

Hebrews Preface

I am convinced that Paul was the writer of Hebrews. First the book was written in Paul's style of often writing lengthy sentences and using multiple arguments within a sentence. Moreover, the closing of each of Paul's letters ending with Paul mentioning the "grace of God..." is found in this letter as well. Moreover, Paul was a recognized expert in Jewish laws, traditions, and customs even before he had the Damascus road experience. Expert knowledge of the Old Testament law and ordinances would have been advantageous to write the book of Hebrews.

The gospel went first to the Hebrew people as the Lord said that it would. There were several thousand Jews who believed the gospel of the grace of Christ on the day of Pentecost and were baptized and added to the Lord's church. Moreover, several thousand more were later added to the church. Thus, the church at Jerusalem would have at one time contained several thousand Jews all believing the grace of Christ. In contrast to this, there were many times more Jews who did not believe the gospel and held to the old law covenant that had been largely polluted with the traditions and teachings of men. The persecutions to the Lord's early church came primarily from the unbelievers who were generally in the camps of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Paul, himself, had at one time been the leader of the persecution against the Lord's church. This, of course, was before his Damascus Road experience with the Lord. In the book of Acts we read where Paul labored with the Jews in his journeys trying to convince them of the grace of Christ and the need to repent of legalism and press into the church kingdom of God on earth.

There arose, among the Jewish church at Jerusalem, some who taught that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. This teaching prevailed among many of the Jews who had been previously converted to the gospel of the grace of Christ.

Among the arguments for keeping the Old Testament law service was that these laws and ceremonies had been spoken and written by the Old Testament prophets that God had sent and had been verified to them sometimes by angels that God had sent. The Hebrew people had a high regard to the writing of the prophets and the testimony of angels.

In the book of Hebrews, Paul shows the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to the prophets and to angels. Moreover, he sets forth the fulfillment of the law by the Lord and that the ceremonial law was largely given as types and shadows of Christ, His kingdom, and His High Priesthood. One of the operative words of the book of Hebrews is "better." Paul showed that we have something better in the New Testament than what they had under the Old Testament. Paul spoke of Christ being a better high priest. He also spoke of a better hope, a better testament, a better covenant, better promises, better sacrifices, a better substance in heaven, a better country, a better resurrection, and a better blood atonement.

Paul wrote in Romans chapter 10 concerning the people of Israel: v. 1-4 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Paul desired to save

the erring Israelites from their ignorance. Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to write the letter to the Hebrew people to show them that through Christ there was something far better. Moreover, for us Gentiles today, the book of Hebrew is a very useful letter to show us the application of the Old Testament types and shadows and to show us that we are a priesthood of believers to offer spiritual sacrifices under the direction of our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1.1-3

Heb 1:1 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

The book of Hebrews was primarily addressed to the Hebrew people by the Apostle Paul. One of the main themes of the book of Hebrews is that we have something better in this New Testament time than what the children of Israel had in the Old Testament economy. Moreover, to show the Hebrew people that much of what they had was pointing to this better New Testament day. There are several things that the book tells us that are “better” than what was had under the Old Testament economy.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...” In the Old Testament days, God spoke unto the fathers by several prophets. Sometimes he spoke many things unto the fathers by a single prophet such as Moses by whom God gave them the law and the ordinances of the Old Testament worship and through whose hand the Lord gave the covenant that established them as a nation and through which they were to govern that nation. Sometimes he would send a prophet to a single individual or to a small group of individuals to give them instruction or encouragement. Through the prophet Jeremiah he gave the children of Israel much admonishment and warnings of the things that would come upon them unless they repented and did what God required of them. The prophets were all vessels of God by which God delivered many messages and instruction. The messages were God’s message and those who heard were supposed to take heed to those messages. In comparison, in this New Testament day we have a far better messenger as God spake unto us by his Son. While the message of Christ is no more true than the messages by God’s prophets, yet these messages in the New Testament day are delivered by a perfect messenger and as Paul stated in Heb. 2:1: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

Next, in our passage Paul list seven things about this New Testament messenger that make him far superior to the prophets:

1. He is the Son of God. This, of course, makes him equal unto God.
2. Secondly, as the Son he has been appointed heir of all things. Thus, everything that is the Father’s is also the Son’s.

3. He made the worlds. He is the Creator of all things. According to John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

4. He is the brightness of God’s glory. God’s glory was seen and manifested in several ways in the Old Testament. His glory appeared in the cloud that led the children of Israel through their wilderness journeys. It appeared in the cloud that filled the tabernacle and that filled the temple. Moreover, it appeared in the miracles, signs and wonders God performed in delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt. It appeared in many other ways. However, in all the ways that we see the glory of the Lord in the Old Testament, it was always veiled in the types and shadows that pointed us to Christ. When the Son of God came into the world, we began to see the brightness of God’s glory. No longer was the glory of God veiled, but it was fully revealed in the person and work of the Son of God.

5. He is the express image of God’s person. God expressed himself to us through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The love of God was expressed through Jesus especially as he suffered and died for us on the tree of the cross. The forgiveness of God was expressed to us when Jesus, while on the cross, said: “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” The power of God was expressed to us in the miracles that Christ performed in raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, healing the lepers, etc. Most of all it was expressed to us in his resurrection from the dead. Just about every attribute of God is clearly expressed to us through the person and work of Jesus Christ while he journeyed here on earth.

6. Not only has he created all things, but he upholds all things by the word of his power. There is no need to fear that global warming will destroy the earth, nor is there any reason to worry that a passing comet will one day destroy the earth. The truth is seed time and harvest, summer and winter will not cease till the Lord brings the world to an end. The same one who created all things also upholds all things by the word of his power.

7. The seventh thing Paul relates to us is that “he purged our sins.” This should make every one of the elect to rejoice and shout for joy.

“When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This verse of scripture by itself destroys the idea that man had anything to do with delivering himself from his sins. After all, it was by himself that he purged our sins. If it took a preacher to preach the gospel, and me to believe the gospel in order for Christ death to be effective in purging my sins, then Christ would not have done it by himself. It would then be by Christ and two others that my sins were purged. However, the scripture says that He did it by himself. Case closed.

Moreover, Christ having purged our sins “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” God never sits down until the work is finished. We find this principle taught in creation. God created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rested on the seventh. The work was completed when he rested. Likewise, the work of purging our sins was completed when Christ say down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Hebrews 1.4-7

Heb. 1:4 “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

The angels of God are a part of God’s creation. They are considered a higher order of creation than man. According to the scriptures, God’s elect family will be like the angels after the resurrection of the dead: Matt. 22:30 “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.” While man in nature thinks very highly of himself, yet to consider that there is a creature of a higher order, would seemingly lead men to praise and adore the creature of a higher order. However, in comparison to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are told that Jesus was made better than the angels. Moreover, he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels. The angels have no right to an inheritance from God. Yet as the Son of God, Christ has obtained an inheritance of all things.

That Christ has obtained a more excellent name than the angels and is so much better than the angels we read an Old Testament prophecy: Psa. 2:7 “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” According to Acts 13:33 “God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Thus, Christ is the first begotten from the dead. Christ is the eternal Son of God and was never not the eternal Son of God. He did not become God’s Son when he was conceived in the womb of the virgin or at his birth. He has always been the eternal Son of God. However, he was begotten from the dead in his resurrection from the grave. Both as the eternal Son of God and as the first begotten from the dead, he has obtained a more excellent name than the angels and is so much better than the angels.

“I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” This was taken from an Old Testament prophecy of a coming king who would sit on an eternal throne reigning forever: 2 Sam 7:14 “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:” Therefore, Christ as a King reigning forever over the house of God and sitting on an everlasting throne, he has a more excellent name than the angels and is so much better than the angels.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. This was fulfilled in Luke 2:13 “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” This was done at the birth of the Christ child. Therefore, since the angels worshipped him, it proves that he has been made so much higher than the angels and that he hath obtained a more excellent name than they have.

“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.” This was taken from the Old Testament as follows: Ps. 104:4 “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: 5 Who laid the foundations of the

earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Moreover, we see that Christ hath obtained a more excellent name than the angels and so much better than the angels, as he who has laid the foundations of the earth is the same who maketh his angels spirits. In conclusion, the angels are a creation of God.

Hebrews 1.8-14

Heb. 1:8 “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. 13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

In this passage Paul continues his discussion of the superiority of Christ to the angels.

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” This was taken from Ps. 45:6 “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” There are several important points in these parallel passages of scripture:

1. Christ is God.
2. Christ is a king sitting on the throne of God in the kingdom of God.
3. Christ is perfect in his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. In this he is far greater than any earthly king.
4. It was the custom to anoint kings with holy anointing oil. Christ was anointed of God with the oil of gladness above all his fellows.
5. The scepter is used in the scriptures as a rod of authority and judgment of a king. That the scepter of Christ is a scepter of righteousness teaches us that Christ reigns in righteousness and rules in righteousness and that his judgment is in righteousness.

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” This passage also teaches us several lessons:

1. Christ is the creator of the heavens and the earth. He created all things. This demonstrates both his eternal nature, and his almighty power, and his great wisdom.

2. The heavens and the earth shall not last forever, but only so long as God shall decree. Peter taught that they were reserved unto fire: 2 Pet. 3:7 “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

3. The natural creation of God is gradually growing older and will wax old as doth a garment.

4. Finally, God shall fold them up and they shall be changed.

5. Through all of the above, Christ does not change and his years do not fail. He shall not grow old.

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Psa. 110:1 reads: “A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This verse introduces us to a few thoughts:

1. Christ sits at the right hand of God on the throne of God.

2. The footstool was at the foot of the throne. Here the subjects came and bowed down before the King.

3. That Christ’s enemies would be his footstool plainly teaches that he has the complete victory over them.

4. These things were never said unto the angels. The angels are made ministering spirits. They are servants of the King. Their purpose is to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

In conclusion, though the angels frequently brought messages from God to the heirs of salvation, they were far lesser in glory and honor than the King whom they serve.

Hebrews 2.1-4

Heb. 2:1 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” Therefore, refers back to the previous chapter. In that chapter Paul had set forth the superiority of Christ to the prophets and to the angels. The Jews had great respect to the writings of the prophets and to the testimony of angels. However, one far greater has now come and Paul is saying to them that though you have properly given much heed to the words of the prophets and angels that God has sent, you need to give even more earnest heed to the things that Christ has spoken. They had listened to the prophets and angels concerning the law covenant and ordinances, now it is time to listen even more intently to the words of the Lord Jesus

Christ, who is the very Son of God, who has set forth to us of this great salvation from sin by the grace of Christ and through his atoning blood.

What Paul is telling these Hebrews to do is in sharp contrast to what many had done. Many who had been readers of the Old Testament scriptures had also heard the testimony of Jesus Christ and were now turning back to the Old Testament practices and ordinances instead of believing the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

“For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward...” Paul is setting forth the truth that the word spoken by angels was steadfast. That is, it could not be broken. Moreover, the law given under the law covenant received a just recompense of reward for every transgression and disobedience. Thus, the penalty for all sin must be executed. There is no such thing under the law of anyone getting away with even a single sin. As Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “the wages of sin is death...” Since the law had a curse attached to it for transgression and disobedience, then no transgressor could be justified by the law, but only condemned by the law. Keeping of the law, therefore, could not possibly be a tool for getting eternal life or escaping the wrath to come.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him...” The Lord taught and the apostles who heard the Lord taught that salvation from sin was by grace through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord’s atoning sacrifice for the sins of the elect is a “great salvation” and the only way of being delivered from the penalty of sins. To neglect this salvation and to turn back unto the law covenant by which we are condemned, only leaves the non-believers in the grace of Christ in their belief system without a way of escape from the wrathful judgment of God as a result of their sins. There is simply no way of escape from the wrathful judgment of sin, except through the grace of Christ and his atoning sacrifice.

“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” When God established the old law covenant with the nation of Israel, it was confirmed of God for a period of 40 years with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles. Likewise, to confirm that these new covenant teachings taught by the Lord and by them who heard him was of God, He confirmed them with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost for a period of 40 years.

Hebrews 2.5-9

Heb. 2:5 “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak...” The world to come is not under the authority of the angels or prophets. The angels have no authority to decide who will or will not be a part of the world to come, nor do they have authority to set up the criteria for attaining the world to come. While the angels are higher in order than man, yet they are not given authority over man.

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” This is a reference to Ps. 8:4-8 as follows: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.”

Please note that what God set man over just after the creation is limited as set forth in the reference above to Psalms 8. His dominion is over the sheep, the oxen, the beast of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

The question as to what is man is one that we all should consider. We are the works of God’s creation. Yet we have been placed in a position greater than the animals and plants that God created. It is not that man is by nature something better than the animals and other creatures of God’s creation. But by the grace of God we occupy a position better than all other creatures do on earth. Even though we are of a lower order of creation than the angels, yet we have been given authority that the angels have not been given.

Why God is mindful of us, is a mystery, except that it is His good pleasure to do so. It is according to His sovereignty that he has chosen to do so.

There are questions that only God can answer. Why God would visit us is also a mystery. There is nothing in us that can merit God’s favor, then he continuously visits with us and comforts us and chastises us, etc.

In creation, we have been made a little lower than the angels. The angels are a higher order of creation than man. Yet God in his good pleasure crowned man with glory and honor and set him over the works of his hand.

“For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

The all that is under the subjection of man is set forth in the above reference of Ps. 8:8 “thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” However, not all things without exception are put under the feet of man. God did not put the world to come under the subjection of man. However, he did put it under the subjection of Jesus: Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. Jesus did not come as a higher order of creation in order to redeem man from his sins. He came as a man, a little lower than the angels, for the purpose of the suffering of death. We do

not read in the scriptures of angels dying. Man however can and does die. Jesus came as a perfect man who was made without sin and lived without sin that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Now this does not mean that he tasted death for every man without exception, but rather that he tasted death for all that the Father had given him, which included men out of every nation, race, kindred, people, and tongue. That is every man without distinction.

Now we see Jesus who had tasted death for all the elect, crowned with glory and honor. It is to Jesus that we give all glory and honor for our great salvation from our sins. In contrast, if we were to believe that through keeping of the law or by some other legalistic method, we help in our salvation from sin, then we would not be giving all glory and honor to Him, but would be sharing that glory and honor with him. The scripture says that God will not give his glory to another: Is. 42:8 "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." All glory for our salvation from sin belongs to God.

Hebrews 2.10-15

Heb. 2:10 "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things..." All things that God has done are done for his praise, honor, and glory. His natural creation praises him: Ps. 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." His work in salvation praises him: Eph. 1:14 "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." For all that God has done, we should praise him: Heb. 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

The "by whom are all things" are all things that God has done. Among the many things that God has done are included his creation of all things; his salvation of the elect from their sins; his work in their regeneration or new birth; his providential blessings upon us; his word that he has given us; his church that he has established; his giving us a hope of eternal life; and the multitude of his promised blessings upon us in our obedience to him.

"In bringing many sons unto glory..." Some people have the idea that there will be just a few in heaven, yet continually throughout the scriptures, the number that are

redeemed from their sins and that will live in glory are described as a great multitude as the following verses show:

1. Gen. 22:17 “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;”

2. Gen. 26:4 “And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;”

3. Rev. 7:9 “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”

“To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Jesus Christ was and is perfect in every respect. He was perfect in righteousness and holiness before he died on the cross. He was perfect in all his works and totally without sin before he suffered on the cross. His sufferings and death did not make him perfect as pertains to righteousness or holiness. He was already perfect in righteousness, holiness, and glory. What his sufferings accomplished was the salvation of his people from their sins. Without his sufferings there was no salvation from their sins. Thus, by his sufferings on the behalf of his people he became the perfect captain of their salvation.

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:” The word, sanctify, means to set apart or make holy. The one who sanctifies or makes holy is God. He set his people apart in the following matters:

1. Election before the foundation of the world: Eph. 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

2. New or spiritual birth: 1 Pet. 1:23 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

3. Salvation from the condemnation of sin: Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”

4. The resurrection of the dead: 1 Cor. 15:51 “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That we “are all of one” the following verses attest:

1. Rom. 8:29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

2. 1 Cor. 15:49 “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

3. Rom. 8:17 “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

4. 1 John 3:2 “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

5. 1 John 3:9 “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

“For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”

From this passage of scripture we can glean the following:

1. Through Christ’s atoning blood the shame of sin has been put away and Christ has called his elect “brethren.”

2. Christ declared the name of God unto the brethren and sang praises unto God with the brethren. Singing praises in the midst of the church literally took place when Christ instituted the communion service and the last thing said about that was that “they sang a song and went out.”

3. God gave to Christ the elect. This gift to Christ by God of a people is further witnessed by the following verses of scripture:

a. John 6:37 “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

b. John 10:29 “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

c. John 17:9 “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

d. John 17:11 “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

When the serpent beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden and then led Adam to sin against the law of God, Both Adam and Eve died in trespasses and sins and brought upon themselves the penalty of death, both of the grave and the eternal condemnation of God. This penalty, because Adam was the representative of all mankind, passed upon all men. We all sinned in Adam. The devil had the power of death and brought death upon all mankind in the Garden of Eden. Subsequently, all wages for all sins is death. Satan is the tempter and our depraved lustful nature wants to follow the temptations that Satan puts before us. Since all sin brings about guiltiness before God and would result in both death of the body and eternal death, it was necessary that those sins be atoned for or else we spend eternity in a lake of fire of God’s wrathful judgment.

We as children are partakers of flesh and blood. Animal sacrifices could not atone for our sins. Angels could not atone for our sins. The only one who could atone for our sins had to be a perfect man. Anything less than perfection would not suffice as an acceptable substitute for us. Christ, himself, took part of flesh and blood. He was conceived in the womb of the virgin of the Holy Spirit. He was conceived and born without sin and he lived without sin, keeping the law and the prophets to a jot and a tittle. At the appropriate time, he went to the cross and was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In this work of redemption, Christ destroyed the devil. That is he destroyed his power of death. The devil can no longer bring death unto us.

The fear that God's children have of death is that they doubt whether their sins have been atoned for and that they will spend an eternity in hell. They are/were in bondage to this fear of death. Thus, they fear death of the body and the eternal death of God's wrathful judgment. However, through the knowledge of Jesus and what he accomplished for us in covenant upon the cross we are delivered from the fear of death. Our hopes rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Heaven will be our home because of what Christ has done for us. We have been delivered from the fear of death.

Hebrew 2.16-18

Heb. 2:16 "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

From the above we can glean the following:

1. Christ did not take on the nature of angels. Animal sacrifices were not sufficient to do away with sin. Neither would an angel been sufficient to do away with the sins of God's elect family.

2. Christ took on him the seed of Abraham. The "seed of Abraham" refers back to the book of Genesis and the promises that God made unto Abraham:

- a. Gen. 12:1 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

- b. Acts 3:25 "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

- c. Gal. 3:16 "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

According to the promises of God unto Abraham, one of the requirements for the Christ was that he be a natural descendent of Abraham.

3. Christ was in all points like unto the elect family of God as it pertains to the flesh, except without sin.

4. Christ is a high priest and he came as a high priest in things pertaining unto God. As a high priest he has mercy for his children. Moreover, as a high priest he is perfectly faithful unto God in the office of High Priest. Later in Hebrews it will be plainly shown that Christ was not a high priest after the order of Aaron, but a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

5. As a High Priest Christ made reconciliation for the sins of the people. The High Priest was the one who made the offerings unto God. Thus Christ was both the offering and the one who made the offering unto God.

6. Christ is by experience acquainted with suffering as he suffered being tempted and suffered in the flesh upon the cross of Calvary. Moreover, because of his sufferings, Christ is imminently qualified to succour (relieve or aid) us in our temptations and sufferings.

Hebrews 3.1

Heb. 3:1 “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;”

Paul is very clear as to whom this epistle is directed to. It is directed to “holy brethren.” Paul was not directing this letter indiscriminately to everyone or to every Hebrew. It was being directed to brethren. A person can be a brother by natural relationship in a particular family or he can be a brother in a greater family, such as the family of God. In this instance it is clear that Paul had in mind that the epistle was directed to the greater family, i.e., the family of God. Moreover, they are “holy” brethren. The word, holy, means separate. These were brethren by the fact that they along with Paul and everyone of the elect family of God has been separated by God’s covenant election of a people before the foundation of the world. This covenant is clearly set forth in Romans 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Additional, Paul identified those whom he called “holy brethren” as being “partakers of the heavenly calling.” This calling is a “heavenly” calling. It is a calling that originates from heaven and not on earth. It is not the calling to repentance and service through the gospel call of God’s gospel ministers, but rather it is a calling that is direct from God to the individual. The Lord identified this calling in John 5:25: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” This calling of the Lord by “His voice” brings the one called from a state of being dead in trespasses and sins to a state of spiritual life. This is a heavenly calling.

Paul calls upon those who are holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling to “consider” someone. He calls upon him to consider “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” The use of several nouns to identify the one they are to consider has significance. Each noun is significant as follows:

1. "The Apostle." The word, apostle, means "one sent forth." Now there were apostles that the Lord sent forth, but "The Apostle" suggest that in His apostleship he is unique, that is, one of a kind. Christ is the one sent forth as the executor of the covenant of redemption. The following scriptures clearly set forth that he is the one chosen to execute the covenant of redemption:

a. Is. 46:9 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." The Lord came from the far country of heaven to execute the counsel or covenant of God.

b. Matt. 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus came for the express purpose of saving his people from their sins.

c. John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The Father gave a people to Jesus before the foundation of the world and came for the purpose to save them from their sins; to raise them up in the new or spiritual birth; and to raise them up again in the resurrection of the dead.

2. "High Priest." Christ was not a high priest after the order of Aaron, but was a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Christ's High Priesthood was far more reaching than Aaron's high priesthood. Christ was/is a high priest over the house of God. The high priest was the one ordained and anointed to offer the sacrifice on behalf of the people to God. Aaron's high priesthood was ceremonial in that all the sacrifices offered in the Old Testament never did away with sin. It took a perfect High Priest after the order of Melchisedec to offer a perfect sacrifice that God would accept and that would be satisfactory for the redemption of God's people from their sins. The other main duty of the high priest was to intercede on behalf of the people. Christ is the perfect intercessor.

3. "Of our profession." As children of God, we are to not only profess a belief in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are also to have as the profession of our lives to be the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. "Christ." The name, Christ, literally means the "Anointed One." In the Old Testament, there were two classes of people that were anointed: kings and priests. In the Old Testament, the kings beginning with David were of the tribe of Judah. In the Old Testament, the priests were of the tribe of Levi. It was not allowed in the Old Testament for a king to be a priest nor for a priest to be a king among the children of Israel. But before the nation of Israel was established in the days of Abraham, there was a man named Melchisedec who was both king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. Thus, Christ is both the King and the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

5. "Jesus." The word, Jesus, literally means "Savior." Jesus came to save his people from their sins. Jesus accomplished exactly what he came to do.

It is for the exact reason that Jesus is both the Apostle, and the High Priest, and the Christ, and the Savior, that we should consider all these aspects of Him since they are extremely significant to us.

Hebrews 3.2-6

Heb. 3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Generally speaking, Moses was highly esteemed among the nation of Israel. He was the one that God used to deliver the law covenant unto them and to deliver the manner of worship and the pattern of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the service of God as well as the laws to govern them as a nation. In the above passage, Paul affirms that though Moses was faithful, yet he has less glory and honor than Christ.

“Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.” Christ was appointed of God to execute the covenant of redemption and he was perfectly faithful to God in doing this. Moses was faithful in the house of Israel to deliver the things that God gave him to do. Both were faithful. The question here is not to compare the faithfulness of both Christ and Moses as both were faithful.

“For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.” Moses was **a part** of the house of Israel. Christ is **the builder** of the house of God: Matt. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” From this alone, Christ receives the greater glory as Christ builds the house and Moses is a part of his house.

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.” There were many who participated in building the tabernacle in the wilderness and who participated in building the temple in Solomon’s day. However, this cannot be compared to the fact that Christ created the heaven and the earth and all that is contained therein. Surely, Christ deserves the greater honor.

“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;” Moses was a servant to God and to the people of God. As a servant Moses was faithful in all his house. Moses delivered the testimony to the children of Israel and ultimately to us today. He was faithful to do so. Likewise, we should be faithful as servants to do what our Master bids us do.

“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Unlike Moses who was a servant in the house, Christ is a son over his house. The Son is ruler and Master over the house. He has a higher position than the servant. We are members and servants of the visible, militant house of God over which Christ is a son, so long as we hold fast to our confidence of the truth of God that Christ is whom the scriptures say that he is and that he

has done what the scriptures say that he did. In this we rejoice in the hope that is laid up for us in heaven.

Hebrews 3.7-11

Heb. 3:7 “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)”

“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:” In this there is an admonition and a warning both to the Jewish disciples of that day and to us today. Paul uses the historical experiences laid out for us in the wilderness journeys of the children of Israel and admonishes the Jewish disciples to not fall into the same pattern of unbelief that befell them. Likewise, we of this day should take heed that if we fall into unbelief of the promises of God that we can also lose out on blessings that would be ours.

The children of Israel had seen the mighty works of God that he wrought in the land of Egypt upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Moreover, they had been witnesses of the Lord’s parting the waters of the Red River that they pass over and then returning the waters to destroy Pharaoh and his host that sought to destroy them. Moreover, they were witnesses of the Lord providing them with water at Marah and then his wonders of giving them daily bread from heaven. The children of Israel had sent spies to spy out the promise land of Canaan and they came back with the report that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. One of the spies, Caleb, encouraged the people that they should go up and take the land for God was with them. However, ten of the spies said there were giants in the land and that they could not stand before them. The people believed the ten spies and turned to go back to Egypt into the land of bondage. Here they hardened their hearts and provoked the Lord to anger. The Lord gave sentence that all that were 20 years of age and over would die in the wilderness as they would journey there for forty years, except for Joshua and Caleb who had encouraged the people to go take the land according to the promise of God.

Similarly, the Jewish believers of Paul’s day had seen the mighty works of the Lord and had believed the report of his resurrection and had knowledge of the miraculous happenings at the day of Pentecost and the signs and wonders given unto the apostles. Yet false witnesses had come and encouraged them to turn back unto the law covenant and its ordinances, thus, going back into bondage under the law just as the children of Israel in the wilderness sought to turn back and go to Egypt.

“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)” That generation in the wilderness was not permitted to enter into the land of rest (Canaan land) because of their hard hearts and unbelief. Likewise, the Jews of Paul’s day were not permitted to either enter into the rest or else lost the rest that they had in the New Testament church because of their unbelief that Christ is the end

(fulfillment) of the law for righteousness. They turned back into legalism and a belief that salvation from sin was dependent upon their works. The lesson for us today is that we also can lose our rest or as many of God's children not be permitted to enter into this gospel rest because of unbelief and a hard heart.

Hebrews 3.12-19

Heb. 3:12 "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

In this passage, Paul continues his discussion of the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness in Moses day and gives a warning to the Jewish brethren of his day. Likewise, this serves as a warning to us today.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Notice that the children of Israel did not depart from believing in God, but rather departed from a belief of the words and promises of God. Likewise, God's children today depart from the living God by not believing in the words and promises of God. This departure comes from an "evil heart." It comes as a result of us letting our fleshly emotions overrule the plain teaching of God's word. For example, the children of Israel in the wilderness let their fear of giants overrule the promises of God that he would deliver them and give them the land. They did not depart from believing in God, but they departed from a belief in his word. Jeremiah described the human heart as follows: Jer. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" When someone says "I am just going to follow my heart" he has already departed from following the word of God.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We need the exhortations of our brethren daily that we not have our hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is deceitful. Satan is deceitful. Our hearts are deceitful. How easy is it for us to be deceived and fall from a belief in the words of God? We need to exhort ourselves and one another daily that we hold fast to the word of God and not be deceived by our heart to sin.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;" Here, being made a partaker of Christ is not the same as getting spiritual life, but rather it is partaking of the fruits of that spiritual life, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. We are partakers of that fruit so long as we steadfastly hold fast to the teachings and promises of God's word.

“While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?” While the majority of the children of Israel hardened their hearts in unbelief and provoked the Lord to anger, yet not all did. We cannot take the position that it is all right because everyone else is doing it. But rather, regardless of how the majority react, we need to steadfastly hold fast to the words and promises of God. Those who hardened their hearts in the wilderness died in the wilderness. Howbeit, Joshua and Caleb did not die in the wilderness as they held steadfastly to the words and promises of God.

“And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Unbelief was the cause of those who died in the wilderness not being permitted to go into the land of rest (Canaan land). Likewise, unbelief is the cause of God’s people not being permitted to enter into the gospel rest found in the Lord’s church here on earth.

Hebrews 4.1-2

Hebrews 4:1 “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” There are two types of promises that God makes: one type is an unconditional promise such as the promise made to never again destroy the earth with a flood. Also, the covenant of redemption in Romans 8:29, 30 is an unconditional promise. The second type of promise is a conditional promise that is conditioned upon the response of those to whom the promise was made. The covenant God made with Adam was a conditional promise. Likewise, the promise made to the children of Israel to enter into the land of Canaan was conditioned upon their belief. When they failed to believe the promise of God, they were not permitted to enter into the land of Canaan. Likewise, we have the promise of rest in the gospel kingdom today that is conditioned upon our belief in the gospel. If we believe the gospel report and obey the gospel call we are blessed to enter into the promised rest in the church kingdom here on earth.

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

We may ask ourselves, “who are the ‘them’ to whom the gospel was preached and it did not profit ‘them?’” The answer to this is found in the book of Numbers chapter 13. The children of Israel had come into the wilderness and had sent out 12 spies to spy out the land of Canaan and they came back with the report that it was a land that flowed with milk and honey and had brought back evidence of the great fruitfulness of that land. They also reported there were giants in the land. Caleb encouraged the people and said, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” However, ten

of the spies discouraged the people and said that they were no match for the giants of the land. The report of the fruitfulness of the land and Caleb's encouragement was the gospel to which Paul was referring. The promise was to the people of a land of rest.

The people, however, did not believe the promise of God, but rather turned back and sought a leader to lead them back to the land of Egypt in which God had delivered them out of. All those of 20 years of age or older died in the 40 years of wilderness wandering except Caleb and Joshua because of their unbelief in the promise of God.

Today, we have the gospel of rest preached unto us that Christ has redeemed us from our sins and now we should press into the gospel kingdom that he has established for us and in which we find rest for our souls. The warning is that if we disbelieve the promises of God we will not be permitted to enter the "rest" that God has promised.

Hebrews 4.3-11

Heb. 4:3 "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest:" The phrase, "As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest..." is a reference to Psalms 95:8 "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." When the children of Israel provoked the Lord with their unbelief and turning back in their hearts to go back to Egypt, the Lord sentenced them to die in the wilderness that were 20 years of age or older at the time. They were not allowed to enter into the land of rest (Canaan land). In contrast, those who believed (Caleb and Joshua) were allowed to enter into that rest and partake of the blessings of that land.

"For we which have believed do enter into rest..." Paul brings his argument into the present time. Here we ask ourselves, "We which have believed what?" The answer is the gospel. The word, "gospel," means "good news." The children of Israel in Egypt and then in the wilderness had a gospel preached unto them and that was the promise of the land of Canaan as a land of rest. Because of their unbelief many were not allowed to enter into that land. The good news we have today is that Christ died to redeem us from

our sins by the grace of God. We who believe that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness have ceased from our works of trying to get right with God and rest in the finished work of Christ. Those who still hold that they must do something to get right with God have not ceased from their own works and consequently do not enter into the rest that God has provided for them.

“Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” This is a reference to the work of creation when God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. God rested after the work was finished: “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” Paul is setting the stage to show the nature of the rest that is available to the children of God. It is a rest in a finished work. God worked in creation for six days and rested on the seventh. In the scriptures, the number seven indicates completion. The word Sabbath has a double meaning: it means completion, and it means rest, thus we are to rest in Christ’s completed work.

“And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:” Paul is setting forth to us a principle that though the children of Israel had not entered into the provided rest that there still is a rest for God’s children to enter into. It is entered into through belief and not in unbelief.

“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Paul references us back to the 95th Psalm. The rest to the people of God was not fulfilled with Joshua and the children of Israel possessing the land of Canaan. This was only a type of a greater rest. The true rest for the people of God was to come later. Paul was pointing out that the promise in Psalms 95 was much later in time than what took place with Joshua and the children of Israel coming to possess the land of Canaan. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. This rest or Sabbath is as we previously pointed out a rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ who through his sufferings and death delivered us from the wrath of God because of our sins. This is the rest that we possess today.

“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” God rested after he had finished the work of creation. Today, we should cease from our own works of trying to get right with God and rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ through which we have been made righteous before God.

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” This labour is a labor in our understanding of what Christ has accomplished for us. So long as a person believes that he is saved by grace but must do something in order to make it effective for him, he has not entered into the rest that God has provided for him. Only when he comes to understand that salvation from sin is by grace alone and not by anything that he has done will he rest in the finished work of Christ.

Hebrews 4.12-13

Heb. 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

This is one of the most misapplied verses of scripture in the bible. Too often, people try to make the phrase, “word of God,” used above to apply to the written word or to the spoken word. However, to be consistent with what the context says, the proper application has to be to the “living Word,” which is described in John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Here, the “Word,” and the Son of God are equated to be one and the same.

From examining Heb. 4:12, 13 we can definitely conclude that the “word of God” in that passage is the Son of God. We look at what the passage says about the word of God:

1. The word of God is “quick.” The word, quick, means life giving. The Son of God gives life. The scriptures bring to light life and immortality: 2 Tim. 1:10 “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:” The scriptures do not give life.

2. The word of God is powerful. John 1:1-3 tells us just how powerful the Son of God is. He created all things. Neither, the written word or the preached word has ever created anything. God is the only Creator.

3. The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. In the book of Revelation we are told of one out of whose mouth went a sharp sword with two edges:

a. Rev. 2:12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;”

b. Rev. 2:16 “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”

These verses speak of a sharp sword coming out of Christ’s mouth. Even if one were to assume that this is the spoken word, which it is, they would still have difficulty trying to apply this to Heb. 4:12. The reason is that the one spoken of in Heb. 4:12 is “sharper” than a two edged sword. It did not say that the “word of God” here was a two-edged sword, but it said that He is “sharper” than a two-edged sword. The Son of God is sharper than a two-edge sword.

4. The word of God pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. The written scriptures or the preached word cannot divide asunder the soul and spirit or the joints and marrow, however, the “living word,” the Son of God can do this.

5. The word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither the written word or the preach word can discern the thoughts and intents of ones heart. However, the living word, the Son of God, can discern the thoughts and intents of ones heart. It was said in Gen. 6:5 “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually.” The Son of God can look into our hearts and know what our thoughts are and our intents are. The scriptures and the preached word cannot do this.

6. All creatures are manifest in the sight of the word of God. Of the three things that are called “the word of God” in the scriptures only one has sight and can see. The one who has sight and can see is the Son of God. Moreover, he sees all creatures, which neither the written word nor the preached word are capable of doing.

7. All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The scriptures are not a “him” and the preached word is not a “him.” The Son of God is a “him.” Moreover, he has “eyes” that neither the written word nor the preached word has.

All rational reason from the above tells us that the “word of God” in this passage is the “Son of God.”

Hebrews 4.14-16

Heb. 4:14 “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” There is to us an assurance in knowing that we have a great high priest in heaven: One who can make intercession for us; One who has already made the one and only needed offering for our sins that delivered us from the wrath of God and assured our righteous standing before God. Because we have such a high priest standing at the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high, we need to hold fast our profession of faith and serve him faithfully all the days of our lives.

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Christ who journeyed here on earth for over 33 years was in all points tempted like as we are. He felt the infirmities of our flesh and yet committed no sin. Thus, we have the assurance that he knows what we suffer and how we are tempted.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Christ is the source of our mercy. By his grace he delivered us from our sins and by his grace is stands at the right hand of God and intercedes on our behalf. Because of his mercy and grace we can come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We, as the people, of God are a needy people. Throughout our lives we stand in need of God’s mercy and grace and he has provided for us a mercy seat, that is, a throne of grace that we can come to and obtain the needed mercy and grace. May God be glorified for his wonderful works toward his children!

Hebrews 5.1-4

Heb. 5:1 “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”

This portion of the book of Hebrews sets forth a summary of the purpose, function, and order of the High Priesthood taught in the Old Testament. It sets the groundwork for that which follows concerning the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament Priesthood was given to the children of Israel by God. There are several points that the above scripture teaches us about the Old Testament high priesthood which served as an example of the greater priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. “The high priest was taken from among men.” God chose that Aaron of the tribe of Levi would be the first high priest and that his sons and the descendant male children who met the requirements would succeed to the office of high priest after his death.

2. The high priest was “ordained for men in things pertaining to God.” The word, ordained, means appointed. The high priest was not ordained for God, but was ordained for men. This gift was given by God for the benefit and blessing of the children of Israel. The office of the high priest was given for men in things pertaining to God. The high priest was the intermediary between God and men. The high priest was to offer the gifts of men toward God and the sacrifices for sins on behalf of men to God. These gifts and sacrifices were an integral part of the worship and service of the children of Israel both daily and annually and at the set feast times in things pertaining to God.

3. “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” Under the Old Testament priesthood, the high priest was often plagued with the same infirmities and circumstances and problems that the people he was representing before God were plagued with. Because of this he could have compassion with the infirmities, circumstances, and problems of the people. With this compassion he was to intercede on behalf of the people he represented.

4. “And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.” The high priest once a year entered into the holiest of all to make sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. The high priest under the order of Aaron were sinners as well as the people, and they had need of saving from their sins, just as the people had need of saving from their sins.

5. “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” The office of the high priest was a called-out office. God chose who would serve in this office and called Aaron and his sons to serve in that office. God is a sovereign God and does according to his will. Men did not have a choice in this matter. Further, we see a principle set forth here that applies to the offices of God’s appointment. God appointed men to be prophets in the Old Testament. Those who were prophets did not choose of themselves to be prophets. God called them to be prophets. Moreover, the office of the gospel minister is established by God. It is not

men's choice to be gospel ministers, but rather it is God who chooses whom he pleases to be gospel ministers and calls those men to serve in that office work. For a man to choose to be a high priest, or a priest, or a prophet, or a gospel minister whom the Lord has not chosen and called to the office is committing great offense against the very God of heaven.

Hebrews 5.5-11

Heb. 5:5 "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing."

This passage points out to us that Christ did not make himself to be a high priest. But the Father made him to be a high priest. His high priesthood was not after the order of Aaron, but was after the order of Melchisedec. Paul, as was frequently his custom, used Old Testament verses to prove his point:

1. "Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee" was taken from Ps. 2:7 "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Moreover, the following scripture shows us that the meaning of "today have I begotten thee:" Acts 13:33 "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The significance of the word "begotten" applies to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

2. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" was taken from Ps. 110:4 "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Thus, we see that Christ's priesthood was given to him by the Father and that it was prophesied in the Old Testament. This was essential for the understanding of the Jews in Paul's day as the Jews were steeped in the traditions and knowledge of the Old Testament.

In the above and as we go forward in the book of Hebrews, Paul pointed out that, today, in the New Testament Church we have something better than the Old Testament law service. Moreover, he is pointing out that the Old Testament law service was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;" We read in the book of Matthew that this was fulfilled in the garden before Jesus was taken into the custody of men as follows: Matt. 26:38 "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O

my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

We are to understand that Jesus was not saved from dying and the text does not indicate that he asked to be saved from “dying,” but he was saved from “death.” Christ suffered death on our behalf and then was delivered from that death from which he had suffered. We know this is true because on the third day he arose from the grave, victorious over death, hell, and the grave.

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” As the Son of God he is eternal and has all knowledge and has always had all knowledge. The learning under consideration is not to be understood as increasing in knowledge. Rather, he “experienced” obedience by the things which he suffered. The obedience was the obedience to the covenant of redemption which he had with the Father before the world begun. The obedience was manifest by the things which Jesus suffered on behalf of his covenant people.

“And being made perfect...” Sinless perfection is not what is under consideration. The Son of God is always and has always been perfect as to sinless ness. The being made perfect has reference to his complete fulfillment of everything necessary to save his people from their sins. As a result of his completing everything necessary to save his people from their sins, he then became “the author” of eternal salvation to them that obey him. The word author means “causer.” Thus, Jesus is the “causer” of eternal salvation. And since Jesus is the causer, the obedience of those who obey him is not the cause of eternal salvation, because Jesus is the cause of their eternal salvation. There is a sense in which every last one of the elect family of God passively obey Jesus in the spiritual birth. As Jesus said in John 5:25 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”

“Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.” Once again, Paul tells us that Christ was called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. He reinforces this in contrast to the priesthood after the order of Aaron. There was a time and a purpose for the Old Testament priesthood, but now a far greater High Priest and priesthood is present. Moreover, Paul said of this High Priest that “we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. The phrase “hard to be uttered” comes from a Greek word meaning “difficult to explain.” The reason those things were difficult to explain was because of the condition of the people. The people had become “dull of hearing.” The word dull comes from a Greek word meaning lazy or sluggard. It would appear that the Jewish disciples had become so tied to their traditions that they had become lazy or sluggish in even attempting to understand the things that Paul was trying to teach them.

Hebrews 5.12-14

Heb. 5:12 “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

In chapter 6, Paul identifies the “first principles of the oracles of God” as being “the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” These things pertain to the doctrines and practices and order and government of the New Testament Church. Paul admonishes the Hebrew brethren in that he said that they had been around New Testament teaching long enough that they ought to be teachers. However, they had failed to progress in their spiritual knowledge and growth, that they now had need that one teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God.

There are basically two main reasons why God’s children who have become members of His kingdom church on earth do not grow in their knowledge of the first principles of the oracles of God. One reason is found when they do not take heed to the preaching of the word and set aside time to read and study God’s word. The other reason is that the preacher is not teaching as He should the first principles of the oracles of God.

I remember hearing on several occasions as a child brothers and sisters remark about someone’s preaching being “strong meat” when that person preached on election, predestination, and salvation by grace. I discovered later that what was being called “strong meat” was in fact what Paul was calling “milk.” Milk is necessary for the babes in Christ and serves as a foundation for the later understand of the need for Godly living.

A truly dedicated disciple of Christ needs to grow spiritually. These Jewish brethren had failed to grow in their spiritual understanding and practice, and had become prey to the legalistic teaching of Judaism.

Just as a little baby begins his growth desiring and using its mothers milk, so we as babes in Christ use the teaching of the doctrines of grace as our spiritual milk. A natural baby will continue to need milk, but other stronger foods are added to its diet so that its body will grow more and stronger. Likewise, as babes in Christ, we need to add stronger and stronger spiritual understanding so that we will grow stronger in our faith and service to God and his people.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Growth of a natural child will be thwarted by the lack of exercise. Likewise, our growth as disciples of Christ is largely dependent on us exercising our senses to discern good and evil. This does not mean that we exercise our senses in both good and evil. It means that we exercise our senses to “discern” good and evil. The word “discern” comes from a Greek word meaning “judicial estimation.” By practicing the things that the scriptures teach us are good and withdrawing ourselves from the things the scriptures teach us are evil, then we are exercising our senses so that we can discern good and evil.

Hebrews 6.1-3

Heb. 6:1 “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.”

Foundations are extremely important. Every house is built on a foundation. Also, learning new things are built on foundations. A young child must first build a foundation of understanding a few basic words and then build upon it before that child can mature into a knowledgeable adult. Isaiah spoke of a foundation for doctrine: Is. 28:9 “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” Everything that we learn is precept upon precept: line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” Likewise, learning the major teachings of the bible and of those things pertaining to the Lord’s church kingdom are precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, there a little.

Paul speaks of the principles of the doctrine of Christ as the foundation for going on unto perfection (maturity) in the service of God. Paul include in that foundation of the principles of the doctrine of Christ:

1. Repentance from dead works. Notice that he did not say, “Repentance from **evil** works.” There is a difference between evil works and dead works. Dead works were the works that the Jews were observing when they continued to observe the Old Testament “law service” which had been completed in Christ Jesus. Moreover, the Jews of that day had perverted the law service and tried to make it do something that it was not designed to do. They tried to make it a legalistic system whereby a person through observing and keeping the law could get right with God. Once the Lord had satisfied the law and redeemed his people from their sins, there was no more a need to observe the “law service.” Those were now **dead** works. When John came preaching he said, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” What John was teaching is that the time had come to turn from the “law kingdom” and turn to the “kingdom of heaven” in their worship and service. Likewise, the call to repent was made on the day of Pentecost, when the people cried out, “men and brethren what shall we do?” The answer was “Repent, and be baptized every one of you...” Moreover, the doctrine of repentance from dead works or erroneous works is a basic tenant in the Lord’s church today. People who come need to repent of the worldly legalistic system of salvation by their actions and turn to the truth that salvation from sin is by the grace of God alone.

2. Faith towards God. Faith toward God is more than just a belief in God. Moreover, it is a belief also in the word of God. Faith towards God involves walking in the teachings of God’s word and trusting in God that he will keep his promises. Paul later on states it this way in Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” If we have faith towards God we will believe that he is and that he will reward us when we diligently seek him and keep his words.

3. “Of the doctrine of baptisms.” There are several baptisms that are taught in the scriptures, but those concerning the church kingdom of God there are two:

baptism of the Holy Ghost and water baptism. Both of these are foundational. In the early church when Christ had completed setting up the church he dedicated it on the day of Pentecost: Acts 2:2 “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Moreover, He did this also with the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius: Acts 11:15 “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” All this was similar to what we find in the Old Testament when the tabernacle was finished and the cloud filled the tabernacle and the scriptures declare that the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Likewise, when the temple was completed, the cloud filled the temple and the scriptures declared to us that the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost was foundational in both identifying the Lord’s approval of the church and of its worship and service to Him in the world.

Likewise, water baptism is foundational as the first step of a child of God in becoming a disciple of the Lord in his church. In the book of Matthew we read of the command that the Lord gave unto the apostles when he told them: 18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Water baptism signifies the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ which is our motivation for the desire to serve him in His church kingdom on earth. To the disciple it begins with water baptism and then goes on into learning and doing all things whatsoever the Lord teaches us in his word.

4. Laying on of hands. The laying on of hands of the presbytery is a function of the New Testament church. The preaching of the gospel is foundational to the New Testament church. Therefore, it is necessary that those who preach the gospel are qualified and sound in the fundamental doctrines and practices laid down for us in the New Testament. To insure that the church would not drift into error by subsequent generations and by designing men, the Lord gave us a protection against the devices of unsound and designing men. He gave us the practice of judging the soundness of a man to preach the gospel and to maintain the government of the New Testament church. The presbytery the Lord established was to be made up of those who already had proved themselves as being sound in doctrine, practice, and government to judge the qualifications and readiness of a young preacher to go forward as an ordained elder in the New Testament church.

Moreover, to assure that the widows and needy in the church were not neglected in the daily ministrations and that the elders of the church were not overtaxed or overburdened, the Lord gave the office of the deacon to the New Testament Church and instructed the church to choose out men who would meet certain qualifications and set them as deacons in the church. This too is done through examination by a presbytery and the laying on of hands.

5. Resurrection of the dead. This is a bedrock foundational principle of the doctrine of Christ. Paul spent a whole chapter in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 addressing this issue. To deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the hope of a child of God. Christ's resurrection is inseparably connected to the resurrection of the elect family of God at his coming. To suggest that all that will be in glory are the souls and spirits of the elect makes a mockery of the death of Christ.

6. Eternal judgment. The doctrine of eternal judgment through the shed blood of Christ for the elect and of a future eternal judgment for the non-elect is foundational to our eternal life and is a foundational teaching of the word of God. The whole purpose and utility of the scriptures fail without this foundational truth.

Hebrews 6.4-6

Heb. 6:4 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." The word "if" is a subordinating conjunction. Frequently it is used in a line of reasoning. It is used above to show the impossibility of one who has been born of the Spirit to fall away from the work that is performed on him.

We know that the ones under consideration have been born of the Spirit of God because of the statements made about them:

1. They have been enlightened. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 1:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2. They have tasted of the heavenly gift. A person could not have tasted of the heavenly gift if they do not possess the heavenly gift.

3. They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. A person who is not born of the Spirit of God cannot be a partaker of the Holy Ghost: 1 Cor. 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

4. They have tasted the good word of God. The Lord showed us that only those who are of God can hear his word: John 8:47 "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

5. They have tasted the powers of the world to come. Those who have not been born of the Spirit cannot taste the powers of the world to come.

One school of thought suggests that born again children of God can fall away from the true worship and service of God in the Lord's church kingdom. While it is true that they can fall away from the fellowship of the Lord's church kingdom, it is also true that they can be renewed unto that fellowship and service. The man who was guilty of fornication in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and was put away from the fellowship of the church was later restored to that fellowship as we read in 2 Cor. 2:6 "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." Likewise, the prodigal son in Luke

chapter 16 who had lost fellowship with his father was later restored to that fellowship after repentance.

Plainly the above passage is teaching that if a born again child of God could fall away from being a born again child of God it would be impossible to renew him to the position he had before he fell away. To renew him would mean that the work of Christ was insufficient to save him the first time and thus bring Christ to an open shame. Moreover it would mean that Christ would have to be crucified afresh in order to save him from his sins.

The principle Paul is teaching here gives rise to the statement, “once saved always saved.” This statement is true with regards to the eternal salvation of the elect family of God.

Hebrews 6.7-10

Heb. 6:7 “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Verses 7 and 8 above are set in contrast to one another. Paul uses these to illustrate the difference between the spiritual man and the natural man. The spiritual man is illustrated in verse 7 as follows:

1. “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it...”
Like the earth which drinks of the rain that comes upon it, so the spiritual man drinks of the Spirit of God those spiritual things that come upon him.
2. “And bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed...” Just as the earth is dressed and brings forth herbs meet for them who dressed it, so the spiritual man brings forth spiritual fruit through the ministry of the gospel and the reading and studying of God’s word.
3. Just as the earth receives blessings from God, so the spiritual man receives manifold blessings from God.

In contrast verse 8 illustrates the natural man. Like the earth that brings forth thorns and briers is rejected and is nigh unto cursing, so the natural man brings forth that which is cursed. In Genesis chapter 3, God cursed the ground because of the sin of man and that curse included that it would bring forth: Gen. 3:18 “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” This curse upon natural man is spelled out for us in Gal. 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” The fruits of that curse are also spelled out in Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell

you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” Paul had seen the works of these Jewish brethren and was persuaded that they were manifesting the fruits of the Spirit, which are things which accompany salvation. He was fully persuaded that they were born of the Spirit of God and were bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” God is not a forgetful God, moreover he sees and blesses those works of labor and love manifest by the saints. Revelations chapter 2 and 3 plainly demonstrate to us that God knows all of our works and rewards us with blessings for those good works that we do. The saints of the church at Jerusalem from the very earliest had been known for the good works manifest therein as we read in Acts 2:44 “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Another example is in Acts 4:32 “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

Hebrews 6.11-15

Heb. 6:11 “And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

Hope can be defined as the earnest expectation of the fulfillment of a promise. Our hope rest in the promises of God and that God will keep his promises.

“And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:” What Paul said here to the Jews is just as true for us today. We should also show the same diligence in our faith toward God and in our service to God with the full assurance of hope until the promises of God are fulfilled.

“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” The word slothful means lazy or sluggish. We should not become lazy or sluggish in our service and worship of God, but we should follow the example of those who through faith and patience inherited the promises. When we consider the promises of God, we should by faith believe in those promises that God will fulfill his promises. Moreover, we should be patient until we possess the promises God promised.

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” Two things stand out in this verse. First, there is the promise. Second there is the oath. Both came from God. Obviously a promise and the oath are only as good as the one who makes the promise or the oath. In this case, the promise and the oath stand, because the promiser and the swearer is God. Failure of the promise coming to pass would mean that God is a failure. That is not possible.

“And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” Patience indicates that Abraham waited for God to fulfill the promise. Patience is what we need when it comes to the promises of God. God will fulfill his promises in his own time.

Hebrews 6.16-20

Heb. 6:16 “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

“For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.” Until just a few years ago it was common practice in the American court room that a witness would swear to tell the truth by making an oath to God. As the verse said, “men swear by the greater.” By swearing by the greater, they are in effect saying, ‘Let God’s wrath abide upon me if I fail to do what I promised to do.’ The oath is to confirm that the promise will be fulfilled by the one who made the promise. The oath was designed to end any controversy over whether the promise would be fulfilled.

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” This verse speaks of both a promise being made by God unto a people who are called the “**heirs of promise.**” We find this promise and the heirs of promise in Rom. 8:29, 30: “For **whom he did foreknow**, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The ones that God “**foreknew**” are the heirs of the promise of this covenant. The final result of this promise is that they will be finally and totally conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. The time this covenant promise was made is spelled out for us in Tit. 1:2: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began;**” Now we are told that God confirmed this promise by an oath.

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie...” The two immutable things are the covenant promise of God and the oath. By these two immutable things and by the fact that one of the characteristics of God is that it is

impossible for him to lie, we know of the absolute certainty that what God promised God will bring to pass. The word “immutable” means unchangeable. Since God cannot change his mind and God cannot lie, we know the promises are sure.

“We might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us...” The phrase “strong consolation” from the Greek means mighty comfort. The word “hope” means “expectant confidence.” Unfortunately many people misunderstand what hope is. They equate hope with a wish or a dream. Hope is not a wish, but rather it is expecting God to fulfill his promise.

It is a mighty comfort to those of God’s children who understand the truth of salvation by grace through the covenant work of God to know that regardless of the circumstances of their lives or the problems or trials they face that God will fulfill his promise and they will inherit the promise of God and live with him eternally in heaven’s glory world.

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil...” Our expectant confidence that God will keep his covenant promise is an anchor to our soul. We are not anchored to things on earth, but rather we are anchored to the God of heaven who sits in heaven. By anchoring on God’s covenant promises we are better able to steer the ship of our lives here on this timely shore.

“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” A forerunner is one who runs before the rest. Our forerunner has run the race that is set before us and has already entered into the veil. This teaches us that we have a race to run and we also will one day enter into the veil which is heaven itself. Moreover, Jesus, who is our forerunner, is also our high priest after the order of Melchisedec. He ever liveth and maketh intercession for us. This is a double blessing as He has assured our entering into the veil and he also is our great helper and intercessor for us here on earth.

Hebrews 7.1-3

Heb. 7:1 “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”

We read about Melchisedec in the book of Genesis when Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the kings: Gen. 14:18 “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.” The only other reference to Melchizedek is found in the book of Psalms: Ps. 110:4 “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” While there were only two Old Testament references to Melchizedek, yet his importance was high. His priesthood had some very significant differences from the priesthood after the order of Aaron.

There has been much speculation and controversy as to who this Melchisedec was. I have found three major ideas espoused as to who this Melchisedec was:

1. A few have speculated that Melchisedec was Shem, one of the sons of Noah who came over with Noah on the ark. The supposition was that since Shem had no beginning on this side of the flood but was before the flood and yet he out lived most of two or three generations of people who came after him and thus those who knew about him saw no beginning with him and assumed that he had no end of life. I do not put much credence in this speculation.

2. A much more generally believed idea is that Melchisedec was a strong type of Christ and that his genealogy is not given nor is his date of birth or date of death that this would satisfy the things that Paul said about him in Hebrews. Even if one makes this assumption however, there is the statement that Paul made “abideth a priest continually” which suggests that his priesthood was still ongoing at the time of Paul’s writing.

3. I personally believe that the Melchizedek that appeared to Abraham was one of several pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. My rationale for this belief is based on the following:

a. Christ as the Son of God was without earthly father or mother. Also, since he is eternal he has neither beginning of days or end of life and is without descent. Moreover, he brought forth bread and wine to Abraham. One only has to look to Christ at the communion service to see that it is He who brings forth bread and wine.

b. Christ is also King of righteousness and King of peace, whereas no other man on earth could ever make that claim.

c. Abraham was blessed of the greater. In what sense would a man on earth besides Christ be considered greater than Abraham?

Hebrews 7.4-10

Heb. 7:4 “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.”

We are invited to consider how great Melchisedec was. Melchisedec was greater than Abraham as Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils from the victory over the kings in the valley of Siddim. Moreover, we read where Melchisedec blessed Abraham who had the promises from God as the less is blessed of the greater. No doubt, Abraham was a great man of faith as evidenced by what we read about him in the book of Genesis. Also, we read in the book of Romans that Abraham is the father of the faithful. Yet,

Melchisedec is far greater than Abraham. Our trust is not to be in men such as Abraham but rather our trust is to be in Him who is after the order of Melchisedec.

Moreover, under the Levitical priesthood, the sons of Levi, received from God the office of the priesthood and were commanded to take tithes of the people according to the law. Yet, we see now that God has shown us the superiority of the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec as Levi paid tithes before the law unto Melchisedec as he was in the loins of Abraham when Abraham gave a tenth unto Melchisedec as he returned from the slaughter of the kings. Additionally we are told that under the law men who die receive tithes. In contrast, Melchisedec received tithes of whom we are told he does not die but lives. Thus, Melchisedec's priesthood, unlike the priesthood under the law, is an everlasting priesthood.

Another lesson taught here is that under the law the tithes were received by the Levites, whereas the tithe was not given by Abraham to a mortal man but were given to one that did not have end of days.

Hebrews 7.11-19

Heb. 7:11 "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" If sinless perfection could have come by the Levitical priesthood and through the keeping of the law, then there was no need for another priest to rise after the order of Melchisedec. However, perfection does not come by the keeping of a set of rules or by the multitude of animal sacrifices offered by the high priest after the order of Aaron. Those Jews seeking to bring the disciples back under the law were seeking to bring them back under a set of dead works. A lesson for us Gentiles today is that perfection is not by keeping a set of rules or by the actions of the flesh to somehow get right with God. Rather, perfection comes from him who was made a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, Jesus Christ.

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The Law of Moses given to the children of Israel from God and delivered unto them by Moses never made man perfect. It never did away with a single sin. It brought sin to remembrance and showed the people the need of a perfect sacrifice and a perfect

offering to God. As will be developed later in the book of Hebrews, animal sacrifices were not sufficient to satisfy God's wrath because of the sins of the elect. It took something far better to satisfy God's wrathful judgment.

"For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Under the law given to the children of Israel, the kings came out of the tribe of Judah and the priest came out of the tribe of Levi. Under the Law of Moses a king could not be a priest and a priest could not be a king. Yet, there arose one who is both a King and a High Priest. This priesthood is not by the law of Moses, but after the promise of God that one would arise after the order of Melchisedec.

"And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It took someone completely outside the law of a carnal commandment to satisfy the wrath of God because of sin. Man under the law was completely unable to do away with sin. All who operated under the law of Moses were under the law of sin and death and thus unable to bring about sinless perfection. Christ came not under the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He came as a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec in order to offer the perfect sacrifice of himself so as to bring about righteousness and peace for God's people.

"For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." When that which is perfect had come, there was no need for that which is weak and unprofitable. When Christ came after the power of an endless life and offer the perfect sacrifice of himself as a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, he fulfilled the wrathful judgment of sin against the elect family of God and justified them before a just and holy God. We have this better hope because of the perfect work of Jesus Christ and the everlasting covenant promise of God. Thus, the law of commandments contained in ordinances was disannulled. It is through this better hope that we are able to draw nigh unto God, knowing that we have a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us.

Hebrews 7.20-22

Heb. 7:20 "And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."

In similar fashion as in the previous chapter when Paul showed the impossibility of God's promise of eternal life to the elect to fail by speaking of two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie. Those two things were God's counsel (covenant) and his oath, Paul now shows the absolute assurance of the execution of the

covenant by the two immutable things assuring us of the certainty of the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ. First, there was the declaration of God saying: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Secondly, there was the oath of God whereby he swore to the declaration. By these two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie we have the assurance of the perfect unfailing high priest who is after the power of an endless life who will completely fulfill the covenant promises of God. For this cause Jesus was made a surety of a better testament. The old testament could not do away with sin, but only brought sin to remembrance. The better testament based upon better promises and brought to fruition by a far better High Priest after the order of Melchisedec assures us that this is an everlasting testament that will be perfectly fulfilled.

Hebrews 7.23-28

Heb. 7:23 "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

"And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Under the old covenant there were many high priests. These men were all sinners and had the effects of sin in their bodies. Some were more faithful than others. Yet all of them died after a period of time. None of them had a perfect reign as a priest. They were limited by their mortality. Christ is not plagued with sin and because he is after the power of an endless life, he will always be the same perfect high priest. His priesthood is unchangeable. He cannot start out good and turn bad as a high priest. He will always be a perfect high priest who perfectly performs the office of a high priest.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." As a perfect high priest that cannot change and cannot die, Christ knows all things and all about everyone of the elect family of God. He knows our needs before we know our needs. He is everywhere present and no where absent. He can hear and answer literally millions of prayers at one time. He is not limited by the mortality of human flesh. One of the duties of a high priest in the old covenant was to intercede on behalf of the people unto God. Because of their limitations, that was not always possible that the high priest would know the needs of the people and know what to intercede to God for them. Christ has no such limitations. He ever liveth to make intercessions for us. Moreover, he has saved us from the condemnation of sin and has saved those of his born again children from the bondage of sin and in the resurrection save all the elect from the corruption of sin. Additionally, he

is able to save us from the timely circumstances of our lives and frequently does so for each of his children. He is able to save us to the uttermost who come unto God by him.

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” Considering the sum of mankind, can anyone other than Christ be said to be perfectly holy, or perfectly harmless, or undefiled, or separate from sinners. I dare say that not one can be found that any one of those things could be honestly said about them. He was also made higher than the heavens because he is higher than the heavens. He is perfection personified. He became us in that he was that perfect suitable high priest for the needs of the elect family of God. As a result of the end result of his high priesthood, we will one day be conformed to this perfect one and be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. To this end we were predestinated according to Rom. 8:29.

“Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” Because the high priests under the law were sinners, it was necessary that they offer up daily sacrifices for their own sins and for the sins of the people. In contrast, our high priest after the order of Melchisedec is sinless. Therefore, He did not have to offer up a sacrifice for himself. Moreover, the sacrifices of the high priests under the law only brought sin to remembrance. They never did away with sin. Unlike these priests offerings, when Christ offered up himself, he offered up that which was perfect and which was also a perfect sacrifice for sin. Consequently his sacrifice was all that was needed to save his people from their sins.

“For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” In contrast to the law which made men high priests which had infirmity and who were sinners, the word of the oath, “Thou art a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,” made the Son a perfect High Priest who is consecrated to that office for evermore. Thanks be to our Great God for this unspeakable gift!

Hebrews 8.1-5

Heb. 8:1 “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.”

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Sometimes it is needful when writing or in discussion that we summarize what we

have been writing or saying. Sometimes we fail to see the forest for the trees. That is we get bogged down in the details and lose sight of the beauty of the whole. The sum of what Paul had previously written was that we have a high priest. This high priest is set or firmly established at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. This high priest is a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle. This sanctuary and true tabernacle was built by God and not man. The sanctuary and tabernacle in the Old Testament were figures of the true tabernacle. However, the true sanctuary of God and true tabernacle of God are far better than the Old Testament types. The High Priest after the order of Melchisedec is far better than the high priests after the order of Aaron.

“For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.” The high priests after the order of Aaron were ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as prescribed in the book of Leviticus and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec was ordained to offer the perfect sacrifice of himself to God on behalf of the elect family of God. His offering was far better than the offerings of those high priests after the order of Aaron, for their offerings never did away with sin.

“For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:” Christ is not on earth but in heaven. He offered the perfect gift through the Holy Spirit unto God.

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” Examples and shadows of heavenly things are not the heavenly things themselves. They are but examples and shadows. The heavenly things are far better than the examples and shadows. But even in the examples and shadows, they were to be carried out according to God’s pattern, just as Moses had been instructed to make all things according to the pattern God had shown to him in the mount.

While we learn that those things that were depicted in the tabernacle worship and in the offerings, were examples and shadows of heavenly things and were pointing us to Christ, yet the heavenly things and Christ himself is far better than all the examples and shadows depicted in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 8.6-13

Heb. 8:6 “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

When John came preaching in the wilderness he said: Matt. 3:2 “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When Jesus began to preach he said: Matt. 4:17 “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When Jesus sent forth the twelve to preach on their first evangelical trip he told them: Matt. 10:7 “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Obviously, the Lord was teaching that there was a kingdom that was at hand and not preaching that the kingdom would come thousands of years later. The Lord pinpointed the beginning of this kingdom of heaven in Luke 16:16 “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” This kingdom began with the preaching of John the Baptist.

For a long time, I misunderstood the significance of the word, “Repent,” as used by John and the Lord in the above scriptures. The word means to turn from and to turn to. When a person repents of unrighteous living, he turns from the unrighteous living and turns to righteous living. The word, repent in the above scriptures is teaching that the people should turn from the old law covenant which established the nation of Israel and turn to the new covenant, which establishes the kingdom of heaven.

Just about every nation or kingdom on the face of the earth today has as its foundation a covenant or constitution by which the government is established and serves as the foundational guide to the legislative, judicial, and executive functions of that government. Most of these covenants or constitutions were either established by a group of people agreeing together on the covenant or constitution or they were established by dictate or force. Regardless, for a nation or kingdom to properly function there must be a foundation for the government and that foundation is a covenant or constitution (which is just another name for a covenant).

God has made two covenants for the establishment of nations or kingdoms. Moreover, these are the only two covenants and there will be no more as we read in Gal. 4:22 “For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.”

From the above we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The first covenant was established at Mount Sinai in Arabia.
2. The second covenant embraces both Jews and Gentiles.
3. There will not be a third covenant as the scriptures says, “These are the two covenants.”

The details for the establishment of the first covenant are found beginning in Exodus chapter 19. The ratification of that covenant is found in Ex. 19:3 “And Moses

went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.”

From the above we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The LORD alone gave the laws and ordinances and governance to the children of Israel and they were to obey what the Lord gave them.
2. By obeying the voice of the Lord and his covenant they would be unto him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
3. The people ratified the covenant by agreeing to do all that the LORD had spoken unto them.

The details of the covenant, including the Ten Commandments, are given in the next several chapters of the book of Exodus.

The nation of Israel was established based on this covenant from God. God was originally their King, until Israel asked for a king like unto the nations about them. At that time, God gave them Saul to be king, and after Saul, God gave them David and his descendents to be king over the nation of Israel.

By the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant different from the first covenant: Jere. 31:31 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” By this, God promised a new kingdom established upon a new covenant with better promises.

In Hebrews chapters 8 and 10 we see the fulfillment of this prophecy of a new kingdom based on a new covenant:

1. Heb. 8:8 “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour,

and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

2. Heb. 10:15 “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

We note that the new covenant establishing a new Kingdom of God was based on better promises as we list below:

1. The first covenant was written on two tables of stone. The new covenant was written and put directly in the heart and mind of the born-again child of God.

2. The first covenant required the teaching of the law to know the Lord. The second covenant does not require that any man teach a born-again child of God to know the Lord, for they all know him as a result of the new or spiritual birth.

3. The first covenant had curses associated with the transgression of the law and a certain fearful execution of justice. The second covenant was based on Christ’s sacrificial atonement which resulted in all the elect being forgiven of their sins by God and subsequently God no longer holding those sins against them (Rom. 8:33, 34: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”)

These people to whom this covenant is made are to God a people and to them He is their God. That they are a kingdom and a nation is clearly set forth to us in 1 Pet. 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” Thus, with the first coming of Christ, he established a kingdom and nation.

“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Plainly, Paul was teaching that the two kingdoms would not co-exist for very long. With the establishment of the Kingdom of God, there cease to be a need for the Kingdom with Israel. The true is better than the types and shadows.

Hebrews 9.1-5

Heb. 9:1 “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5

And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

Several words in this chapter keys us to the significance of the Old Testament structures and ordinances as being types of greater things presented to us in the New Testament. These words and verses are as follows:

1. v.8 “The Holy Ghost this **signifying**, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:” The word, signify, means to show by signs, which teaches us that these Old Testament principles are signs of better things presented in the New Testament.

2. v.9 “Which was a **figure** for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;” A figure is a representation of something greater.

3. v.23 “It was therefore necessary that the **patterns** of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Again, patterns are an outline of something greater.

From this we gather that the Old Testament figures, signs, and patterns all point us to the greater things and lessons taught in the New Testament. Throughout the ninth chapter we are presented a comparison to the Old Testament figures, signs, and patterns to the greater things taught in the New Testament.

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” If there is a first covenant then there must of necessity be a second covenant which likewise in comparison has ordinances of divine service and a heavenly sanctuary.

“For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary.” This tabernacle was also called the holy place. It is a figure of the New Testament church. The candlestick according to what the Lord told us in Revelation chapter 1 is a representation of the church. The table is a place of eating or feasting and the showbread is what is set forth for the occupants to feast upon. Since there were six loaves by six loaves or 6X6 that is 66 books of the scriptures we are to feast upon the word of God in the New Testament church.

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all...” In the Old Testament the priests were allowed to go into the first tabernacle or holy place and worship and perform the service of God. However, in contrast, only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Holiest of all.

“Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant...” Revelation 8:1-5 identifies for us the golden censer as a type or representation of the mediatory work of Jesus Christ on behalf of his elect family. The Ark of the Covenant was a type of Jesus Christ and his covenant work. Aaron's rod that budded is a representation of life from the dead pointing to Christ as the one who died and rose from the dead never to die again. The golden pot of manna shows us that Christ lived by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God. And the two tables of covenant points us to the perfect work and life of Christ who kept the law to a jot and tittle.

“And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.” There were two cherubims overshadowing the mercy

seat. My take on this is that the reason Paul said we cannot now speak particularly is because the New Testament scriptures was not yet complete. My thoughts on this is that the two cherubims are typical of the two covenants pointing to the covenant work of Jesus Christ in redeeming his people from their sins.

The mercyseat is just that. It is God' mercy towards his covenant children as a result of the covenant work of Jesus Christ in redeeming them from their sins.

Hebrews 9.6-10

Heb. 9:6 “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.” The things were the things in the previous 5 verses which included the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, the cherubims of glory, the table of shew bread, the candlestick, and the incense altar. These things were appointed or ordained of God. The priests who were the sons of the high priest were permitted only to go into the first tabernacle or holy place and there they were to accomplish the service of God which God had appointed them. They were not permitted to go into the holiest of all.

“But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:” The high priest under the Old Testament pattern was the only one permitted to go into the holiest of all and that was once a year at the appointed time. He was to make a sacrifice for himself and then a sacrifice for the errors of the people. The purpose for making a sacrifice for himself was that he also was a sinner like unto the people. The high priest took the blood of the sacrifices for himself and the people into the holiest of all made a blood offering unto God.

“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:” The things done in the tabernacle were types, shadows, and patterns of heavenly things and pointed to the better day in which Christ would come and make the perfect sacrifice for the sins of his people and offer it to God.

“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Those sacrifices and gifts offered were not intended to make the people perfect or cleanse them from their sins.

They were designed to bring sin to remembrance and to teach the people there was a need for one to come and offer a perfect sacrifice. The time of reformation spoken of is the time that Christ came and offered the perfect sacrifice for sin unto God and it was accepted. At the time he came he also set up the better worship and service that we have today in the New Testament church.

Hebrews 9.11-14

Heb. 9:11 “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;” One of the main themes of the book of Hebrews is that we have something far better today in this New Testament age. We have previously been shown that the high priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedec is far better than the high priesthood after the order of Aaron. A comparison is here made between the Old Testament tabernacle and the perfect tabernacle. Christ compared his body to a temple: John 2:19 “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.” Thus the perfect tabernacle or temple is the body of Christ. This tabernacle was made without hands thus not the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness or the temple in Jerusalem in that day. Moreover, Christ came as a high priest of good things to come. The Old Testament ordinances of worship and service never perfected or cleansed even a single individual. They did call sin to remembrance and testified of a need for a redeemer. Christ, in contrast cleansed his people from their sins by his perfect offering to God. He gave us this precious hope of eternal life that we look forward to. He intercedes for us to God in his high priestly office.

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” The offering of the blood of goats and calves never did away with a single sin, but brought sin to remembrance testifying to us of God’s wrathful judgment of sin. In contrast, Christ entered into the holy place of heaven one time, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The high priest under the Old Testament entered into the holiest of all once a year and never obtained eternal redemption for a single individual. Notice that the phrase “having obtained” is in the past tense. It is an accomplished fact. Since it is already obtained, there is nothing for us to do to obtain it. Now we should give praise to the one who obtained it for us. The blood of goats and calves were not sufficient to satisfy God’s

wrathful judgment because of our sins, but the blood of Christ was sufficient and he obtained eternal redemption for us.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” The blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, ceremoniously sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but never put away sin. In contrast the blood of Christ, who offered himself to God, not to man, through the eternal Spirit. He offered himself without spot to God. He who knew no sin and had no sin, offered himself without spot to God and the offering was accepted of God and thus he obtained eternal redemption for us. This wonderful news serves to purge our conscience from dead works (works under the law which are not evil works, but now dead works) as they served their purpose until Christ came and made the perfect offering to God. Paul is teaching the Hebrew people here that they need to turn from the dead works of the law to worship God in Spirit and truth under the New Testament teachings. He is saying that the old law service is dead works now that Christ has come and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Hebrews 9.15-17

Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

Four elements of a testament are presented in the above passage. These four elements are:

1. The testament.
2. The mediator of the testament.
3. The testator.
4. Time that the testament takes force.

The testament under consideration is the testament spelled out for us in Rom. 8:29, 30: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The details of this covenant spell out several things to us including:

1. The beneficiaries of the testament are those who God foreknew before the foundation of the world.
2. The benefits of the testament are that those named beneficiaries are to be finally glorified and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ the Son of God.
3. The mediator of this testament is Jesus Christ. He is the one who calls us and justifies us and glorifies us according to the terms: called; justified; and glorified.

4. The testator of this testament is also Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Next, we notice that once the testament comes into force, it is too late to add names to the testament or remove names from the testament. When Christ the testator died, the testament came into force. Now the terms of the testament cannot be changed and the beneficiaries of the testament cannot be changed. All the labors of all the so-called preachers and all the efforts of man cannot change the beneficiaries by adding or subtracting names to the testament. They are eternally fixed because the testament is in force.

Hebrews 9.18-23

Heb. 9:18 “Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

Under the ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament everything including the book, the people, the tabernacle, and the vessels of the ministry were ceremonial sprinkled with the blood of calves and goats. This was a ceremonial cleansing or purifying. Moreover, Moses said when this was done: “This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you.” This ceremonial blood and cleansing did not do away with sin, but was a pattern enjoined upon them until the one came who would offer a sacrifice that would do away with sin. This ceremony was enjoined upon the people until Christ came.

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Purging or purifying with blood is a requirement established by God in both the ceremonial remission of sins and in the actual remission of sins. In the Old Testament the blood of animals was enjoined ceremoniously upon the people as a means of calling to the attention of the people that there was a need for one to come and make a perfect offering to God in order to redeem them from their sins.

“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with **better sacrifices** than these.” Once again, our attention is drawn to the fact that we have something **better** today than the children of Israel under the first testament had. One has come and offered a far better sacrifice for the remission of sins than were ever offered in the Old Testament ceremonial law. Those sacrifices could not do away with sin. Christ through his one offering did away the sins of the elect and justified them before God.

Hebrews 9.24-28

Heb. 9:24 “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Following the theme that we have something far better under this New Testament day we have several comparisons between what was under the Old Testament worship and what we have today under the New Testament worship:

1. The high priests under the Old Testament entered into the holy places made with hands which are only figures of the true. In contrast, Christ entered into heaven itself.
2. The high priests under the Old Testament appeared only ceremoniously in the presence of God, whereas Christ literally appeared in the presence of God for us.
3. The high priests under the Old Testament entered into the holy place and offered the blood of others yearly. Christ entered into heaven only once.
4. The blood offerings of the Old Testament never did away with sin, but Christ’s one offering of himself hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Because of sin men die, and afterwards comes the judgment. Because Christ was offered to bear the sins of many their judgment has been satisfied and it is they who will look for him to appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 10.1-4

Heb. 10:1 “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

From this passage we make the following observations:

1. The law was only a shadow of good things to come. The object that cast the shadow is always far greater and better than the shadow itself. The shadow leads to the object that is casting the shadow. The good things to come is Christ and his perfect covenant work. Elsewhere Paul told us that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

2. The sacrifices under the law never made anyone perfect. The worshippers under the law never had their sins purged by the sacrifices under the law.

This proves beyond a doubt that the children of Israel under the law were not saved from sin by the works of the law.

3. If they could have been saved by the sacrifices, which they couldn't, under the law then there was no further need for annual sacrifices.

4. The sacrifices under the law did not roll sins back, but rather brought sin to remembrance to the worshippers under the law. Those sacrifices pointed to the one perfect sacrifice that was to come.

5. It was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. They were totally incapable of taking away even one sin. It would take a better sacrifice to take away sin.

Hebrews 10.5-14

Heb. 10:5 "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." Paul was here quoting from Ps. 40:6 "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." This is a quote that has direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ as the speaker. From this we make the following observations:

1. Sacrifices and offerings under the law gave no pleasure to God and never satisfied his justice. God took no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. There was only one thing that would satisfy God's justice and that was a perfect sacrifice, which animal sacrifices could not do. Perfection was required of the one who was to be sacrificed to satisfy God's wrath against the sins of the elect family of God.

2. Christ came to do God's will as we read in John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." It was God's will

that none of the elect be lost, but that they all be raised up again at the last day. Christ came to do the will of God and save all the elect and raise them up again at the last day.

3. Christ, the Son of God, was prepared as a body to make a perfect offering for sin. He was conceived of the virgin by the Holy Spirit so that he was without sin. He kept the law to a jot and a tittle. He was perfect without sin though Satan and his angels tried to tempt him to sin in every way imaginable. He was prepared of God for the perfect offering for sin.

“Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” By doing the will of God, Christ satisfied the law in every detail and made the perfect offering for sin. Thus, he completed the law covenant and then established the new testament of worship.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” All the multiplied thousands of sacrifices under the law never sanctified the elect, but Christ offered himself once as a lamb without spot or blemish to God for all the elect and his offering was accepted of God and we set apart as justified before God by that one offering.

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;” Until Christ came there would have been no end of offering animal sacrifices for sin which would never satisfy God’s wrath against our sins. In contrast, Christ offered one sacrifice for sins for ever. Having satisfied God’s wrathful judgment against our sins, Christ sat down on the right hand of God. To sit testifies that the work was completed. God never sits down until the work is completed.

“From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” To have one’s feet over the enemy is to show that one has the victory over the enemy. According to 1 Cor 15:26: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Christ is expecting until this last enemy is destroyed in the resurrection of the dead.

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “Hath” is past tense meaning that the work of perfecting from sin is past. There is nothing left to be done as the work is completed. Moreover, the work cannot be undone as the perfecting is for ever to them that are sanctified. We were sanctified (set apart) by the covenant of redemption as stated for us in Rom. 8:29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” All that God chose (foreknew) in Christ before the foundation of the world have been perfected for ever.

Hebrews 10.15-18

Heb. 10:15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the

Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

The Holy Ghost in putting into the heart of the prophet, Jeremiah, to pen the above words, has testified to us that there was coming a time when worship would no longer be under the law covenant that God made with the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai, but would be predicated on the work of the Spirit in writing God’s laws in our hearts and minds in the new birth and in the perfect sacrificial atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of the sins of the elect. Once the sacrifice was made then our sins and iniquities were remitted and God no longer holds them against us in judgment any more. Therefore, there is no more a need for the animal sacrifices for sin even as a ceremonial ordinance enjoined upon the children of Israel until the time that Christ made that perfect sacrifice.

Hebrews 10.19-25

Heb. 10:19 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Paul used analogies between the Old Testament types and the true principles of God. He used an analogy between the veil of the temple or tabernacle and the flesh of Jesus Christ. Showing us that the way into the holiest of all was through the atoning work of Jesus Christ through his fleshly atonement. Moreover, the high priest of the Old Testament was a figure of Christ as a High Priest over the house of God. The sprinkling of blood of the Old Testament was a figure of the sprinkling of Christ’s blood on our hearts purging us from an evil conscience to give us a good clean conscience. The washing of the Old Testament types shows us that we have the washing of regeneration and the washing or cleansing of our sins in our bodies by the blood of Jesus.

In the Old Testament entry into the holiest was made by the high priest alone once a year when the annual sacrifices for sin was made. Now we have boldness to presently enter into heaven in fellowship and communion with God and hope of entering into heaven’s glory world in our changed bodies at the last day through the atoning bodily sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Based on the above wonderful truths we are told that we have the privilege and admonished to take advantage of that privilege to do the following things:

1. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...” We now have the privilege as blood bought children of God to draw near to the heavenly mercy seat, to commune with God and to witness the glories of the beauties of Christ, the covenant making covenant keeping God.

2. “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” With these precious foundational and certain truths and promises we are encouraged and should hold fast (not let them slip) the profession of our faith. We know that God is faithful to his covenant promises and that heaven will be our home one glorious day.

3. “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:” Our motivation to love and to do good works is not based on fear of the consequences if we don’t do them, but it is predicated on the love, mercy, and grace of God manifested to us through the covenant work of Jesus Christ and through his atoning sacrifice for our sins. Manifesting love and good works towards God and towards our neighbors is to glorify God for what he has done for us.

4. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;” It seems we live in a day and age in which many people will take the slightest excuse to forsake the public assembly of the Lord’s church as they gather to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. This ought not to be. As a part of the family of God we have the blessed privilege to worship God in Spirit and in truth. We forsake our own blessings and the sweet privilege of obeying God when we forsake the assembly of the Lord’s saints in public worship.

5. “But exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Rather than putting stumbling blocks in our brethren and sisters way, we should have the sweet love for them so as to exhort one another unto love and good works and to the public assembly of God’s people.

Hebrews 10.26-31

Heb. 10:26 “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

There are several points that we can make concerning the above passage of scripture:

1. The word “for” is a connecting word that connects to the previous statement. The previous statement had to do with the forsaking of the assembly of the saints. The willful sin under consideration is the willful decision to no longer assemble together with the saints of God in public worship. Sometimes people no longer attend to the public worship because of health reasons or because of distance and the lack of resources or ability, but this is not what is under consideration. What is under

consideration is when someone makes a conscience decision that they will not attend to public worship any longer.

2. The people Paul is addressing in this passage are the Lord's people, and more specifically those who have received knowledge of the truth. When a person willfully withdraws from public worship he has in effect trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

3. God's timely judgment is certain upon those who have willfully sinned by forsaking the assembly of the Lord's saints. They face a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. I have seen the timely destruction in the lives of several who have done so.

4. The Lord will judge his people who have come unto a knowledge of the truth and forsake the assembling of the Lord's saints turning instead unto the world and its allures. As the above scripture plainly says: "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Hebrews 10.32-39

Heb. 10:32 "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions..." Paul is here addressing the Jewish Christians who had endured afflictions and persecutions for the gospel sake. Many of these persecutions had arisen from the Jewish religious leaders including the Pharisees and Sadducees. Moreover, they had also endured persecution and affliction from the Roman government as well. Paul is calling upon the people to think back upon those things and their willingness to suffer for righteousness sake and for the gospel's sake. "Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." Most of us in the United States in our day have never suffered the level of persecution that the Lord's people have suffered down through the ages. We have lived in a time of exception rather than a time of the general rule. The world hates the gospel of the grace of Christ and hates those who believe the gospel truth and like Cain will seek to destroy those who do what is right. 2 Tim. 3:12 "Yea, and all

that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” If we don’t suffer persecution, it may be that we are not living godly in Christ Jesus.

In the midst of the persecution of the Jewish church Paul spoke of their love and consolation: “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” These Jewish brethren though suffering much persecution and affliction were still manifesting their compassion as they had compassion upon Paul in his bonds. Moreover, they counted it joy to do so when their goods were spoiled. They understood and had the consolation that they have in heaven a better and enduring substance.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.” Our confidence is in the Lord and his covenant promises. Whatever we may suffer in this life is not even worthy to be compared to what we will have in heaven. Moreover, we have the joy in knowing that he will not forsake here in this time world in which we live. We have the privilege of having fellowship with Him and his obedient people today.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Today, we are living in a society that wants instant gratification about everything. There seems to be an almost total impatience to wait upon almost anything today. However, in serving the Lord it is imperative that we learn to wait upon the Lord. We need to wait upon Him for direction in our lives, and we need to wait upon him to receive the blessings of service to Him and His people.

“For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” After the Lord’s death, burial and resurrection and just before his ascension back into heaven he told the apostles to go and tarry at Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. In other words, one of the first things they were to do was wait for the Lord to empower them. Likewise, the Lord will come in his time and not on our timetable but his promises are sure and amen and he will fulfill his promises to us.

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” I must point out, as many misapply this statement about the just shall live by faith, that it does not say that the just shall get life by faith, but it says the just shall live by faith. By faith we live the life of discipleship and fellowship with the Lord while we walk here on earth. However, the warning Paul is giving to the Jewish brethren is that there is a danger to them at this time as some seemed to be drawing back from a life of discipleship and returning back to the old Jewish law service. Paul is telling them that the Lord has no pleasure in them drawing back from a life of discipleship and fellowship and returning to a works system of salvation.

“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” The word “perdition” literally means destruction. Drawing back from following the Lord as his disciple leads to destruction in the life of a child of God. The Lord illustrated that to us in a parable: Matt. 7:24 “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods

came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

Hebrews 11.1-2

Heb. 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.” Faith is described as two things: substance and evidence. Substance is defined as support, confidence, and assurance. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Hope is a product of our faith and rests in the promises of God. We hope in the promises of God. The underlying foundation for that hope is what we call faith. When we believe the promises of God, we have hope in the fulfillment of those promises. Since, faith is a part of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit we are made to understand that as a result of the spiritual birth we have the ability to believe in God and his word. Through faith we have confidence that God will fulfill his promises. Also, through faith we have the assurance that what God has promised he will also perform.

Moreover, faith is an evidence of things not seen. There are things that we cannot see with our natural eyes. We cannot see God. We cannot see the eternal heaven at this time. Yet, we believe there is a God and that there is an eternal heaven and that God’s promise that we will one day live with him in that eternal heaven is true. This substance we call faith is the evidence of these things.

“For by it the elders obtained a good report.” Much of the rest of the 11th chapter of Hebrews describes the good report that the elders obtained through faith.

Hebrews 11.3

Heb. 11:3 “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

According to Genesis chapter 1 God spoke the worlds into existence. By the power of his spoken word, the heavenly bodies, the earth, the vegetation, the birds, the fishes, the animals and man were all created by God. These things that are created we can see with our natural eyes. Yet, the one who created these things we cannot see with our natural eyes. Yet, through faith we believe that the one who does not appear created the things that are seen. Now there is much scientific evidence that the earth is only about 6 thousand years old. Yet, that evidence is not the reason we believe that God created the heaven and earth, but our faith in God and in his word is the reason we believe these things. A person who does not possess faith will not believe that the heavens and the earth were created by God, for he does not believe in God or his existence.

To those who possess faith, the heavenly bodies and those things which were created is evidence to us of things not seen. As Psalms 19:1-5 states: “To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth

knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.”

One of the lessons the subject verse teaches us is that we should believe what the word of God says and not base our beliefs solely on what we learn from science, falsely so called.

Hebrews 11.4

Heb. 11:4 “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

According to Gen. 4:3-5: “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

First, we ask why was Abel’s offering a more excellent sacrifice than Cain’s offering? Abel’s offering was made after the pattern that God had established in Gen. 3:21: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Whereas Cain’s offering was of the fruit of the ground which God had cursed: Gen. 3:17 “And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” From this, we learn that God establishes the pattern for acceptable worship, not man.

Second, in what way did Abel obtain witness that he was righteous? We know that the scriptures teach us that in our flesh nature there is none righteous. Righteousness comes through the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ and through his imputed righteousness. While we cannot do anything to make ourselves righteous, yet we can manifest that Christ has made us righteous and we do that by doing what is right:

1. 1 John 2:29 “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

2. 1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”

By doing what is right in the sight of God, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous.

“God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” It is God who gives to his children the gift of the new birth and the gift of faith. When Abel by faith offered unto God the more excellent sacrifice he testified to us by his example that we also, by faith, should offer praise unto God through following the pattern God has shown us in the scriptures.

Hebrews 11.5-6

Heb. 11:5 “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Gen. 5:21 “And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

The scriptures plainly teach us that we should walk by faith and not by sight: 2 Cor. 5:7 “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” Also, we are taught that to walk with God we must be agreed with God: Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” To walk with God, it must be on God’s terms and not on our terms.

The scriptures plainly tell us that Enoch walked with God for a period of 300 years. This suggests a continuous walk with God for three hundred years. How was Enoch able to walk with God for this long especially since he did not have the written word to guide him? Obviously he must have continuously sought the Lord’s direction and wisdom in his life and followed those directions and wisdom as God gave them to him. As the scriptures tell us what is right and wrong and how we are to conduct our lives both in worship and service to God and also in our relationships in the family, with other church members, and with others we come in contact with, yet there are many things that the scriptures do not precisely spell out for us. The scriptures do not tell us where we are to live, or what we are to do as far as our labor to provide for our families and ourselves. Moreover, we are often faced with situations in our lives that we need guidance. One of the biggest problems we have in our fellowship with God is that we too often don’t seek the Lord’s guidance concerning such matters as listed above. Too often we get the idea that we can solve our own problems, make the best decisions, live where we want to live, marry who we want to marry, worship where we want to worship, and serve the Lord in the manner of our choosing. If we do not seek the Lord’s guidance in these things, then we are walking by sight and not by faith.

Enoch walked with God for three hundred continuous years. Walking with God requires sacrificing our own selfish will and pride and recognizing that God knows what is best for us in every circumstance. It means seeking the Lord’s way and not our own way.

“For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” It pleases God when we walk by faith and not by sight. It does not please God when we do not seek his direction in our daily lives and follow those directions.

“For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” It certainly goes without saying, that if a man does not believe that God is, he will not come to God. However, if we are to come to God in fellowship and service to Him, then we must also believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This raises two questions we must answer:

1. Do you believe that God will reward you if you diligently seek Him?
2. Do you diligently seek Him or are you a part time seeker?

These are questions that each of us should ask and answer for ourself. If we truthfully answer in the affirmative, then we can have a continuous walk with God so long as our walk is by faith and not by sight.

Hebrews 11.7

Heb. 11:7 “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

“By faith Noah, being warned of God...” The following verses show us of God’s warning to Noah: Gen. 6:13 “And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.¹⁴ Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.” Before this warning we read of Noah that he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and that he was a just man, and that he walked with God. This pattern is the same for all of God’s children. Our standing with God as his children is based on grace (the unmerited favor of God.) We are all just because of the fact that Christ has justified us by his shed blood. Moreover, it pleases the Lord when we walk with God.

“Of things not seen as yet...” There were several things that Noah had not seen at the time that God warned him:

1. He had not seen rain.
2. He had not seen a flood.
3. He had not seen the fountains of the great deep.
4. He had not seen the windows of heaven being opened.
5. He had not seen the promised outcome that God promised.

A journey of faith means that there will be times that God instructs us to do things and we will not immediately have seen the promised outcome or the means by which God will bring about the promised outcome.

“Moved with fear...” The word, fear, has more than one meaning. One meaning is terror. This is not the way it was used in the passage. Another meaning is reverential respect, such as a son fears his father and will do things because of the respect he has for his father. This is the meaning in this passage. Noah had been walking with God and had a great respect for God and his word. This respect was what motivated him to do what God instructed him to do.

“Prepared an ark...” James said: James 2:18 “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” Faith, often involves works to be performed. In Noah’s case, it was a great work. Noah was charged of God to build an ark according to the pattern God gave unto him. Noah did not have all the modern tools available to him that we have today. Moreover, this task was not one that would be accomplished in a short time. It would take Noah at least one hundred years to accomplish this task. Yet, with such a daunting task before him, Noah believed in God and that God would reward his diligence in seeking him in obedience to the instructions of God.

We live in a world that currently seeks after instant gratification. Seeking to do the will of God often requires patience on our part and a diligence to accomplish the tasks that God gives us even if it takes a long time to do it.

The ark was to be prepared according to the pattern God gave unto Noah. Noah was not to deviate from the pattern. Likewise, to walk by faith, we must do things God's way and not our way. This means subjugating our will to God's will.

"To the saving of his house..." Noah's faithfulness to the Lord did not just save himself from the flood, but it also resulted in saving of his entire house. Sometimes a single individual's faithfulness can result in a blessing to many people. Noah and his house were all save from the impending flood.

"By the which he condemned the world..." It was God who had condemned the world to destruction, yet Noah and his faithfulness to walk with God justified God in condemning the world. Because of Noah's faithfulness the world could not say that it was impossible to please God and that God was unjust to condemn the world.

"And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Noah was already just or righteous in the eyes of God as we have before noted. However, he became "heir" of the righteousness which is by faith. The word "heir" frequently means to come into possession. Noah actively and practically came into possession of doing what was "right" in the eyes of God. He did this by faith. When we walk by faith and do what is right in the eyes of God we come into possession of the righteousness which is by faith.

Hebrews 11.8-10

Heb. 11:8 "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

God appeared to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 and gave him instruction and made outstanding promises unto him: Gen. 12:1 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." To leave ones country, and his kindred, his father's house and to go to a country you don't even know where it is when you start your journey requires a strong belief in God and that he is a God who keeps his promises. Abraham at the time he left did not know anything about the place to which he was going. He knew not the people or their customs. He knew nothing about how he would make a living and what trials he would face, yet he trusted God would provide for his needs. He was not disappointed in trusting God for God did indeed provide for his needs and fulfilled his promises to him. This should be a great encouragement to us to trust that God will provide for us when he directs our paths and we are obedient to follow his directions.

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:" At one time

in their lives Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelled together in the same tent in the land of Canaan. All three had received the same promise from God. The seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would one day come to possess the land of Canaan and furthermore through the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would come forth the seed through which all the promises would be fulfilled: Gal. 3:16 “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Neither, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob ever had a permanent dwelling in the land of Canaan, but dwelled in tabernacles in that land with the knowledge that their descendants would one day possess the land as God had promised.

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Abraham was content to not have possession of the land of Canaan for he looked beyond the natural country and rather looked unto a heavenly country to a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This should teach us that while we dwell here on this earthly planet, we do not have permanent possession here, but we should likewise, look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We should realize our time here on earth is short and look forward to our heavenly home which will be eternal.

Hebrews 11.11-12

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

We should never think that what God calls on us to do is impossible. It only seems impossible to man. With God all things are possible: Matt. 19:26 “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” According to Rom. 4:19 both Abraham and Sara were dead as far as their reproductive ability was concerned. At the time Isaac was born Abraham was 100 years old and Sara was 90 years old. This was an example of God’s miraculous power delivering two individuals who were reproductively dead and giving them the ability to have a child according to God’s promise. Sara received strength through faith to conceive seed and be delivered of a child when men would have considered this impossible. Her faith was in the faithfulness of God to keep his promise. Likewise our faith should be rooted in the faithfulness of God to keep his promises.

Does ones faith only affect the individual who has it or does it sometimes affect others? The answer to this is found in the verse which says “Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.” Couple this statement with Noah’s faithfulness not only affecting Noah, but also the wife of Noah, the three sons of Noah and their wives, and all who have proceeded from them.

Hebrews 11.13-16

Heb. 11:13 “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” God had made the same promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Embraced in those promises were promises of eternal things to come. The patriarchs embraced those promises, even though they at that time only saw them afar off. They were fully persuaded of those promises and they embraced those promises. They also confessed that they were but strangers and pilgrims on the earth meaning that they were not in their homeland but journeying away from home. Likewise, we have the blessings of eternal promises. We, too, are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. This earth is not our home, we are just sojourning here. We should embrace those promises and be fully persuaded of them and confess that we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

“For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” The patriarchs were not looking back to the country from which they had come out of nor to the country in which they were strangers and pilgrims in, but they were looking forward to a heavenly country and a heavenly city in which the Lord had pitched and not man. Like the patriarchs of old, we likewise, should have in our mind and the desire of our heart towards the heavenly country and heavenly city to which we will one day reside and which has been built and made by our Lord.

Hebrews 11.17-19

Heb. 11:17 “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

Three events in the life of Abraham are brought together in this passage of scripture. All three events manifested the faith of Abraham. The birth of Isaac came about when Abraham and Sara were both unable by nature to have children. God appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years old and Sara was 89 and told Abraham that at this set time in the next year that Sara would bear him a son and that his name would be called Isaac. According to Rom. 4:19 “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the

deadness of Sarah's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Abraham believed God would perform what God had promised.

Abraham having witnessed the miraculous performance of God’s work in bringing about the birth of Isaac knew by experience the great power of God in overruling nature.

Next, as the above passage states, God had promised to Abraham, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” All the promises that God had made to Abraham in the beginning were to be funneled through Isaac. If Isaac had no children, then it would have been impossible for those promises to be fulfilled, which Abraham well knew.

Finally, God had told Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering at the place that God would show him. Abraham had experienced God fulfilling his promise to restore to him and Sara the time of life that they may have a son, and having the promise that the son would be the vessel to which all the promises God had made to Abraham in the beginning would be fulfilled, he reasoned within himself, that if he offered up Isaac as a burnt offering, then God would raise up the ashes of his son back to life again. He accounted that God is able to raise him up even from the dead from which he received him in a figure.

A great lesson in the above is that we should trust in the promise of God that when we die, God will raise us up again in the resurrection at the last day. We, like Abraham, have experience the great power of God when we were born of the Spirit of God, which is life from the dead. We have the promise of God in Rom. 8:29, 30 that all that God foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified will be glorified. Therefore, we can look forward with hope and anticipation that our dead bodies will be raised up from the dead. Our belief in the resurrection, like, Abraham’s belief that Isaac would be raised up is by both experience and faith in the promise of God.

Hebrews 11.20-23

Heb. 11:20 “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.”

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” No man has the ability to accurately predict the future without the revelation of God. Isaac had received the revelation from God and faithfully pronounced it concerning his son Jacob and Esau.

“By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.” What was true with Isaac was also true with Jacob as they both were faithful to pronounce the revelations that God gave unto them. In these examples, faith is both believing the revelations and faithfully pronouncing them.

“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” Joseph was stating a promise made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He believed the promises and faithfully reminded the children of Israel of those promises that they would one day depart from Egypt and possess the land of Canaan.

Gen. 50:25 “And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” This tells us that Joseph believed the promises and that he believed as God had promised that the children of Israel would depart and based on that he took the oath of the children of Israel.

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.” The faith under consideration in this verse was not the faith of Moses, but was the faith of his parents. Pharaoh had commanded that all the male children born of the children of Israel be cast into the river when they were born. The faith of the parents of Moses was demonstrated as they first hid him for three months and then put him in a small ark in the banks of the river among the flags at the edge of the river. While certainly not knowing how he would be delivered they trusted in the Lord that he would provide a way for his deliverance and of course the Lord did provide a way.

Hebrews 11.24-29

Heb. 11:24 “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” There were two very significant changes in the life of Moses. One took place when he was forty years old and he slew the Egyptian and fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. The other was when he was 80 years old and God appeared unto him and told him to go to Pharaoh and be a vessel to deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. In the above passage it is not perfectly clear if this was his departing from Egypt at 40 or at 80. I suspect it was when he was 40 years old as that was the time that he went out to see how his brethren fared and he took the cause of the Israelite who was being beaten by an Egyptian. When he slew the Egyptian he effectively chose to no longer be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and to suffer affliction with the people of God.

One lesson we are taught about faith in the above example is that through faith we are often called upon to make difficult and life changing decisions. If Moses had not

done what he did, he could have had great riches in Pharaoh's kingdom and great esteem and great adulation as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. However, Moses chose to give all that up so that he would be associated with the people of God. It is important that we remember that he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Another lesson in the above is that there are two types of treasures. There is worldly treasures and worldly honors and worldly positions that can be sought after in the world. However, there is a greater treasure and that is a spiritual treasure. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ, which is a great spiritual treasure to be greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Today, we are called upon to seek by faith the greater riches of spiritual treasures and to forsake the treasures of the world.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Indications are that this phase of Moses life began when he was about 80 years of age. It was at the backside of the desert that the LORD appeared unto Moses in a bush that burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. In this manner, Moses saw him who is invisible. Up until this time Moses had kept his father-in-laws flocks. Now the LORD had a greater task for him: A task that could only be performed by faith. Moses was to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the Lord's people go. Moses was to go the greatest king on the face of the earth at that time and demand him that he let the children of Israel go. This was done by faith in that God had promised that by and by Pharaoh would let them go. Moreover, it was the reason that Moses did not fear the wrath of the king. When we go in faith by the direction of the Lord, then who can successfully stand against us? We have the LORD on our side.

One lesson we are taught about faith in the above is that when we go by the direction of the LORD trusting his promises, he is on our side and will deliver us.

"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." There are several points we can make about the Passover that the children of Israel observed at that time:

1. The blood of the lamb was only given to the children of Israel. It was not provided to the Egyptians.

2. The blood of the lamb pointed us to a greater Passover which is Jesus Christ who died to redeem us from our sins and thus we escape the wrathful judgment of God that we deserved because of our sins.

3. The observation of the Passover by the children of Israel was a timely deliverance that pointed to an eternal deliverance. If any of the families of the children of Israel had failed to observe the Passover, then the firstborn of that house would have died, just as the firstborn of the houses of the Egyptians died.

4. The observing of the Passover by the children of Israel was by faith. They had the promise of God that they would be passed over if they kept the Passover in the fashion the LORD commanded them to keep it. They were trusting the LORD to keep his promise, which of course he did.

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." The parting of the Red sea was done by God for the benefit of the children of Israel. They trusted that the wind and the congealing of the

waters on either side were performed by the miraculous power of God for their benefit. The Egyptians had no such promises and when they assayed to pass through the sea, the waters returned and drowned Pharaoh and his mighty host.

Hebrews 11.30-35

Heb. 11:30 “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:”

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.” The walls of Jericho fell down because of the power and wisdom of God. The children of Israel compassed about the walls according to the commandment of God. Their faith was that God would perform his promise and, of course, the Lord did according to his promise.

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” By faith Rahab believed the report of the power of Israel’s God and believed that Jericho was marked for destruction. She hid the spies who were come to spy out the land. In doing so she hazarded her own life. Her request of the spies was that she and those with her in the house be spared from the destruction of Jericho. She was rewarded for her faithfulness in trusting in the God of Israel.

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” In this statement Paul is showing the faithfulness of God’s servants in summary form and the resulting greatness of God’s deliverance in response to the faithfulness of his servants. The many examples of the faithfulness of God’s children set forth for us in the scriptures should be a source to strengthen our resolve to walk by faith and not by sight and to trust in the living God.

“Women received their dead raised to life again:” In this example, the prophets, Elijah and Elisha had both been blessed to go to the dead sons of a woman and raise their body back to life again. This illustrates the faith of the prophet who was following the instruction of the Lord and the resulting inheritors of that blessing.

“And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:” Not all that walk by faith are spared from natural sufferings, afflictions, and death. Those who are cruelly persecuted and tortured and do not accept

deliverance by denying the Lord are blessed to have a better resurrection from their circumstance than they would experience by denying the Lord.

Hebrews 11.36-40

Heb. 11:36 “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

Sometimes we get the mistaken idea that if we walk by faith that nothing bad will ever happen to us. Sometimes people will think that if something bad happens it is a result of not walking by faith. However, the above passage clearly shows that walking by faith does not exclude us from cruel persecutions, torments, trials, afflictions or destitution. The persons in the above examples showed to us a willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ and his word. Even in the New Testament we see examples of people suffering on account of their faith: Stephen was stoned to death and James was put to death by Herod and Paul spoke of his sufferings: 2 Cor. 11:24 “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” However, whatever we may suffer in this life is nothing to be compared to what our Savior suffered for us on the cross.

When we walk by faith we should have a willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ: 2 Tim 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” The Old Testament witnesses of faith were looking for the coming of a better day, a better king, and a better kingdom that was frequently prophesied of in the Old Testament. We who live on this side of the cross have possession of that better day and better kingdom that was prophesied and is headed by the King Jesus Christ. In this we have received the promises made in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 12.1-4

Heb. 12:1 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

The great cloud of witnesses encompassing us is the list of faithful brethren and sisters presented to us in chapter 11. They are both examples and encouragement unto us to be faithful to the cause of Jesus Christ. With such a great cloud of witnesses, Paul encourages us to lay aside every weight. When a person is running he wants as little excess weight on him as he can reasonably shed. A weight slows a person down when the person is running a race. We should lay aside anything that would hinder us in running the race of faith. Especially, we need to lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us. That sin which so easily besets us is unbelief. Unbelief in the promises of God and in the power of God and in the wisdom of God derails us so often when we are attempting to run the race of faith. It derailed the children of Israel who had come across the Red Sea and had sent the spies to spy out the land and when the report came back that there were giants in the land, they failed to believe that God would deliver those giants into their hands and turned back and ended up wandering in the desert for forty years. There are many more examples of unbelief in the Old Testament that derailed the children of Israel and individuals from their walk of faith and in their seeing the Lord and his promised blessings.

The race in which we are to run is a long distance race and not a sprint. We are to run that race of faith the rest of our lives. Because it is a long distance race, we need to run with patience. Immediate results are not had in a long distance race as it is in a sprint. We don't always immediately see the results of our faith, but sometimes the results are not had until much later. Patiently waiting upon the Lord is an important ingredient in our race of faith.

Moreover, we are to be continually looking unto Jesus. Back when I was younger and working on a farm, there were times that I was plowing and I recall the importance of looking to find something at the end of the field to fix my eyes upon so that I would plow a straight row. If I took my eyes off the object at the end of the row, then I would not plow a straight row. This is similar in our race of faith. We are to be continually feasting our eyes upon Jesus and his instructions unto us. Peter when he was walking on water to go to the Lord did not get in trouble until he looked at the boisterous wind and sea, then he began to sink.

We need to fully understand that the Lord is the author and finisher of our faith. The word, author, means initiator and the word, finisher, means completer. Jesus is both the initiator of our faith and he is the completer of our faith. Faith, being a fruit of the Spirit is given to us in the spiritual birth. What has been given to us is complete and needs nothing added to it. We just need to use it.

“Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The Lord endured the agony and suffering of the cross and despised the shame of the cross, so then why did he do it? The answer is because of the joy that was set before him. The joy of the Lord set before him

was to see the completion of God's covenant and to see all the elect family of God called, justified and glorified before God. Having fulfilled the work of justification, the Lord set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The Lord never sets down until the work is finished. The work of Justification is finished.

“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” Our motivation for both beginning and continuing in the race of faith is because of the sufferings and endurance of Christ on our behalf which was borne out of His love for us. Paul tells us that we should strive to continue in this race of faith even unto death, resisting, if need be unto blood.

Hebrews 12.5-13

Heb. 12:5 “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

In this passage, Paul sets forth the grand purpose for chastening and especially the chastisement of the Lord. The purpose of chastening is not designed as a tool for revenge or of hatred. It is designed to make us better persons and servants. There are several important points set forth in the above passage:

1. The Lord chastens his children. He does not chasten those that are not his. One of the evidences of our spiritual birth is that we have received chastening from the Lord.
2. We should not despise nor faint at the chastening or rebuke of the Lord. His purpose in chastening is that we might be partakers of his holiness.
3. Everyone that the Lord loves he chastens. Again chastening is evidence that the Lord loves us.
4. While we often reflect back on our childhood and rejoice that we had parents that loved us enough to chasten and correct us after their pleasure and we gave them reverence, much more should we be thankful for the chastening of the Lord who chastens us so that we may be partakers of his holiness.

5. At the times we through chastening we may think it grievous, yet it works to bring about in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness when we are exercised by the chastening.

6. Just like a child who receives chastisement and bows down his head and sorrows for the chastisement, yet afterward when he has learned the important lesson, he rejoices that he was chastened, so we should likewise lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees and press forward to serve the Lord with healing and learned lessons from the chastisement.

Hebrews 12.14-17

Heb. 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” Peace can be defined as the absence of conflict. Judicially, we have peace with God through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. According to Rom. 8:33 no charge can be brought against God’s elect before God: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” Moreover, we have peace in our own minds concerning our judicial standing with God when we believe the gospel report as foretold in Isaiah 40:1-2: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

Moreover, we have peace in fellowship with God when we live in harmony with the words of God. Furthermore, two can walk together in peace when both are in harmony with the teaching of God’s words.

The word, holiness, means to be separate. To walk the course of this world is to live in an unholy manner. When we separate ourselves unto the teaching of God’s words and living according to those principles, we are then living a holy life and we are permitted to see God in the fellowship of faith.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;” We are saved from our sins and born of the Spirit of God by the grace of God. We cannot fail of this grace of God. However, God giveth more grace, and grace for our daily living. Unless we are looking diligently we can fail of the grace of daily living and lose out on the blessings of living and walking with God in fellowship and the blessings of obedience.

Oftentimes, we are tempted to become bitter in the experiences of our lives. Bitterness can often accompany someone with the loss of a loved one such as a husband or wife; or when we contract a dread or crippling disease; or when a child has serious problems or things do not go as we wanted them to go; or when a spouse deserts a marriage; etc. Bitterness can spring up and trouble us and sometimes brings us into a

state of blaming God for our condition or circumstances, or bring us into a state of depression. These things can defile us from the blessings of living a holy life and a walk of faith.

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

For us which have been born of the Spirit we have a two-fold nature. We still possess the sin-cursed totally depraved nature of our mortal bodies. We also have an inward nature that God gave to us in regeneration that cannot sin. For those who have not been born of the Spirit, they only possess the sin-cursed totally depraved nature of their mortal bodies.

Those who are not born of the Spirit will live after the works of the flesh which are detailed for us in Gal. 5:19-21. Moreover, a child of God who also has a mortal body can also live after the works of the flesh. We also have the ability to produce the fruit of the Spirit as taught to us in Gal. 5:22.

We who are born of the Spirit need to beware lest we live in fornication or profanity or as the wicked person Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Hebrews 12.18-24

Heb. 12:18 “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Paul laid out to the Jewish people, who were either worshipping under the law or were thinking about departing from grace and going back under the law system of worship, the two kingdoms for comparison. One of the kingdoms is the kingdom that God established with the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai. The other kingdom is the Kingdom of God.

Mount Sinai represented the law kingdom and Mount Sion represented the Kingdom of God. Mount Sinai is described as burning with fire (fire represents God’s wrathful judgment of sin), and blackness (gloom), and darkness (obscurity), and tempest (storm). The sound of a trumpet was for the gathering of the people, however, notice what the people were gathered unto: Ex. 19:16 “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp

trembled.” They were gathered unto the judgment of God because of sin. The trumpet of the law was exceeding loud and caused the people to tremble at the mighty judgment of God. “And the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:” When God speaks in the voice of judgment, no one can endure. No wonder they entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.

“(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)” Death was the penalty for touching the mountain. Paul is pointing out that worshipping under the law is tantamount to death as the final outcome of the law is death in all its aspects.

In contrast to the covenant of the law, Paul points out that under the covenant of grace we have come to something far better:

1. We are come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God. Mount Zion is described in Ps. 48:1 “A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

2. The city of the living God is described as the heavenly Jerusalem. The earthly Jerusalem is located in the land of Canaan. The heavenly Jerusalem has its headquarters in heaven itself.

3. To an innumerable company of angels.

4. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. This is the description of the elect family of God. Christ is the firstborn among many brethren as Rom. 8:29, 30 describes: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified:” Their names are written in heaven.

5. And to God the Judge of all. According to the scriptures every sin and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward. Also, the wages of sin is death. The elect are judged in Christ and the non-elect are judged in the lake of fire judgment at the end of this time world.

6. And to the spirits of just men made perfect. Men do not make themselves just and they do not make themselves perfect. They are made just and made perfect by the sacrificial atonement of Christ and the quickening of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

7. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. Here Paul points us right back to Rom. 8:29, 30 and the mediatory work of Jesus Christ in calling, justifying, and glorifying the elect that God foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

8. And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” The blood of Abel spoke of revenge, whereas, the blood of Christ speaks to us of forgiveness and deliverance from sin.

Obviously it is far better to come to Mount Zion than it is to come to Mount Sinai.

Hebrews 12.25-29

Heb. 12:25 “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.”

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven...” Paul issues a warning here to God’s people not to turn away from him that speaketh (Christ). There was judgment under the law for those who turned away from that which was spoken. How much greater judgment would we be worthy of if we turned away from Christ who speaks from heaven? To turn from grace to turn back unto the law would put us in jeopardy of the timely punishment of God.

“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” The purpose of this shaking is to shake out those things that are no longer needed or desirable in the kingdom of God. “And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” When Christ came and established a new covenant of worship and service in the kingdom of God, the elements of the law under which the Jewish nation had observed for hundreds of years were both fulfilled by Christ and then done away with in the kingdom of God. They were shaken out.

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:” The kingdom of God cannot be moved. We may depart our service and worship in the kingdom here on earth, but the kingdom remains. We having received such a kingdom that cannot be moved can by the grace of God serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

“For our God is a consuming fire.” Our God has consumed our sins in judgment at the cross. Furthermore, through his chastening and leadership he consumes away from us in our walks of life, the things we need to depart from so that we may serve, and worship, and fellowship him in a more acceptable way.

Hebrews Chapter 13 Preface

In the previous twelve chapters Paul has identified several things that are better in the Kingdom of heaven than in the old law kingdom of Israel established at Mt. Sinai. Some of these things are: Christ is better than the angels; Melchisedec is better than Abraham; better hope; better testament; better covenant; better promises; better sacrifices; better and enduring substance; better country; better resurrection; and a better thing. Thus, to the Jews who had not believed and to the Jews who had believed and

been baptized, but now were wavering in their beliefs and thinking of returning to the old testament law service, Paul has abundantly shown that the Kingdom of God is far superior and better than the law kingdom established at Mt. Sinai.

With the above backdrop leading up to chapter 13, Paul turns to instructing the Lord's people of how we are to behave ourselves in that better and superior kingdom.

Hebrews 13.1-6

Heb.13:1 "Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

"Let brotherly love continue." Brotherly love (Philadelphia) springs from Godly love (agape). We love God because he first loved us. The first of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is love. Love should be the single-most defining characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Love, by its very nature is sacrificial and totally unselfish. The Lord said in John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." All of our interactions with the Lord's people in his kingdom should be done out of a desire to let brotherly love continue.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." There are several examples in the Old Testament of people entertaining angels unawares:

1. Abraham – Gen.18:1 "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground," The three men were the Lord and two angels. To Abraham's initial view they were men.

2. Lot – Gen. 19:1 "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;" Lot at first thought these were men who were traveling and he invited them to stay in his house and prepared a feast and unleavened bread for them. Later he was made to realize they were angels.

3. Judges 13:3 "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. 4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: 5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. 6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: 7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear

a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. 8 Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.” At first, Manoah and his wife thought the man who appeared unto them to be a man of God, only later to find out he was an angel.

If you knew that a person was an angel, how would you entertain them? In this same manner we are told to entertain strangers. How sad it is when a church has visitors and no one even bothers to find out their names or make them to feel welcome.

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” There are many ways that a person can be in bonds. Prison and slavery are the first ways that generally pop into people’s minds when then think of bonds. However, people can also be in bonds of poverty; of persecution; of tribulation; of physical health conditions or be in a nursing facility or under other bonds of restriction. God’s people and especially his disciples are in bonds of love. Whether we are currently in restricted bonds or adversity, we should have empathy for those who are. One thing is certain there will come a day in which, we being in these bodies of clay will be in restrictive bonds. Then we will want people to think upon us and have empathy with us in our condition.

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” I once was asked the question: “Is sexual relations sin?” The statement above plainly shows us that within the bonds of marriage, the bed is undefiled. Moreover, there is a warning that God will judge whoremongers and adulterers. Whoremongers and adulterers are those who engage in sexual relations outside of the marriage covenant.

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Covetousness is the greed for something that belongs to another. Covetousness leaves us not content. Covetousness is a plague in our society. There is the ever pressing desire to continually want more than we currently have. Covetousness will rule our lives so that most of what we do will be to try to attain more stuff. Paul tells us that we should be content with such things as we have. Covetousness takes away our dependence upon the Lord. We get to thinking we can rely upon our accumulations of wealth. However, we should take heed to what Paul told Timothy in I Tim. 6:17 “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” When we are content with such things that we have and leave off covetousness, then we look to the Lord as our helper and have no need to fear what man shall do unto us.

Hebrews 13.7-9

Heb. 13:7 “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” The word, “rule,” comes from a Greek word that means “to lead; i.e. command (with official authority). The gospel ministers are to be leaders in the church. While, they teach, “thus saith the Lord;” they are also to be leading by their own personal deportment. They speak the word of God and they are to lead by example. The walk of a gospel minister should be a walk of faith. When the walk of the gospel minister is a walk of faith, we are to follow that example he is setting for us. Paul said: 1 Cor. 11:1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” As the Son of God, Jesus Christ does not change. He is the same nature and character and has the same attributes yesterday as he had today and will have for ever. Jesus Christ is an unchanging God. Because he cannot change, then his promises cannot fail and he cannot lie or fail of anything he has determined to do. It should be a great comfort to us that as we change, and things change around us and times and people change, yet we can rely upon one that does not change.

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.” The Lord said concerning the kingdom in Luke 17:20 “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” There are many lo here and lo there teachings in the world. There are many false prophets and false teachers, trying to draw away disciples after themselves. Eph. 4:14 “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”

Paul taught there is only one true doctrine of God and that is the doctrine of grace: Gal. 1:6 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Divers and strange doctrines, toss us too and fro and we are deceived by them. Moreover, they lead us into error and false worship and bondage to the work systems of men.

“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.” Rom. 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Unfortunately, many of God’s children are deceived into believing that worship is found in performing rituals. As the scripture teaches, the kingdom of God is not meat

and drink. It is not found in rituals, but rather righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We find this righteousness, peace, and joy through the grace of Christ and in understanding that we have been saved from sin by the grace of Christ and that the Spiritual birth, is by the grace of Christ, and that the scriptures have been given to us by the grace of Christ, and the gospel ministry have been called by the grace of Christ and that all spiritual gifts are by the grace of Christ and that our home in heaven is by the grace of Christ.

Hebrews 13.10-14

Heb. 13:10 “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

In the Old Testament, God had Moses and the children of Israel to construct a tabernacle that contained a sanctuary or holy place, and a place called holiest of all or most holy place. Separating between the two was a veil. Just outside the tabernacle was a brazen altar and in the sanctuary was a golden incense altar. The sacrifices were burned upon the brazen altar. The priests went within the sanctuary and ordered the table, burnt incense upon the golden altar and attended to the lights of the golden candlestick. Once a year the high priest took blood from off the altar and carried it into the holiest of all and sprinkled the blood upon the mercy seat and ark of the covenant. The priest ate of the sacrifices and of the show bread upon the table in the sanctuary.

While all of these things had ordinances of divine service, yet they also were a type of the true. Now let us look at the antitypes presented to us in the book of Hebrews:

1. Holiest of all: Heb. 9:11 “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Here we have identified that the holy place (holiest of all or most holy place) is heaven itself for that is where Christ entered having obtained eternal redemption for us.

2. By implication from the above and the following verse we make the conclusion that the true sanctuary is now the Lord’s church: Heb. 8:2 “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

3. The veil: Heb. 10:20 “By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;” The veil separated in the Old Testament between the sanctuary and the holiest of all. Now the true veil is the flesh of Christ and our entrance into the holiest of all (heaven itself) is through the flesh of Christ.

4. The altar was a place for the sacrifice to be offered. The Old Testament had a brazen altar and a golden incense altar. The animal sacrifices were made on the brazen altar and incense was offered upon the incense altar. Thus the brazen altar was a sacrifice altar and the golden altar was a praise altar. The altar for our

sacrifices today is on the sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ and his finished work by the grace of God. Heb. 13:11-13 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Christ has sanctified us through his own blood. This blood offering was not made in the tabernacle that man pitched nor the blood offered in the place known as holiest of all, but this sacrifice was made without the camp and the blood was offered to the Father in heaven.

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” Those serving the Old Testament tabernacle which was a type of the true, have failed to recognize that the true sacrifice has been made and all the types and shadows have been fulfilled. They are still looking for a coming Messiah rather than worshipping the true Messiah who has already come. They have no right to eat at our altar so long as they are serving the tabernacle. This is, also, true of those who take parts of the tabernacle service and try to bring it into the New Testament worship. As we are told in Gal. 5:3 “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” A tabernacle is a temporary dwelling place. We are only temporary residents here on earth, but we look forward to a residence that will be permanent and have no end. We have the promise of God of an eternal inheritance and God always keeps his promises.

Hebrews 13.15-16

Heb. 13:15 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

After we have examined the “betters” presented to us in the book of Hebrews and Paul has shown that all of the Old Testament tabernacle service presented in types has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and that Christ is now reigning as King of the kingdom of heaven and that he is our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, we are presented three things that we as a part of the current priesthood of God are to do in the way of offering sacrifices. Three of those sacrifices are listed for us in the above passage:

1. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually...” He is worthy of all our praise. Every thing that is good and everything that is a blessing to us has come at his hands. We owe everything to him. The very least that we could do is to continually praise him for his wonderful works to the children of men. In many places in the New Testament we are told to praise Him:

a. Luke 19:37 “And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;”

b. Rom. 15:11 “And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.”

c. Eph. 1:6 “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

d. Eph. 1:12 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

e. Eph. 1:14 “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

f. Phil. 1:11 “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

g. Phil. 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

h. Heb. 2:12 “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”

i. 1 Pet. 4:11 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

j. Rev. 19:5 “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.”

2. “But to do good...” Again we have several New Testament scriptures that teach us that we are to do good:

a. Mat. 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

b. Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

c. 1 Tim 6:18 “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;”

d. 1 Pet. 3:11 “Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.”

3. “To communicate...” To communicate means to actively help with the needs of others:

a. Phil. 4:14 “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.”

b. 1 Tim. 6:18 “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;”

c. James 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

d. 1 John 3:17 “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

“For with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” There are times that we may wonder if what we do or did is pleasing to God. However, when we offer the sacrifices above we do not have to doubt for these sacrifices are well pleasing to God. We know when we do these things that God is well pleased.

Hebrews 13.17

Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

The word, “rule,” often means lead or responsibility in the scriptures. The most common application today to the above verse would be the relationship between the pastor and the members of the church. The pastor has a leadership role over the church and is charged with the responsibility to teach the whole counsel of God to the membership of the church. Peter teaches the elders of the church in 1 Pet. 5:1 “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” The elders are to take the oversight of the flock of God and be examples unto the flock.

The above passage in Heb. 13:17 the principle of the watchman is introduced. This ties in to the lessons taught in Ezekiel chapters 3 and 33. We will use Ezekiel chapter 3 to illustrate: Ezek 3:16 “And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”

The responsibility of the watchman was to warn the people. If the people failed to heed the warning then the guilty would bear the responsibility. However, if the watchman failed to warn the people, then the watchman would bear the responsibility. Paul stated this principle when he gathered the elders of Ephesus together to give them final instruction before he went up to Jerusalem: Acts 20:26 “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” From this along with our text in Heb. 13:17 we gather that the preacher is responsible for delivering the message and if he fails to do so he is answerable to God for his failure. However, if he faithfully delivers the message and the individuals take no heed to it, then they will suffer the consequences of their actions at the hand of God.

Hebrews 13.18-25

Heb. 13:18 “Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. 25 Grace be with you all. Amen.”

“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.” While we are admonished to pray for others, yet it is also good to ask others to pray for us. Paul asked for prayers for himself and those with him.

“But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.” As was so common for Paul, he asked for prayers for a specific purpose. This teaches us that while we can pray in generalities, it is important that we pray for specific things. Paul’s prayer here is that he may be restored to them again soon. Paul desired the fellowship of his Hebrew brothers in Christ.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” While Paul asked the brethren to pray for him, he was not negligent to pray for them. Here he states great glorious truths of God’s covenant work in saving his people, he prayed, that the same God who through the blood of the everlasting covenant and the great shepherd of the sheep delivered his people from their sins, that he make them perfect (mature) in every good work to do his will, knowing that it is the same God who was working in them that which is wellpleasing in his sight. In all this, the one and only one to receive glory was the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.” In this letter to the Hebrews Paul exhorted them to hold fast to the New Testament teachings and worship and not regress to the Old Testament law worship and service. Paul had showed to them that they had something far better now in the kingdom of God.

“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.” Timothy, of course, was a young minister starting forth on his ministry and had been set at liberty to go and preach the gospel wherever, the Spirit should lead him.

“Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.” Salute means to warmly greet. From the verse we know that Paul was writing this letter from Italy, probably Rome.

“Grace be with you all. Amen.” The closing of “grace” was Paul’s identifying mark to all the churches and individuals to whom he wrote.