jesus has not yet begun His rule as King. He is presently following Divine instructions, and is sitting at God's right hand, awaiting the time when His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet (Psalm 110:1; Heb. 1:13; 10:10-13). But He is not doing nothing up there. If the author of Hebrews says anything at all, he makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is presently exercising His ministry as the Great High Priest (Heb. 2:17-3:1; 4:14-16; 5:5-6, 9-10; 6:19-20; 7:17, 20-28; 8:1-6; 9:11-14, 24; 10:19-22). His rule as King will begin when He returns to Earth. That's what the Messiah was meant to do – rule over the nation of Israel and the nations of the world here upon the earth. That is what He said, isn't it (Luke 19:11-27)?

⁵⁸³ Heb. 12:3 - so that you will not grow weary and lose heart: This has been the concern of the author the whole time. In spite of whatever pressures they have been experiencing to return to Judaism and repudiate Christianity, he encourages them to remain true to Jesus – and not to grow weary and lose heart in the battle.

D 1 The lesson of discipline as stemming from Scriptural exhortation 12:5-6

E 1 Their forgetfulness of the exhortation: {5} and you have forgotten the exhortation 12:5a

E 2 The exhortation directed to sons: which is addressed to you as sons,⁵⁸⁴

E 3 The essence of the exhortation 12:5b-6

G 1 Incorrect attitudes 12:5b

H 1 Belittling God's chastening: "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,"⁵⁸⁵

H 2 Despairing during rebuke: NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

G 2 Correct attitudes to be aware of 12:6

H 1 God loves whom He chastens: {6} FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,⁵⁸⁶H 2 God disciplines all His own: AND HE SCOURGES⁵⁸⁷ EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

⁵⁸⁴ Heb. 12:4 - addressed to you as sons: The writer is mindful that his readers, through faith in Jesus, are sons of the living God. God is addressing them here as "sons," the plural of *huiós* (5207), used 24X in 21 verses in Hebrews. It is used here of a believer in Jesus having been born into God's family (John 1:12-13), and also of our having been adopted into God's family by His choice (Eph. 1:4-6). That this is a sublimely close spiritual relation to God is witnessed by the fact that God designates Jesus, the Messiah, as His "beloved Son" (Matt. 3:16-17; 17:5; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; 2 Pet. 1:17).

⁵⁸⁵ Heb. 12:5 - MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD: The author quotes, in Heb. 12:5, from Prov. 3:11, and in Heb. 12:6, from Prov. 3:12. The exhortation that the readers are not to "regard lightly" is the [Present](#) Imperative of *oligōréō* (3643), which means to regard something as having little value. Synonyms are "disparage," "think lightly of," "make light of." Prudent sons will place a high value on the Lord's discipline.

"Discipline" is the noun *paideía* (3809), which means, literally, "child-training." On a literal level it is the active process of parents in disciplining, training, and instruction their child or children to become mature, responsible adults. On a spiritual level, God uses an oft-times painful process to make his sons (and daughters, of course) more responsible, mature, productive Christians. The writer uses this noun repeatedly in this paragraph – in Heb. 12:5, 7, 8, 11.

⁵⁸⁶ Heb. 12:6 - HE DISCIPLINES: [Present](#) tense of the verb *paideúō* (3811), and obviously related to the noun *paideía* (3809). The 3rd person singular [Present](#) means here, literally, "He child-trains." Friberg's more formal definition, on a literal level, reads "as bringing up a child and guiding him toward maturity *instruct, train, educate* (Acts 7:22);" when used, as here, addressing an adult, "as morally disciplining an adult *correct, give guidance to, discipline* (1 Tim. 1:20)." Every person the Lord (*kúrios*, 2962) loves ([present](#) tense of *agapáō*, 25) he child-trains. Heb. 12:6 quotes Prov. 3:12.

⁵⁸⁷ Heb. 12:6 - SCOURGES: the [Present](#) tense of *mastigóō* (3146), literally, to beat "with a lash or whip *flog, scourge, whip* (Matt. 10:17); figuratively, of God's corrective punishment *chastise, punish severely* (Heb. 12:6)" ([Friberg](#)).

D 2 The implications of discipline 12:7-8

E 1 Sonship 12:7

G 1 The condition of discipline present: {7} It is for discipline⁵⁸⁸ that you endure;

G 2 Discipline implies sonship: God deals with you as with sons;⁵⁸⁹

G 3 There is no son whom a father fails to discipline: for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

E 2 Illegitimacy 12:8

G 1 The condition of absence of discipline: {8} But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers,

G 2 The result is then illegitimacy, not sonship: then you are illegitimate children⁵⁹⁰ and not sons.

D 3 The comparison of human and Divine discipline 12:9-10

E 1 The response to human discipline demands comparable response to Divine discipline 12:9

G 1 Human fathers who disciplined were respected: {9} Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them;

G 2 Similarly, we should submit to the Father's discipline, and live: shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits,⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Heb. 12:7 - discipline: *paideia* ([3809](#)), "child-training," used in Heb. 12:5, 7, 8, 11.

⁵⁸⁹ Heb. 12:7 - sons: plural of *huiós* ([5207](#)), used 21X in 24 verses in Hebrews, used here as a person who stands in close relationship to God (see [Friberg](#)).

⁵⁹⁰ Heb. 12:8 - illegitimate children: There is but one word in Greek – the plural of the adjective *nóthos* ([3541](#)), used only here in the NT. In a world of yesteryear, this word was translated "bastard" by the AV. But that was four centuries ago. That translation has become a crudity, if not an obscenity. Today, the single word "illegitimate" is sufficient (so NKJV, CEB). The word "children" does not appear in the Greek text.

⁵⁹¹ Heb. 12:9 - the Father of spirits: Literally, "the Father of the spirits." This is the only occurrence of this phrase in the entire NT, and it is enigmatic. The author had specific spirits in mind, for he used the article in front of the plural noun *pneû'ma* ([4151](#)).

(1) Possibly he had in mind "the seven spirits of God" (Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) who are before the throne of God (Rev. 1:4). That presents its own interpretational problem. Who knows with certainty who these seven spirits are? I do not. [Some](#) of have suggested that these seven spirits represent the one Holy Spirit in all His fullness (cf. Isa. 11:2-3; Zech. 4:2-7). That is a possibility, but by no means a certainty.

(2) Another possibility is that the spirits are the angels, all of whom were created by God. This is certainly feasible, for the writer of Hebrews, quoting Psalm 104:4 designates angels as the plural of *pneû'ma* (Heb. 1:7). The [deuterocanonical](#) book of Tobit refers to seven angels who stand before God, designating Raphael as one of them ([Tobit 12:15](#)). The [pseudepigraphal](#) Book of Enoch names seven "holy angels who watch." These are Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel, and Remiel ([The Book of Enoch 20:1-8](#)). Since neither Tobit nor The Book of

and live? ⁵⁹²

E 2 The superiority of Divine discipline 12:10a

G 1 The nature of human discipline

H 1 The brief duration: {10} For they disciplined us for a short time

H 2 According to human judgment: as seemed best to them,

G 2 The nature of Divine discipline 12:10b

H 1 The Father's purpose – for our benefit: but He *disciplines us* for *our* good,

H 2 The Father's goal: so that we may share His holiness. ⁵⁹³

D 4 The results of discipline 12:11

E 1 In the present

G 1 Never joy: {11} All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful,

G 2 Always grief: but sorrowful; ⁵⁹⁴

E 2 Afterward – righteousness: yet to those who have been trained ⁵⁹⁵ by

Enoch have the authority of Scripture, their statements cannot be considered authoritative. In the end, we can only guess at the true meaning of the phrase “Father of the Spirits.” Either of the suggested answers is as good as the other.

⁵⁹² Heb. 12:9 - and live: There are a number of Scriptures in Proverbs which teach that obedience to the commands of God brings life, not death – Prov. 4:13; 6:23; 10:17; 16:17 (see the [NetBible](#) footnote 13 on this verse, viewed March 16, 2016).

⁵⁹³ Heb. 12:10 - so that we may share His holiness: “Holiness” is the noun *hagiôtês* ([41](#)), used only in 2 Cor 1:12 and here. It is a state of *holiness* or *sanctity*, here used “as a quality of God’s character to be shared by the Christian in his own character” ... ([Friberg](#)).

⁵⁹⁴ Heb. 12:11 - All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful: All discipline (*paideia*, [3809](#)), whether enforced by human fathers or by the Father of spirits, is painful, and pain brings sorrow. It is incumbent upon us Christians to understand that, when hard times come, God is “child-training” us for holiness (Heb. 12:10) and for righteousness (Heb. 12:11). This is the last time the author of Hebrews will refer to *paideia*.

⁵⁹⁵ Heb. 12:11 - trained: [Perfect](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *gumnázō* ([1128](#)), which, on a literal level, means to “exercise naked, train in gymnastic discipline;” but used “figuratively in the NT, of mental and spiritual training and discipline control oneself, exercise self-control (1 Tim. 4:7)” ([Friberg](#)). Elsewhere, it is used in Heb. 5:14; 12:11; and negatively in 2 Pet. 2:14. *Gumnázō* ([1128](#)) is a synonym for *paideúō* ([3811](#)), used in Heb. 12:6, 7, 10.

it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.⁵⁹⁶

D 5 The proper attitude in discipline 12:12-13

E 1 Don't be disheartened 12:12

G 1 Lift up the hands: {12} Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak⁵⁹⁷

G 2 Lift up the knees: and the knees that are feeble,

E 2 Live properly 12:13

G 1 Make straight paths for your feet: {13} and make straight paths for your feet,

G 2 Promote healing

H 1 Preventing further injury: so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint,⁵⁹⁸

H 2 Resulting in healing: but rather be healed.

C 4 The Lesson from Esau 12:14-17

D 1 The general injunction 12:14

E 1 Pursue peace: {14} Pursue peace with all men,⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ Heb. 12:11 - peaceful fruit of righteousness: "Righteousness" is *dikaïosúnē* (1343) – uprightness, integrity, good behavior (adapted from Friberg). So God's discipline yields both holiness (Heb. 12:10) and righteousness (Heb. 12:11), the latter characterized by a state of peacefulness (*eirēnikós*, 1516), an adjective used only here and in James 3:17.

⁵⁹⁷ Heb. 12:12 - strengthen the hands that are weak: The writer wants his readers to do everything in their power to stay the course in following Jesus as the Messiah. The Scriptures are clear that there are a group of people who are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). At the same time, the Scriptures are equally clear that we must "be all the more diligent to make sure about his calling and choosing" us (2 Pet. 1:10). We must "strengthen the hands that are weak." The Christian life is a struggle. It is hard work (Heb. 12:1-4)!

⁵⁹⁸ Heb. 12:13 - so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint: The writer is not suggesting a loss of salvation. He is concerned about a Christian life that may become so disabled that it is of little value in this world. "Put out of joint" translates the Aorist Passive of *ektrépō* (1624), which, in a literal sense, means to "swerve, turn aside or away," and, possibly, in a medical technical sense, of a limb that is "dislocated" or "put out of joint" (Friberg). However, the word translated "paths" earlier in the verse is the plural of *trochiá* (5163), which means, literally, "wheel tracks." So in that context, the writer is saying, literally, "Make straight wheel tracks for your feet so that the lame may not be caused to swerve aside, but rather be healed." So as you go through your Christian life, you may have already sprained your ankle. Take pains to chart a straight path so you don't injure yourself even more, and put yourself out of commission in your Christian life!

⁵⁹⁹ Heb. 2:14 - Pursue peace with all men: Peace (*eirē'nē*, 1515) with all men, whether believers or unbelievers, is a quality the readers are commanded to pursue continually (Present Imperative of *diō'kō*, 1377). But peace can never be wholly pursued if one is asked to sacrifice "the sanctification" (*hagiasmós*, 38), "...the careful moral behavior that expresses one's dedication to God *pure way of life, upright behavior, holy living ...*" (Friberg). Without

- E 2 Pursue holiness: and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
- D 2 The two dangers to avoid 12:15
 - E 1 Bypassing God's grace: {15} See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God;⁶⁰⁰
 - E 2 Reaping a harvest of bitterness
 - G 1 Feeling bitterness: that no root of bitterness⁶⁰¹ springing up causes trouble,
 - G 2 Defiling many: and by it many be defiled;⁶⁰²
- D 3 Esau an example of going astray 12:16-17
 - E 1 Esau's description 12:16a
 - G 1 {16} that *there be* no immoral⁶⁰³
 - G 2 or godless person⁶⁰⁴ like Esau,⁶⁰⁵

this sanctification, no one will see the Lord.

⁶⁰⁰ Heb. 12:15 - comes short of the grace of God: The author is not thinking about loss of salvation. He is thinking of defiled behavior unbefitting of a committed Christian, as his next descriptions indicate. If we fail to avail ourselves fully of the grace of God we run the risk of becoming bitter (Heb. 12:15), of yielding to sexual temptation or otherwise to the temptation to gratify our own flesh without regard to the values of the Spirit (Heb. 12:16), as did Esau.

⁶⁰¹ Heb. 12:15 - bitterness: The noun *pikria* (4088), is used of Simon the Magician (Acts 8:23), as descriptive of generic fallen man's speech (Rom. 3:14), as a trait to be avoided by each Christian (Eph. 4:31), for we are sealed with God's Spirit (Eph. 4:32), and last, here (Heb. 12:15), as a trait characterizing someone who has failed to avail himself of the grace of God. If we do not live in God's grace, we risk becoming bitter. *Pikria* (4088) refers, literally, to plants that produce poisonous or inedible fruit. On a metaphorical level, as here, it describes someone whose actions or influence become corrosive to the community of believers. Bitterness is a cancer that corrodes our own personal peace and corrodes the attitudes and behavior of others around us. When we are bitter, is natural for us to exempt ourselves from the same censure with which we revile others. Grace for ourselves means we must extend grace to others. The author may have been alluding to Deuteronomy 29:18, which warns against an Israeli who might serve the gods of surrounding nations and exude a corrosive influence on other Israelis.

⁶⁰² Heb. 12:15 - and by it many be defiled: If we are infected with bitterness *pikria* (4088), it will tend to contaminate many others around us.

⁶⁰³ Heb. 12:16 - immoral: The noun is *pórnos* (4205), typically translated (in the NASB) as "immoral person" (or "immoral people" in the plural) (1 Cor. 5:9, 10, 11; Eph. 5:5; Heb. 12:16; Rev. 21:8; 22:15) or "immoral men" (1 Tim. 1:10). Twice it is translated "fornicators" (1 Cor. 6:9; Heb. 13:4). According to Friberg, "in the NT [it refers to] a man who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute *fornicator*, *sexually immoral person* (1 Cor. 5:9); distinguished from *moichós* [3432] (adulterer) in 1 Cor. 6:9 and *arsenokoitês* [733] (sodomite or homosexual) in 1 Tim. 1:10." This sad condition is a bona fide temptation for someone who falls short of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15).

⁶⁰⁴ Heb. 12:16 - or godless person: This is the adjective *BéBêlos* (952). Strictly speaking, it refers to that which is "open and accessible to all, opposite *hierós* [2413] (sacred); (1) of things *profane*, *godless*, *worldly* (1 Tim. 6:20); substantively of *hoi BéBêloi* of persons *ungodly*, *irreligious*, or *profane* ... Heb. 12:16" (adapted from Friberg). It is

E 2 Esau's failure: who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.⁶⁰⁶
12:16b

E 3 Esau's rejection 12:17

G 1 The irrevocable loss of his inheritance: {17} For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected,

G 2 The impossibility of repentance: for he found no place for repentance,⁶⁰⁷ though he sought for it with tears.

C 5 The Lesson from Mt. Sinai 12:18-24

D 1 The readers' position: They are not come to Mt. Sinai 12:18-21

E 1 The description of the mount 12:18

G 1 It could be touched: {18} For you have not come to *a mountain* that can be touched⁶⁰⁸

translated in the NASB as “profane” (1 Tim. 1:9), “worldly” (1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16), and as “godless person” (Heb. 12:16). The word “person,” appearing in the NASB text, does not appear in the Greek text.

⁶⁰⁵ Heb. 12:16 - Esau: Esau is given as a prime example of someone (1) who came short of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15); (2) who was (subsequently) beset by a root of bitterness springing up within himself that caused trouble, defiling many (Heb. 12:15); (3) and who was “godless” or “profane” by devaluing his own birthright for the value of a single meal (Heb. 12:16), thus demonstrating the attitude by which he came short of the grace of God.

⁶⁰⁶ Heb. 12:16 - who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal: The author refers to the incident recorded in Gen. 25:27-34. Esau thus became the poster boy for instant gratification, for satisfying the rumblings of his own empty stomach by stupidly selling his own birthright. This incident describes the manner in which he came “short of the grace of God.”

⁶⁰⁷ Heb. 12:17 - he found no place for repentance: This is a bit of an awkward way (in English) for saying that there are certain poor decisions made in life that are irreversible. They can be ameliorated, but they cannot be undone. A couple who have cohabited cannot enter their marriage day pure, no matter how much they later come to regret that fact. And they can never use their own example as an incentive for sexual purity for the benefit of their own children.

⁶⁰⁸ Heb. 12:18 - For you have not come to *a mountain* that can be touched: Though the writer does not even use the word “mountain” in this statement, the added words in the NASB are appropriate because he does refer to “the mountain” in Heb. 12:20. Literally, the statement reads, “For you have not come to that which can be touched” (the verbal-noun form is the Neuter [Present](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *psêlapháō* (5584). It becomes very obvious that the writer is referring in particular to Mount Sinai in Arabia (Gal. 4:24, 25). His whole purpose in this section is to portray the fearsomeness and judgment of God in connection with the giving of the [Old Covenant](#) on Mount Sinai in contrast with the perfected communities ensconced in heavenly Mount Zion gained under the gracious benefits of the [New Covenant](#). In short, he is attempting, once again, to dissuade his Messianic-Israeli audience from forsaking Jesus the Messiah and reverting to the familiar constraints of Judaism and the [Old Covenant](#).

On a side note, it is a bit difficult to understand why the author says that Mount Sinai can be touched, when touching the mountain was the very thing God forbade the people to do (Exod. 19:12). The writer must, therefore, mean that the mountain was a physical, earthly entity, as opposed to Mount Zion up in heaven, which is a spiritual, heavenly entity. By this I am not saying that heavenly Mount Zion is not real, or that it has no substance. I am merely acknowledging that the physics of things up in heaven are evidently on a completely different level than that which exists on earth. See, for example, Rev. 15:2, which speaks of a sea of glass mingled with fire. Such a mixture is unknown here upon earth.

- G 2 It was fiery: and to a blazing fire,⁶⁰⁹
- G 3 It was dark: and to darkness
- G 4 It was gloomy: and gloom
- G 5 It was tempestuous: and whirlwind,
- E 2 The sounds at the mount 12:19
 - G 1 The trumpet sound: {19} and to the blast of a trumpet
 - G 2 The alarming voice of God: and the sound of words which *sound was such that* those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.⁶¹⁰
- E 3 The restrictions at the mount: {20} For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."⁶¹¹ 12:20
- E 4 God's awesomeness at the mount 12:21
 - G 1 The terrible sight: {21} And so terrible was the sight,
 - G 2 Moses' fearful reaction: *that* Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."⁶¹²
- D 2 The readers' position: They are come to heavenly Mt. Zion and all that heavenly Jerusalem entails 12:22-24
 - E 1 God's city, the heavenly Jerusalem 12:22a
 - G 1 {22} But you have come to Mount Zion⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁹ Heb. 12:18 - and to a blazing fire: On Mount Sinai at the giving of the Old Covenant, there were cracks of thunder, lightning flashes, a thick cloud, and a long, loud trumpet blast (Ex. 19:16).

⁶¹⁰ Heb. 12:19 - no further word be spoken to them: Israel's experience with God at Mount Sinai was, by design, an exceedingly intimidating experience. Yahweh literally "put the fear of God" into them (Exod. 20:18-21)! The Israelis were so intimidated they told Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die" (Exod. 20:19)!

⁶¹¹ Heb. 12:20 - IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED: The writer of Hebrews is condensing the commands of Exod. 19:12-13.

⁶¹² Heb. 12:21 - I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling: Though the NASB assigns the first part of this clause as a direct quotation (possibly from Deut. 9:19), there is really no precise, observable parallel. [Jewish tradition](#) has a fuller explanation of what occurred, but it is merely tradition, not Scripture. Either the author is alluding to, rather than precisely quoting Moses' speech, or he has received additional information by Divine revelation.

⁶¹³ Heb. 12:22 - But you have come to Mount Zion: The writer does not speak of earthly Mount [Zion](#), but rather of heavenly Mount [Zion](#). His whole purpose is to portray the superiority of the [New Covenant](#) over the [Old Covenant](#). The Israelis were forbidden to touch the earthly Mount Sinai, but the present readers, through faith in

G 2 and to the city of the living God,⁶¹⁴

G 3 the heavenly Jerusalem,⁶¹⁵

E 2 Angels: and to myriads of angels,⁶¹⁶ 12:22b

E 3 The general assembly and church of the firstborn: {23} to the general assembly⁶¹⁷ and church of the firstborn⁶¹⁸ who are enrolled in

Jesus, Mediator of the [New Covenant](#), have come, at least in a spiritual sense, to Heavenly Mount [Zion](#).

It is my belief, by the way, that there is a real Mount [Zion](#) up in heaven. I believe it is alluded to in such passages as Ezek. 28:14, 16; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1. I also believe that Heavenly Mount [Zion](#) is encompassed within [New Jerusalem](#). That city is enormous – nearly 1400 miles long, wide, and high. I personally do not believe it exists in the shape of a cube, but rather of a pyramid, the apex of the pyramid being the summit of heavenly Mount [Zion](#). Time, of course, will determine whether I am correct or incorrect in my beliefs.

⁶¹⁴ Heb. 12:22 - the city of the living God: Here (heavenly) Mount [Zion](#) is associated with a particular city, “heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22), also called “the new Jerusalem” (Rev. 3:12), “the holy city, new Jerusalem” (Rev. 21:2), and “the city, the holy Jerusalem” (Rev. 21:10).

⁶¹⁵ Heb. 12:22 - heavenly Jerusalem: There is no article before “heavenly Jerusalem” in Greek, and it is unnecessary in English. This is the only place in the entire NT where these two words are used in conjunction with one another in the same verse. [New Jerusalem](#) presently exists in [heaven](#), the abode of God and myriads of angels (Heb. 12:22-23). But after God has destroyed the existing heavens (limited to the heaven in which birds and planes fly and the heaven in which stars move) and earth, and replaced them both with [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#), [New Jerusalem](#) will descend from heaven to [New Earth](#). Since John described its descent as continually “coming down” ([Present Participle](#) of *katabainō*, 2597), I take it that [New Jerusalem](#) will never actually reach [New Earth](#), but will orbit around it as a satellite city, much as does our present moon. However, it will be readily accessible to [redeemed Gentiles](#) who are not part of the [Church](#) or of [Israel](#), and thus are living upon [New Earth](#) (Rev. 21:23-27; 22:1-2). See [a more extensive discussion of New Jerusalem](#).

⁶¹⁶ Heb. 12:22 - and to myriads of angels: “myriads” translates the Dative plural of *muriás* (3461), which, in certain contexts means, strictly, ten thousand (Acts 19:19 – here, times five), but which, in a more general context, as here, designates an innumerable multitude – countless ten thousands. Other translations read, “innumerable angels” (ESV), “thousands upon thousands of angels” (NIV), “an innumerable company of angels” (NKJV), and “countless thousands of angels” (NLT). “Myriads,” used by NASB, can mean “a very great or indefinitely great number of persons or things” or simply “ten thousand” ([Dictionary.com](#)). Thus, though the NASB translation is a bit obscure, it is precisely accurate and concise, the hallmark of the NASB. See Rev. 5:11, where John cites the number of angels he witnessed in heaven as being “myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands”!

“Angels,” of course is the plural of *aggelos* (32), whose most basic designation is “messengers” of God. See [“Angel”](#) in the Glossary.

⁶¹⁷ Heb. 12:23 - to the general assembly: This phrase translates the single word *panē'guris* (3831), used only here in the NT. According to [Friberg](#), it means “literally, as a festal gathering of a whole group *celebration, happy festive occasion; kai muriásin aggellōn panēgūrei and to innumerable angels in joyful assembly* (Heb. 12:22). Here is one instance in which I disagree with NASB translators. [Friberg's](#) (and [Thayer's](#)) translation is superior. In the [UBS4](#) Greek text, this word actually appears in Heb. 12:22.

⁶¹⁸ Heb. 12:23 - and church of the firstborn: “Church” (Dative Singular of *ekklesiá*, 1577) translates the frequently used noun whose most basic meaning is “assembly.” It can refer to a local church, such as the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2) or, as here, to the [church](#) universal.

“Of the firstborn” translates the Genitive plural of the adjective *prōtōtokos* (4416). This adjective is used of Jesus as the “firstborn” son of Mary (Luke 2:7); of Jesus as the Son most prominent among many siblings (Rom. 8:29); of the “beloved Son” of God (Col. 1:13) who, by virtue of His having created all things (Col. 1:16) occupies a place of supreme prominence as being “the firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15); of this same Son, as having been the first to be resurrected with an immortal body, as “the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5); of the Son of God as the Messiah (Heb. 1:1-5) being God’s “firstborn,” and worthy of the worship of angels (Heb. 1:6); of the literal firstborn sons of the Egyptians (Heb. 11:28). Because “firstborn” is used here in the plural, it cannot refer to

heaven,⁶¹⁹ 12:23a

E 4 God Himself, the Judge: and to God, the Judge of all,⁶²⁰ 12:23b

E 5 The sanctified spirits of just men: and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,⁶²¹ 12:23c

E 6 Jesus, the mediator of the [new covenant](#): {24} and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,⁶²² 12:24a

Jesus, but rather to those who are part of Christ's universal Church, begun at Pentecost and completed at the Rapture. It is in that unique and privileged position that the author of Hebrews describes his readers, who are part of the Universal Church, as being part of the "church of the firstborn" and also described as those who have been enrolled in heaven.

⁶¹⁹ Heb. 12:23 - who are enrolled in heaven: "who are enrolled" translates the Plural [Perfect](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *apographō* ([583](#)), used only three other times in the NT, all with reference to being registered in the census commanded by Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1, 3, 5). Friberg: "(1) literally, of an official listing of citizens *enroll*, *register*, middle *enroll* or *register oneself* (Luke 2:3); passive *be registered* or *enrolled* (Luke 2:1); (2) figuratively, of records kept in heaven *be enrolled* or *written*, *be listed* (Heb. 12:23)." The [Perfect](#) tense indicates that, in regard to those who, through faith in Jesus, are members of the universal church, at some time in the unspecified past their names were written in heaven, and the results continue up to the present time. The phrase could be translated, "the ones having been enrolled in (the) heavens."

"Heaven" is the Dative Plural of the noun, *ouranós* ([3772](#)), so technically the word should be translated "heavens." It refers here not to the first heaven, that of birds and airplanes, nor to the second heaven, that of the stars and galaxies, but to the third heavens, the abode of God and chosen angels. The word is used 273X in the NT, 90X in the plural. Of those plural uses, the most, 55X, are in Matthew ("the kingdom of the heavens"). The second most frequent plural uses are in Hebrews with 7X. The writer of Hebrews characteristically refers to the "heavens" (plural).

⁶²⁰ Heb. 12:23 - and to God, the Judge of all: God (*theós*, [2316](#)), Judge (*kritē's*, [2923](#)) of all people. God is Judge of all (Gen. 18:25; Psalm 50:6; 94:2), but He has delegated all judgment (*krisis*, [2920](#)) to Jesus, who is both Son of God and Son of Man (John 5:22, 25-27; 9:39; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:8). I believe the point the author is making is that we who have placed our confidence in Jesus the Messiah can come freely into the presence of the Judge, seated on His throne of grace (cf. Heb. 4:16).

⁶²¹ Heb. 12:23 - and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect: "spirits" (plural of *pneúma*, [4151](#)) of righteous (plural of the adjective *dikaíos*, [1342](#)) (people) having been made complete ([Perfect](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *teleiōō*, [5048](#)). The writer is stating that those who have trusted in Jesus the Messiah have access, by virtue of their faith, to heavenly Mount Zion, to the Judge of all the earth, and to deceased believers who have gone on before us and reached that penultimate stage of perfection. He calls them "spirits," I believe, because they have not yet experienced the great resurrection, in which they will be reunited with their previously earthly, thus mortal, but then eternal spiritual bodies. The writer is not suggesting that believers who have died and gone to heaven are disembodied spirits. It seems we will receive temporary spiritual bodies (2 Cor. 5:1-4), but we will await our reunion with our glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The writer of Hebrews uses the verb *teleiōō*, [5048](#) more than any other NT author (Heb. 1:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23). People in heaven have been completed, or perfected, in the sense that, having died, they are no longer plagued with the temptation of and the evil consequences of sinning. What a glorious day that will be! But God created us with bodies, and it is His plan for us to be reunited with our resurrected, glorified, immortal bodies forever!

⁶²² Heb. 12:24 - and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant: The word "mediator" has no article in Greek. The text reads, "and to Jesus, mediator of new covenant." "Mediator" is the Dative case of *mesítēs* ([3316](#)). A mediator is "basically, a neutral and trusted person in the middle (*mésos*, [3319](#)); (1) one who works to remove disagreement *mediator*, *go-between*, *reconciler* (1 Tim. 2:5); (2) one who provides a guarantee of fulfillment of contracted obligation *mediator* (Heb. 9:15)" ([Friberg](#)). This noun is used in the NT only in Gal. 3:19, 20; 1 Tim. 2:5; and in Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. In Heb. 8:6 Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant, and in Heb. 9:15; 12:24 He is the mediator of a [new covenant](#). In 1 Tim. 2:5 we read "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This renders invalid the fiction created by Rome that Mary is a "Mediatrice" ([969](#)).

- E 7 Christ's blood, which, when sprinkled, proclaimed a vastly superior message to that of Abel's, the first victim of murder: and to the sprinkled blood,⁶²³ which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel.⁶²⁴ 12:24b

C 6 The Lesson from Those who Refused God 12:25-29

D 1 The seriousness of refusing God 12:25

- E 1 The command not to refuse: {25} See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking.⁶²⁵
- E 2 The consequences of refusing the earthly speaker: For if those did not escape⁶²⁶ when they refused him who warned *them* on earth,
- E 3 The greater consequences of refusing the heavenly speaker: much less *will we escape* who turn away from Him⁶²⁷ who *warns* from heaven.

D 2 The added severity of refusing God now 12:26-27

The writer of Hebrews is intent on showing that the [New Covenant](#) mediated by Jesus is superior to the [Old Covenant](#) mediated by Moses. "Covenant" is *diathē'kē* ([1242](#)). See other footnotes on "covenant" – *diathē'kē* ([1242](#)) at Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:4 (two separate notes) and Heb. 9:16.

⁶²³ Heb. 12:24 - and to the sprinkled blood: Literally, "and to blood of sprinkling" "Blood" is the Dative case of the noun *haima* ([129](#)), and refers to the blood of Jesus, shed upon the cross. "Of sprinkling" is the Genitive case of the noun *hrantismós* ([4473](#)), used only here and in 1 Pet. 1:2, a portion of which reads, "...to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood" This rare use of "sprinkling" in connection with Jesus' blood may be an allusion to the blood of the Passover, applied with hyssop on the door frames of Israeli houses in Egypt (Heb. 12:21-22); or it may be an allusion to the blood of the [First Covenant](#), sprinkled upon the people (Ex. 24:8) (so [Gill](#))

⁶²⁴ Heb. 12:24 - which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel: literally, "better speaking than the Abel." In the context, the English translators correctly supply "the blood of." In the following citation, [Constable](#) quotes William L. Lane, [Hebrews 9-13](#), p. 474:

"It must be acknowledged that the reference to Abel in v. 24b is unexpected, because it does not belong to the developed comparison between Sinai and Zion. It may have been suggested by the reference in v 23b to the presence of *pneumasi dikaiōn*, 'the spirits of righteous persons,' in the heavenly city, since the writer had specified in 11:4 that Abel was attested by God as *dikaïos*, 'righteous.' It may also have been the writer's intention to evoke the whole history of redemption, from the righteous Abel to the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus, mediator of the new covenant . . ."

⁶²⁵ Heb. 12:25 - Him who is speaking: This may be a reference to Jesus (Heb. 1:1-3; 2:1-4). [In that case](#) the contrast "is between a human oracle of God (Moses) and the divine Voice" of God (Christ). Slightly more likely, the One who is speaking in heaven is God. The One who was speaking on earth was also God (see Heb. 12:26). So the contrast is not so much the identity of the speaker, but rather, the location of the speaker when He gave the message – in the first instance, on earth, and in the second instance, in heaven.

⁶²⁶ Heb. 12:25 - For if those did not escape: The OT is replete with the littered corpses of those who failed to listen to the voice of God under the [First Covenant](#) (e.g., Num. 14:20-25).

⁶²⁷ Heb. 12:25 - who turn away from Him: Evidently, in the context of this letter, by reverting to Judaism. The larger clause is better translated, literally, "much more, we, the ones being turned away (from) the One (warning) from heaven (shall not escape)." (The words in parentheses are supplied to make sense in English.) "Being turned aside" is the [Present](#) Passive [Participle](#) of *apostrophō* ([654](#)). Notice that the [participle](#) appears in the Passive voice. There were voices out there attempting to turn the Jewish Christians away from their commitment to Jesus as the Messiah and revert to Judaism.

- E 1 His voice formerly shook the earth: {26} And His voice shook the earth then, ⁶²⁸ 12:26a
- E 2 His voice will yet shake both the earth and heaven: but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." ⁶²⁹ 12:26b
- E 3 The implications of the prophecy 12:27
 - G 1 Implying disposal of the temporary: {27} This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, ⁶³⁰ as of created things,
 - G 2 Implying retention of the immovable: so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ⁶³¹
- D 3 The present prudent action 12:28-29
 - E 1 Let us experience the security of having received an immovable kingdom: {28} Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, ⁶³² 12:28a
 - E 2 Let us give the appropriate response: let us show gratitude, ⁶³³ 12:28b

⁶²⁸ Heb. 12:26 - His voice shook the earth then: Apparently a reference to the fearful voice of Yahweh at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:18; Judges 5:4).

⁶²⁹ Heb. 12:26 - YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN: The writer quotes Hag. 2:6. He evidently takes it as referring to the [destruction of the existing order](#) – the heavens and the earth (2 Pet. 3:10-12) – to make way for the creation of [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#) (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

⁶³⁰ Heb. 12:27 - the removing of those things which can be shaken: This appears to refer to the dissolution of the present universe as described in 2 Pet. 3:7-12, and likely in Rev. 20:11.

⁶³¹ Heb. 12:27 - so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain: This likely refers to the creation of [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#) – perfected eternity for the redeemed in connection with the eternal Capital City of [New Jerusalem](#).

⁶³² Heb. 12:28 - since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken: The author uses the [Present Plural Participle](#) of "we receive" (*paralambánō*, [3880](#)). Here he expresses no doubt that he and his readers are in the process of receiving this unshakeable (*asáleutos*, [761](#)) kingdom. We believers are not presently living in this kingdom, despite the author's assurance of our receipt of it. We live in the [Church Age](#). This kingdom, in its initial form, will appear as the Messiah's [Millennial Kingdom](#). But the [dissolution of the universe](#) and the creation of the [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#) will take place *after* the [Millennium](#) (Rev. 20:1-22:5). That is when the Eternal unshakeable Kingdom will ensue for eternity (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

⁶³³ Heb. 12:28 - let us show gratitude: This is a difficult two-word phrase to translate. The noun here translated "gratitude" is the Accusative case of *cháris* ([5485](#)). Of the 155 uses of *cháris* in the NT, the NASB translates it "grace" 122X (79%). Consequently, "gratitude" is an unusual translation. The writer of Hebrews uses *cháris* seven times, but only one other time in the Accusative case. That is in the latter half of Heb. 4:16, "so that we may receive mercy and find **grace** to help in time of need." In every other instance in Hebrews, the NASB translates *cháris* as "grace." Why not be consistent? In Heb. 12:28, the writer states that, since we have the benefit of receiving an unshakable kingdom, **let us possess grace**, through which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and fear" (author's translation). The grace we are exhorted to possess comes from the unshakable kingdom which we are

E 3 Let us appropriate God's grace 12:28c-29

G 1 The effect of gratitude – it is the means of acceptable service to God: by which we may offer to God an acceptable service⁶³⁴ with reverence and awe; 12:28c

G 2 The absolute necessity of gratitude: {29} for our God is a consuming fire.⁶³⁵ 12:29

B 4 The Personal Note 13

C 1 General Admonitions 13:1-9

D 1 Concerning service to others 13:1-3

E 1 The command to remain in brotherly love: {1} Let love of the brethren continue.⁶³⁶ 13:1

E 2 The command to be hospitable 13:2

receiving (Heb. 12:28) and also from the Great High Priest who has passed into the heavens (Heb. 4:14-16). My translation “let us possess (grace)” translates the Plural [Present Subjunctive](#) of *échō* ([2192](#)), to “have” or “hold.” My translation employs a more typical usage than the unusual usage exhibited by the NASB (and a number of other translations). My translation follows the translation of Zane Hodges, [TBKC, NT](#) volume, p. 811.

⁶³⁴ Heb. 12:28 - by which we may offer to God an acceptable service: Though it is certainly fitting to give thanks to God, the verb *eucharistēō* ([2168](#)), used, for example, in 1 Thess. 5:18, is the more typical word for that action. And while gratitude is certainly acceptable to God, it is uncertain that trait will be the means by which we offer acceptable service to God. Accessing the grace (*cháris*, [5485](#)) of God (Heb. 12:28) seems to me to be a much more likely means by which we can be enabled to serve God acceptably. “we may offer ... acceptable service” is actually the translation of but two words in Greek, “we may serve acceptably” – the Plural Subjunctive [Present](#) of *latreúō* ([3000](#)) – “we may serve;” and the adverb “acceptably” (*euaréstōs*, [2102](#)).

⁶³⁵ Heb. 12:29 - for our God is a consuming fire: Literally, “for the God of us (is) fire ([Nominative](#) case of *pūr*, [4442](#)) consuming” ([Present, Nominative Participle](#) of *katanaliskō*, [2654](#)), used only here in the entire NT. “Fire” is used 5X in Hebrews – Heb. 1:7; 10:27; 11:34; 12:18, 29. Fire is indeed a characteristic of God and of Christ Ex. 19:18; 24:17; Dan. 7:9-10; Matt. 3:12; Luke 3:9; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Heb. 12:18; Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 14:10; 15:2; 18:8; 19:12, 20; 20:7-10, 14-15; 21:8. Believers would be well-advised to stay committed to the Messiah to avoid His consuming fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

⁶³⁶ Heb. 13:1 - Let love of the brethren continue: The Greek text reads, “The brotherly love (*philadelphia*, [5360](#)) – let it continue [or remain] ([Present Imperative](#) of *ménō*, [3306](#)). The readers are urged to keep fostering their affection for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This verse begins a series of practical admonitions in this letter, although the writer will revisit the tension between Judaism and Christianity.

The Greek noun *philadelphia* combines the nouns *philia* ([5373](#)) and *adelphós* ([80](#)). The former is used only once in the NT, James 4:4, where it is translated “friendship.” Lexical definitions include “friendship, affection, love” ([Friberg](#)) and “friendly love, affection, friendship, distinct from *érōs*” ([Liddell-Scott](#)) (sexual attraction), not used in the NT or in the LXX. The latter is used in the NT (1) literally in reference to a male sibling having at least one parent in common (Matt. 1:2); (2) figuratively in reference to participants in the family of God, and thus siblings (in a spiritual sense) of Jesus, the Messiah (Rom. 8:29) and of one another (Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:10); (3) of fellow Jewish countrymen (Acts 3:22; Rom. 9:3).

So *philadelphia* refers to the affection and fondness that naturally exists between the family members of the family of God – the Church. The writer of Hebrews was commanding his readers that they were to perpetuate that bond of love, that brotherly affection. They were to keep fostering that brotherly love. It was absolutely essential for Jewish believers under pressure and duress from local adherents of Judaism to be embraced by the Christian community. It is just as true today.

G 1 The command: {2} Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,⁶³⁷

G 2 The historical justification from the life of Abraham: for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.⁶³⁸

E 3 The command to help sufferers 13:3

G 1 Those imprisoned: {3} Remember the prisoners,⁶³⁹ as though in prison with them,

G 2 Those suffering adversity: *and* those who are ill-treated,

G 3 The need for empathy: since you yourselves also are in the body.⁶⁴⁰

D 2 Concerning marriage 13:4

E 1 The honor of marriage: {4} Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all,⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁷ Heb. 13:2 - Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers: Literally, the text reads, “The love of strangers do not be neglecting.” “Love of strangers” translates the Genitive of *philoxenia* (5381), used only in Rom. 12:13 and Heb. 13:2 in the NT. It identifies the “love” or “fondness” or “affection” – *philia* (5373) toward “strangers” (*xénos*, 3581), ie. those who foreigners or aliens (adapted from Friberg). The writer has in mind providing food and friendship (and perhaps lodging) for foreigners who might visit the assembly or with whom members of the Christian community might find contact. We conclude this from the justification which follows.

⁶³⁸ Heb. 13:2 - for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it: The writer was perhaps alluding to the hospitality that Abraham and Sarai showed to three men (Gen. 18:1-33); or that Lot showed to two men (Gen. 19:1-29); or that Gideon demonstrated (Judges 6:11-24); or that Manoah and his wife demonstrated (Judges 13:2-23). The plural noun *ànggelos* (32), “angels,” means simply “messengers.” Frequently in the Bible “messengers” are supernatural beings who deliver messages from God to man. That is probably the meaning in this passage. By way of application, we should also be prepared to offer hospitality to humans who are delivering messages of God’s good news about Jesus to people who do not know Him.

⁶³⁹ Heb. 13:3 - Remember the prisoners: The writer’s use of the term “prisoners” (*désmios*, 1198) (see Acts 16:25, 27; 23:18; 25:14, 27, etc.) indicates that Christians were being imprisoned for their faith. According to Constable,

Oftentimes prisoners in the Roman world had to depend on friends outside the prison to provide them with food and other necessities. The existence of a significant number of prisoners supports a date of writing after A.D. 64, when an empire-wide persecution of Christians began. In July of that year, Emperor Nero set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians, resulting in much persecution of Christians.

⁶⁴⁰ Heb. 13:3 - since you yourselves also are in the body: The [idea seems to be](#) that one day the readers themselves might find themselves in prison also, and in need of help and sustenance. This ought to make them all the more ready to help Christians who were in prison now.

⁶⁴¹ Heb. 13:4 - Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all: The Greek text reads, literally, “Valuable the marriage among all.” “Valuable” or “in honor” (NASB) speaks, “literally, of things *valuable, costly, precious* (Rv. 17:4); ... figuratively, as honor and value attributed to something *precious, of great worth, held in honor* (1 Peter 1:19)” (excerpted from Friberg). Then as now, apparently, marriage as a status was devalued. Sadly, there are, today, an increasing number of Christians who are cohabiting without marrying. There is a fundamental difference between cohabitation and marriage. Cohabitation ought never to be practiced among Christians! I have heard a Christian man argue that if you are living with someone, you are married in God’s sight. That simply is not true. Jesus asked a woman in Samaria to go call her husband and return (John 4:16). The following conversation ensued:

E 2 The purity of marriage: and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*; ⁶⁴²

E 3 The judgment to befall extra-marital participation

G 1 To fornicators: for fornicators ⁶⁴³

G 2 To adulterers: and adulterers ⁶⁴⁴ God will judge. ⁶⁴⁵

D 3 Concerning contentedness in living 13:5-6

E 1 Abstention from covetousness: {5} *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money*, ⁶⁴⁶ 13:5

¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus *said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly." (John 4:17-18).

My point is that Jesus knew the difference between cohabitation and marriage, and he distinguished between the two. If he distinguished the two, how can we Christians do anything less?

⁶⁴² Heb. 13:4 - and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*: As the italics in the NASB indicate, the word "marriage" does not appear in the Greek text. Literally, the first half of the verse reads, "Valuable the marriage among all and the bed undefiled" "Bed" is the [Nominative](#) case of *koitê* (2845), which sometimes speaks of the bed on which one sleeps (Luke 11:7), but, more often in the NT, contains sexual overtones. In Rom. 9:10 Paul speaks of conception; in the context of Rom. 13:13, of sexual promiscuity. In Heb. 13:4, the context conveys sexual overtones. Marriage is to be valued, and the bed must be undefiled, unsoiled ([Nominative](#) case of the adjective *amíantos*, 283). The writer used this word to describe Jesus, the High Priest (Heb. 7:26), and the bed (Heb. 13:4). James used it to describe pure religion (James 1:27), and Peter used it to describe our unspoiled inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4).

Maintaining an undefiled bed precludes fornication (sexual relationships between unmarried people); cohabitation (permanent or semi-permanent sexual relationships between unmarried); and adultery (sexual relationships with someone who is married or by someone who is married). The remainder of this verse supports this interpretation. People who are morally chaste outside of marriage help preserve the value of marriage. Immorality and promiscuity devalues marriage. In our country a number of states formerly had laws against cohabitation. Now only one or two do. Cohabitation and fornication destroy families and weaken countries.

⁶⁴³ Heb. 13:4 - fornicators: This word is the Plural Accusative case of the noun *pórnos* (4205). According to [Thayer](#), this word refers to a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute; ... universally, a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator" According to [Friberg](#), "in the NT a man who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute *fornicator, sexually immoral person* (1 Cor. 5:9); distinguished from *moichós* (adulterer) in 1 Cor. 6:9 and *arsenokoítês* (sodomite or homosexual) in 1 Tim. 1:10.

⁶⁴⁴ Heb. 13:4 - adulterers: Accusative plural of *moichós* (3432), used in Luke 18:11; 1 Cor. 6:9 (where it is distinguished from fornicators, effeminate, and homosexuals); and here in Heb. 13:4 (where it is distinguished from fornicators). The related verb, "commit adultery," is *moicheuō* (3431).

⁶⁴⁵ Heb. 13:4 - God will judge: "will judge" is the Future Indicative of *krínō* (2919). It has the basic meaning of "divide out or separate off" ([Friberg](#)), used in a variety of nuances. He who believes in Jesus is not judged in the sense of eternal condemnation (John 3:18), but rather here, for believers, judged in the sense of being disciplined by the Lord (1 Cor. 11:31-32). There will come a time when our work here on earth will be judged in the sense of evaluated (1 Pet. 1:17) by Him who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23). This is why believers need to be morally pure. Our sins are forgiven, but we can be disciplined in this life, and we will all be judged as to how effectively and faithfully we have served the King.

⁶⁴⁶ Heb. 13:5 - free from the love of money: This six-word phrase translates the single Greek adjective, [Nominative](#) case, *aphilárguros* (866), used only here and in 1 Tim. 3:3, where it appears in a list of character traits to be used by Timothy in the selection of an overseer (*episkopos*, 1985) (1 Tim. 3:2), elsewhere identified as an elder (*presbúteros*, 4245) (Acts 20:28, cf. Acts 20:17; Titus 1:7, cf. Titus 1:5). The word means "not loving money, not greedy ..." ([Friberg](#)), to which I might add, "not avaricious." Its antithesis, *philárguros* (5366) is used in Luke 16:14

- E 2 Maintain contentment with present possessions: being content with what you have;
 - G 1 The sufficiency of Christ as a possession: for He Himself has said,
 - H 1 "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU,
 - H 2 NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"⁶⁴⁷
 - G 2 The benefits of Christ as a possession 13:6
 - H 1 As a helper: {6} so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER,
 - H 2 As an antidote to the fear of man: I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"⁶⁴⁸
- D 4 Concerning the regard for spiritual leaders 13:7-8
 - E 1 Human leaders 13:7
 - G 1 The command to remember human leaders
 - H 1 They are presently guiding you: {7} Remember those who led you,⁶⁴⁹
 - H 2 They were dispensers of the Word: who spoke the word of God to you;⁶⁵⁰
 - G 2 The command to follow them

and 2 Tim. 3:2, where it is translated on both occasions, "lovers of money." In 1Tim. 6:10 Paul reminds us, "For the love of money (*philárguria*, [5365](#)) is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." A solemn warning, indeed.

⁶⁴⁷ Heb. 13:5 - I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU: The writer appears to be quoting Deut. 31:6, 8, along with Josh. 1:5, all of which refer to Yahweh. Jesus Himself promised, "... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

⁶⁴⁸ Heb. 13:6 - THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?: The writer quotes from Psalm 118:6

⁶⁴⁹ Heb. 13:7 - Remember those who led you: Literally, "Be remembering the ones leading you" or "Be mindful of the ones leading you" (author's literal translation). "Leading" is the Genitive Plural [Present Participle](#) of *hégéomai* ([2233](#)). The writer is likely referring to the audience's original founders (see the next footnote). He further defines these individuals as those "who spoke the word of God to you" He will use *hégéomai* again in Heb. 13:17, 24.

⁶⁵⁰ Heb. 13:7 - who spoke the word of God to you: "spoke" is the [Aorist](#) tense of *lalēō* ([2980](#)). The [Aorist](#) tense, in this context, indicates a past occurrence at a point in time. This may refer to those who initially took the Good News about Jesus to these now Messianic Jewish people. Through their past speech, (and their actions – see the following phrase) these individuals continue to lead the audience in the present. It may be that these leaders are in another place, inaccessible to the audience, or that they have passed on from this life.

H 1 Consider their conduct: and considering the result of their conduct,

H 2 Subscribe to what they taught you: imitate their faith.⁶⁵¹

E 2 Divine / human leadership 13:8

G 1 The faithfulness of Christ: {8} Jesus Christ *is* the same⁶⁵²

G 2 The constancy of Christ

H 1 In the past: yesterday

H 2 In the present: and today

H 3 In the future: and forever.

D 5 Concerning doctrinal issues 13:9

E 1 The command to beware strange doctrines: {9} Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings;⁶⁵³

E 2 The concern for doctrinal priorities

G 1 The proper priority: for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace,

⁶⁵¹ Heb. 13:7 - imitate their faith: More accurately, “imitate the faith” (Accusative case of *ho* [3588] *pístis* [4102]). When used with the definite article, as here, *pístis* connotes the content of one’s faith, not the quality of believing. So what the writer meant was, “considering the outcome of their behavior, imitate the content of the faith they proclaimed.” The content of our faith always influences the way we live. If I as a Christian do not live out in my life the teachings of the New Testament, it is because that which I believe, to one degree or another, is defective. If we truly believe something, we do what that faith dictates. The content of the faith of the passengers who boarded the Titanic was that the ship on which they embarked was unsinkable. The content of their faith was wrong, and the results of their actions were that most of them died.

⁶⁵² Heb. 13:8 - the same: *ho* (3588) *autós* (846). This means that Jesus the Messiah is eternally self-consistent. Therefore, He is always reliable, always trustworthy.

⁶⁵³ Heb. 13:9 - Do not be carried away with varied and strange teachings: The writer has cast a wide net to describe illicit doctrines. We can assume, however, that he referred to teachings not supported by the Word of God. The Church of the Vatican would have us believe that the Pope and the bishops in communion with him are the [sole interpreters of Scripture](#). But that statement is nowhere found in Scripture, and the Vatican has, in my opinion, carried the faithful away, subscribing to “varied and strange teachings.” Luke, the writer of Acts, heaped praise upon those attending the Jewish synagogue at Berea. They were more noble than those who attended the synagogue of Thessalonica, for they received Paul’s message with eagerness, yet they examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul was teaching them was true or not (Acts 17:11). So it is always. The Word of God is our only criterion by which we can detect false doctrine. Only Scripture itself is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Man’s interpretation and church tradition are not inspired.

“Do not be carried away” is an [Imperative](#) that appears in the Passive voice. There is a tendency for us Christians to be pulled away from the truth of God’s Word by persuasive people almost imperceptibly. Several of my ancestors were pulled away from the truth by a charlatan named Claas Epp, who led many Mennonite families to Turkestan to await the return of Christ on a certain date. No family is immune from the lure of “varied and strange teachings.”

G 2 The issue of non-essentials

H 1 The example of meats: not by foods, ⁶⁵⁴

H 2 The unprofitable nature of preoccupation with non-essentials: through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

C 2 The Admonition to Appropriate Christ's Sacrifice 13:10-16

D 1 The Levitical basis of the sacrifice 13:10-11

E 1 The use of the sacrifice 13:10

G 1 The existence of a restrictive altar: {10} We have an altar ⁶⁵⁵G 2 The priests' and Levites' inability to partake of this offering: from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. ⁶⁵⁶

E 2 The place of the sacrifice 13:11

G 1 The blood from the offerings appropriated within the tabernacle: {11} For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest ⁶⁵⁷ *as an offering* for sin,G 2 The bodies of the sacrificed animals are burned outside the camp: are burned outside the camp. ⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁴ Heb. 13:9 - not by foods: Evidently dietary restriction was one area that reared its head as a convenient mechanism by which to deceive the unwary into holding a false doctrinal position. The writer maintains that getting bogged down in dietary issues is not beneficial even for Messianic Jews. See also Col. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:1-5.

⁶⁵⁵ Heb. 13:10 - We have an altar: The altar of which the writer speaks is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross outside the city (see Heb. 13:12-13). By "we" the writer referred to himself and all other Christians.

⁶⁵⁶ Heb. 13:10 - from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat: The author continues to illustrate the tension between Judaism and Christianity. The priests who served in the first tabernacle and subsequent temples were privileged to eat a portion of the meat from certain sacrifices that were offered. But because they rejected Jesus as their Messiah, they had no right to eat (i.e. partake from the benefits) from the altar of Mount Calvary, where Jesus' body and blood were sacrificed to pay for the sins of the world.

⁶⁵⁷ Heb. 13:11 - whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest: The author here is referring to a notable exception, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:2-25), when neither the high priest nor any other priests were allowed to eat of the sacrificed animals. The bodies of these animals whose blood was taken into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement were burned outside the camp (Lev. 16:27).

⁶⁵⁸ Heb. 13:11 - burned outside the camp: The author's point is that the most prominent sacrifice in Israel was the sacrifice of a bull and a goat for the sins of the people and for the sins of the high priest and his family. No meat from those sacrifices was ever consumed by any priest. The bodies of the sacrificed animals were burned outside the camp in their entirety (Lev. 16:27). Similarly, Jesus was [killed outside the city of Jerusalem](#). Those who only subscribe to the [First Covenant](#), rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, cannot partake of the sacrifice of Jesus outside the city. But those of us who subscribe to the [New Covenant](#), confessing that Jesus truly is the Messiah, are able to partake (spiritually) of Jesus' sacrifice outside the city.

D 2 The Christological fulfillment of the sacrifice 13:12

E 1 Jesus' purpose – sanctification of the people by means of His own blood: {12} Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, **

E 2 Jesus' suffering outside the city: suffered outside the gate.

D 3 The application of the sacrifice 13:13-16

E 1 Initially 13:13-14

G 1 The call to identify with Jesus outside the camp: {13} So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, ⁶⁵⁹ 13:13a

G 2 The call to bear His reproach: bearing His reproach. 13:13b

G 3 The need for taking an “other world” approach 13:14

H 1 Present day Christians have no lasting city: {14} For here we do not have a lasting city,

H 2 We look for a future, eternal city: but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

E 2 Subsequently – the need to offer sacrifices outside the pale of Judaism 13:15-16

G 1 Of praise 13:15

H 1 The modal nature of Christ in offering praise: {15} Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice

H 2 Praise as a sacrifice: of praise to God, ⁶⁶⁰

H 3 The nature of praise: that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

G 2 Of good works 13:16

⁶⁵⁹ Heb. 13:13 - So, let us go out to Him outside the camp: The writer is urging his readers to depart from official Judaism in order to identify fully with Jesus. “There is nothing wrong with Jewish Christians maintaining Jewish customs provided they do not rely on them for favor with God.” (Thomas Constable, Notes on Hebrews) <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/htm/NT/Hebrews/Hebrews.htm#486t>

⁶⁶⁰ Heb. 13:15 - let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God: Why does the writer prescribe that his Hebrew Christian readers offer up a sacrifice of praise to God? Because he has just told them they must join Jesus outside the camp of Judaism and bear Jesus’ reproach. If they identified with Jesus, they ran the risk of being expelled from the synagogue and being an outcast, unable to participate in the sacrifices. So they, of necessity, must offer up a sacrifice of praise, thanking God.

Alternatively, this passage may suggest that offering up the prescribed animal sacrifices has become obsolete because of Jesus’ one, all-sufficient sacrifice. Therefore, they need to offer up other sacrifices, such as praise (13:15), doing good, and sharing financially (13:16).

H 1 Doing good: {16} And do not neglect doing good

H 2 Giving financially: and sharing,

H 3 God's pleasure in these sacrifices: for with such sacrifices
God is pleased.

C 3 Final Words 13:17-25

D 1 Exhortations 13:17-19

E 1 To submit to authority 13:17

G 1 Obedience and submission to spiritual rulers enjoined: {17}
Obey your leaders and submit *to them*,

G 2 The responsibility of spiritual authority

H 1 Watching over the souls of those in their care: for they
keep watch over your souls as those who will give an
account.

H 2 Giving account to God for the lifestyles of their charges:
Let them do this with joy and not with grief,

H 3 Protecting the readers from adverse consequences: for this
would be unprofitable for you.

E 2 To pray for the writer 13:18-19

G 1 The appeal for prayer: {18} Pray for us, 13:18a

G 2 The conscientiousness of the writer 13:18b

H 1 for we are sure that we have a good conscience,

H 2 desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

G 3 His desire to visit them as soon as possible 13:19

H 1 The urgency of his request for them to pray for him: {19}
And I urge *you* all the more to do this,

H 2 His motivation: so that I may be restored to you the
sooner.

D 2 The prayer for the readers 13:20-21

E 1 The object of the request 13:20

G 1 The God of peace: {20} Now the God of peace,

- G 2 The God who resurrected Jesus: who brought up from the dead
 - H 1 The identification of the One resurrected: the great Shepherd of the sheep
 - H 2 The ground of His resurrection: through the blood of the eternal covenant,
 - H 3 The name of the one resurrected: *even* Jesus our Lord,
- E 2 The essence of the request 13:21
 - G 1 The perfection of the readers in good works: {21} equip you in every good thing to do His will,
 - G 2 The inworking of that which pleases God: working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,
- E 3 The fulfillment of the request: through Jesus Christ,
- E 4 The destiny of the Messiah: to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- D 3 The request for the readers: 13:22
 - E 1 For forbearance in view of his hortatory message: {22} But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation,
 - E 2 His justification of his tome: for I have written to you briefly.
- D 4 The informing of the readers 13:23
 - E 1 Of Timothy's release: {23} Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released,
 - E 2 Of the writer's plan to visit along with Timothy: with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.
- D 5 The farewell to the readers 13:24-25
 - E 1 Greetings 13:24
 - G 1 To their authorities: {24} Greet all of your leaders
 - G 2 To all the saints: and all the saints.
 - G 3 From the Italian saints: Those from Italy greet you.
 - E 2 The benediction of God's grace upon all: {25} Grace be with you all. 13:25

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