

THE GOSPEL IN HEBREWS

—AUTHENTICATING OUR FAITH—



The illustration features a man with brown hair and glasses, wearing a brown suit jacket, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking down at a document he is holding. The background is a collage of historical and religious imagery, including a car, a building, and various figures. Surrounding the central image are four icons: a fingerprint, an ID card, a seal with the word 'AUTHENTIC' repeated three times, and a padlock.

Authenticate ... to establish something to be true, genuine, or valid; proving something to be what people say it is.

36 STUDIES IN THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

BY DAVID SCOTT

THE GOSPEL IN HEBREWS — TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright Page

Scripture Quotations Copyright Page

Preface

Lesson Overview

Study Sheets: 1-36

The Gospel in Hebrews

(Authenticating Our Faith)

Copyright © 2024 by David Lee Scott.

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

For information contact:

Dave Scott, 101 E Bushnell Street, Tennessee, IL 62374

<http://dave.dlscott.info/>

Book and Cover design by David Scott

ISBN:

First Edition: April 2024

The Gospel in Hebrews by David Scott

Scripture Quotations Copyright Notices

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "NKJV" are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

GOD'S WORD is a copyrighted work of God's Word to the Nations. Quotations are used by permission. Copyright 1995 by God's Word to the Nations. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "NASB95" are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

“Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.lockman.org”

Scripture quotations marked “AMP” or "The Amplified Bible" or "The Amplified New Testament" are taken from The Amplified Bible, Old Testament copyright © 1965, 1987 by the Zondervan Corporation and The Amplified New Testament copyright © 1958, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked "KJV" are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version, Cambridge, 1769.

Scripture quotations marked “The Message” or “Msg” are taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group. All rights reserved.

Preface to The Gospel in Hebrews (*Authenticating Our Faith*)

Hello. My name is Dave Scott, and I pastor a small church in western Illinois about twenty miles from the Mississippi River as the crow flies. I believe I can best express my thoughts in this plain and simple way. I have done my best and present this study as a worker who has no need to be ashamed.

- (2 Timothy 2:15 ESV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

I cannot express the blessing of God I have experienced throughout this study. The Holy Spirit brought me to places of amazement, worship and wonder exceeding my very high expectations and growing my faith stronger and deeper than ever because of the depth and power of the truth of the gospel in this letter.

I found a kindred spirit with the human author of Hebrews who it seems was very possibly also the pastor of this fellowship of believers, a man who was very passionate that his sheep discover the reality of where they stood before a holy God. His urgency and concern that each person under his care would come to authentic, saving faith is evident throughout.

- (Hebrews 4:2–3a ESV) For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”

If you happen to stumble upon this work and for some reason study through the pages, I hope and pray it will be a blessing and a reward to you as it has been to me.

This creature here below certainly gives all praise, glory and honor to God from whom all blessings flow.

Sincerely,
Dave Scott

PS To whom it may concern these study sheets are what I preach from. I format them somewhat differently for my iPad but they are the same notes without the introduction and conclusion.

davelscott@outlook.com

<http://dave.dlscott.info/>

<http://blog.faithfellowship.info/>

THE GOSPEL IN HEBREWS — LESSON OVERVIEW (1 OF 2)

- 1 The Words of the Father**
—Hebrews 1:1-4 - 010823
- 2 The Exact Representation Is the Perfect Representative**
—Hebrews 1 - 011523
- 3 Paying Much Closer Attention**
—Hebrews 2:1-4 - 012223
- 4 The Great Salvation Plan of God**
—Hebrews 2:5-10 - 012923
- 5 The Holy Brothers and Sisters of Jesus**
—Hebrews 2:8-13 - 021223
- 6 Jesus Saves His Brothers and Sisters from Death**
—Hebrews 2:14-18 - 021923
- 7 Fixing Our Thoughts on Jesus**
—Hebrews 3:1-11 - 022623
- 8 Entrance Denied for an Unbelieving Heart**
—Hebrews 3:12-19 - 031923
- 9 God's Rest—The Promise to Enter Remains**
—Hebrews 3:18—4:11 - 032623
- 10 Finding the Real Me—Discovering the Wretched Man Inside**
—Hebrews 4:11-13 - 042323
- 11 Receiving Mercy and Finding Grace**
—Hebrews 4:14-16 - 043023
- 12 Rest in Jesus Our Rest**
—Hebrews 4:9—5:10 - 052123
- 13 The Hidden Perils of Spiritual Immaturity**
—Hebrews 5:11-14 - 061123
- 14 Moving on to Better Things**
—Hebrews 6:1-12 - 061823
- 15 We Have an Anchor**
—Hebrews 6:11-20 - 070923
- 16 We Have Such a High Priest, Part 1**
—Hebrews 6:19—8:6 - 071623
- 17 We Have Such a High Priest, Part 2**
—Hebrews 7:4—8:2 - 072323
- 18 The More Excellent Ministry of Our High Priest**
—Hebrews 8 - 073023

THE GOSPEL IN HEBREWS — LESSON OVERVIEW (2 OF 2)

- 19 Now Open—The Holy Places of God**
—Hebrews 9:1-14 - 081323
- 20 Christ Our Mediator**
—Hebrews 9:13-22 - 082023
- 21 God's Offering to God**
—Hebrews 9:23—10:18 - 082723
- 22 Near to God or Far Away**
—Hebrews 10:19-27 - 091723
- 23 Our Realistic Expectations Before A Holy God**
—Hebrews 10:19-31 - 092423
- 24 We Are Not of Those Who Shrink Back**
—Hebrews 10:32-39 - 100123
- 25 Saving Faith**
—Hebrews 10:39—11:1 - 100823
- 26 The Approved of God**
—Hebrews 11:1-7 - 101523
- 27 The Faithful Ones**
—Hebrews 11:8-16 - 123123
- 28 Passing the Faith Test**
—Hebrews 11:17-29 - 010724
- 29 The Hall of Faith - What Matters**
—Hebrews 11:30-40 - 012824
- 30 Running the Race Set Before Us**
—Hebrews 12:1-3 - 021124
- 31 How to Run with Endurance**
—Hebrews 12:3-11 - 021824
- 32 Not Finishing the Race Is Not an Option**
—Hebrews 12:10-17 - 022524
- 33 The Tale of Two Mountains**
—Hebrews 12:18-29 - 031024
- 34 Offering Acceptable Service to God**
—Hebrews 12:28—13:21 - 031724
- 35 Offering Acceptable Service to God, Part 2**
—Hebrews 13:5-19 - 032424
- 36 The Benediction—Equipped to Do the Will of God**
—Hebrews 13:20-25 - 040724

THE WORDS OF THE FATHER

—AS SPOKEN TO US BY THE SON—



I will raise up a prophet from among their brothers like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

(Deuteronomy 18:18 LSB)

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ...

Author: We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Neither the author nor recipients are identified directly. There is no introductory greeting such as Paul gives in his letter to the Ephesians.

- (Ephesians 1:1 LSB) Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

Or as Peter ...

- (1 Peter 1:1 LSB) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen.

Conclusion? God didn't tell us so it is not necessary to our study.

Date: Written in the first century and probably before a.d. 70.

Recipients: Probably the best way to describe them would be as those who were true believers and those who thought of themselves as believers—the second group having *a faith in a Christ* but not saving faith in Jesus the Son of God as revealed in Hebrews and throughout the Bible.

The most dominant **theme** is the superiority of Christ the Son with the author's **purpose** being to show the great divide and the dramatic contrast between Christ and every other rival for his love, allegiance and offer of salvation.

We will find **dire warnings** of impending doom throughout Hebrews for those foolish enough to allow any variance or compromise to undermine their belief in Christ in all of his glory and superiority. Any and every lesser approach to Christ will lead to an abandonment of the faith.



1. In the days long ago God spoke through the many and varied voices of the prophets, 1:1.

- (Hebrews 1:1 LSB) **God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets** in many portions and in many ways.

A. God has spoken.

Raymond Brown ... The letter to the Hebrews begins by asserting the greatest single fact of the Christian revelation: God has spoken to man through his word in the Bible and through his Son, Jesus. In Christ God has closed the greatest communication gap of all time, that which exists between a holy God and sinful mankind. [Brown, R. (1988). *The message of Hebrews: Christ above all* (p. 27). InterVarsity Press.]

B. In days long ago he spoke in/through the prophets.

Ray Stedman ... First, there were the prophets, God's ancient spokesmen (1:1-3); then the angels, Israel's guardians (1:4-2:18); then Israel's great leader, Moses (3:1-4:7); Israel's godly general, Joshua (4:8-13); and finally the founder of Israel's priesthood, Aaron (4:14-7:28). Each was a voice from Israel's past that needed to be heard but that was woefully inadequate if followed alone. It was clearly a case of the good being the enemy of the best. Eclipsing all these, as the rising sun eclipses the light of the stars, is the figure of Jesus, God's Son, creator and heir of all things. The abrupt beginning here marks the intensity with which the author writes. It parallels, in that respect, Paul's letter to the Galatians. The writer sees clearly that any slippage in the view of Jesus as supreme is fraught with the gravest danger and must be dealt with forthrightly and thoroughly. Since the same danger is present today, Christians must take special care that no obscuring mists of doubt or unbelief should diminish the stature of Jesus in their eyes. [Stedman, R. C. (1992). *Hebrews (Heb 1:1-3)*. IVP Academic.]



2. In the last days God spoke with a singular voice in/through his Son, 1:2a.

- (Hebrews 1:2a LSB) **In these last days spoke to us in His Son.**

Raymond Brown ... Jesus is God's prophetic voice. It is naturally important in these circumstances for the author to emphasize the continuity of the Old and New Testaments. Christ does not break with the great Jewish past. He comes to bring it to fulfillment. Without him the Old Testament revelation is partial, fragmentary, preparatory and incomplete. God spoke at different times by different means. He used many and various

ways. But in Christ he spoke fully, decisively, finally and perfectly. [ibid. (p. 28).]

A. Christ is the eternal Word of God and was God from the beginning.

- (John 1:1-5 LSB) In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

B. God gave the law through Moses but gave us the revelation of grace and truth through the God-Man Jesus Christ.

- (John 1:14-17 LSB) **And the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, **glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth**. 15 John bore witness about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has been ahead of me, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 **For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

C. Christ—in a body that could be touched with hands and seen with the eyes—was the Word of Life.

- (1 John 1:1-3 LSB) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, **what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life**— 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.



To hear God speak through the Son we must understand fully and hold firmly to the superiority of the Son, 1:2b-4.

- (Hebrews 1:2-4 LSB) **In these last days spoke to us in His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all

things, through whom also He made the worlds, 3 who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

- A. We are living in the last days.
- B. In the last days God speaks to us in/through his Son.
- C. To hear God speak to us in/through his Son we must understand, fully accept and receive biblical instruction as to the superior role of the Son in revelation.
- D. We hear what God has to say—his full, decisive, final and perfect message—when we hear his Son.
- E. We then must persevere in upholding Christ as the supreme, singular, lone voice of God in the last days.

Philip Hughes ... The comprehensive theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that of the absolute supremacy of Christ—a supremacy which allows no challenge, whether from human or angelic beings. As this is not an essay in academic speculation, it is apparent that those whom the writer is addressing, attracted by the teachings of some contemporary movement, are being tempted to assign to certain personages a prominence which would detract from the unique authority of Christ and thus have the effect of subverting the gospel of their salvation. It is of vital importance, for their eternal destiny is at stake, that they should not lose hold of this salvation which they have professed to receive, and to this end they must see clearly that Christ is without rival or equal. [Hughes, P. E. (1977). *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (pp. 2-3). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]



4. Scripture clearly, plainly, powerfully teaches us that Christ spoke the Father's words.

- A. Christ is the “prophesied prophet” to whom we must listen.

- **Christ the appointed Prophet ...** (Acts 3:19–23 LSB) Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; 20 **and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you**, 21 whom heaven must

receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. 22 “Moses said, **THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BROTHERS; TO HIM YOU SHALL LISTEN to everything He says to you.** 23 **‘AND IT WILL BE THAT EVERY SOUL THAT DOES NOT HEED THAT PROPHET SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.’**

- (Deuteronomy 18:15–19 LSB) **Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you**, from your brothers; **you shall listen to him.** 16 “This is according to all that you asked of Yahweh your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of Yahweh my God; let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ 17 “And Yahweh said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 **I will raise up a prophet from among their brothers like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.** 19 ‘And it will be that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

- B. Christ spoke the things that he had heard from the Father.

- (John 8:23–30 LSB) And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” 25 So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you from the beginning? 26 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; **and the things which I heard from Him, these I am saying to the world.**” 27 **They did not know that He had been speaking to them about the Father.** 28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing from Myself, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are

pleasing to Him.” 30 As He was speaking these things, many believed in Him.

C. Christ contrasted his actions—speaking the things he had seen with his Father—with their actions which they heard from their father.

- (John 8:38–42 LSB) “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.” 39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, you would do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But now you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. 41 You are doing the deeds of your father.” They said to Him, “We were not born of sexual immorality; we have one Father: God.” 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come of Myself, but He sent Me.”

D. The scribes and Pharisees could not understand what Christ was saying because they could not hear his word.

- (John 8:43–45 LSB) Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

E. Christ spoke by commandment of the Father who sent him.

- (John 12:47–50 LSB) And if anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the

world. 48 He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him on the last day. 49 For I did not speak from Myself, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.

F. Christ told the disciples that they had seen the Father because it was the Father speaking and working through him.

- (John 14:9–11 LSB) Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all so long and have you not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”

G. Christ clearly told them that the words he spoke were not his own but were his Father’s words who lives in him.

- (John 14:10 NLT) Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

THE EXACT REPRESENTATION IS THE PERFECT REPRESENTATIVE



**FOR THE SON OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST, WHO WAS PREACHED AMONG YOU BY US
... WAS NOT YES AND NO, BUT HAS BECOME YES IN HIM.**

FOR AS MANY AS ARE THE PROMISES OF GOD, IN HIM THEY ARE YES.

(2 CORINTHIANS 1:19A–20A LSB)

To read the Old Testament without reference to Christ is like reading a mystery novel with the final chapter torn out. All the clues are scattered throughout the story, but without the finale no one could be sure of the explanation of the mystery or the identity of the one in whom all interest has been aroused. The gospel of the Son

of God, as proclaimed by Paul, is the final chapter of God's story, which explains all, and without which everything which precedes remains enigmatic and 'up in the air.'

Barnett, P. (1988). The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness (pp. 39–40). InterVarsity Press.

REVIEW: God spoke long ago in the prophets, and in the last days God spoke to us in his Son.

- (Hebrews 1:1-2a LSB) God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days spoke to us in His Son.

1. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the exact representation of God and so is the perfect representative to fulfill the promises of God.—He is the “yes” man of God

- (2 Corinthians 1:19–20 LSB) **For the Son of God, Jesus Christ**, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but has become yes in Him. 20 **For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes.** Therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

The numerous promises of God, given through the mouths of many prophets at different times and places, all converge like so many lines at one point, the Son of God ... There is no ambiguity ... It is as if God is saying 'Jesus Christ, my Son, is my "yes" to every promise I have ever made'. ... Because God's promises come true in Christ, we say the Amen through Christ to the glory of God. [Barnett, P. (1988). *The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness* (p. 39). InterVarsity Press.]

2. The necessary message—the word of the cross—had to be delivered by God in Person as flesh and blood, cf. 2:14-15.

a. God had to become a man.

- (Hebrews 2:14–15 LSB) Therefore, **since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same**, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

b. So God became a man.

- (Isaiah 7:14 LSB) Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin **will be with child and bear a son**, and she will call His name Immanuel.
- (Isaiah 9:6 LSB) For **a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us**; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

c. God alone saves and Jesus saves so Jesus is God.

- (Isaiah 43:11 LSB) I, even I, am Yahweh, And **there is no savior besides Me.**
- (Isaiah 45:22 LSB) **Turn to Me and be saved**, all the ends of the earth; **For I am God, and there is no other.**
- (Luke 2:11 LSB) For today in the city of David **there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**
- (John 4:42 LSB) And they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and **know that this One is truly the Savior of the world.**”
- (2 Timothy 1:10 NLT) And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of **Christ Jesus, our Savior.** He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.
- (Titus 2:13–14 LSB) Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of **our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ**, 14 who gave Himself for us **that He might redeem us** from all lawlessness, **and purify for Himself a people for His own possession**, zealous for good works.
- (1 John 4:14–15 LSB) **We have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.** 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

3. The Son in Hebrews is Jesus Christ who became flesh and blood to deliver God's word regarding salvation—the gospel—on the cross.

THE ONE WHO WAS THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF THE IMAGE OF GOD WAS THE PERFECT REPRESENTATIVE TO DIE ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS.

- (Hebrews 1:3 LSB) ... **the radiance of His glory** and **the exact representation of His nature** ... **accomplished cleansing for sins** ...
- (John 14:9b LSB) **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’
- (John 1:14 LSB) **And the Word became flesh, and**

dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- (1 Corinthians 15:3 LSB) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.**
- (1 Corinthians 1:18 LSB) **For the word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it **is the power of God.**
- (Philippians 2:5–8 LSB) Have this way of thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 **who, although existing in the form of God,** did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 **but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men.** 8 **Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

4. The biblical evidence for the superiority of Jesus Son of God leaves absolutely no doubt that he alone qualifies to represent God in the flesh and deliver his final word of the cross.

a. The Son was appointed heir of all things, 1:2b.

b. The Son created the worlds—literally the ages, 1:2c.

- (Hebrews 11:3 LSB) **By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God,** so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.
- (1 Corinthians 2:7 LSB) But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory.**

1:2 worlds, ages ... αἰών αἰὼν ... an age; the earliest times; eternity; the world; time and now and forever.

c. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature, 1:3a.

- (Hebrews 1:3 LSB) Who is **the radiance of His glory** and the **exact representation of His nature,** and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

1:3 radiance ... ἀπαύγασμα [apaugasma / ap-ow-gas-mah/] ... of Christ in that he perfectly

reflects the majesty of God; shining forth, of a light coming from a luminous body.

1:3 ... exact representation ... χαρακτήρ [charakter /khar-ak-tare/] ... the instrument used for engraving or carving; the mark stamped upon that instrument or wrought out on it; the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect, i.e. facsimile.

d. The disciples saw Jesus and therefore saw the Father.

- (John 14:7–9 LSB) **If you have come to know Me, you will know My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.** 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, **“Have I been with you all so long and have you not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”**

e. The Old Testament Scriptures pointed to the glory of God being revealed in Christ.

- (Isaiah 40:3–5 LSB, Matthew 3:1-3) **A voice is calling, “Prepare the way for Yahweh in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.** 4 Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5 **Then the glory of Yahweh will be revealed,** And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.”

John the Baptist quotes this Isaiah prophecy.

- (Matthew 3:3 LSB) For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, **MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,** MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!”

f. The Old Testament Scriptures bore witness to Christ as the one they needed for eternal life.

- (John 5:37–40 LSB) And **the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness about Me.** You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. 39 **You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness about Me;** 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.
- (2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV) In their case the

god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, **to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

- (1 Corinthians 2:7–8 LSB) But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages to our glory, 8 **which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

g. The Son upholds all creation by the word of his power, 1:3b.

- (Hebrews 1:3b LSB) **And upholds all things by the word of His power;** who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

h. The Son accomplished cleansing for sins by his in-person payment for our sins on the cross, 1:3c.

- (Hebrews 1:3c LSB) **Who, having accomplished cleansing for sins,** sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

i. The Son sat down at the right hand of God, 1:3d.

- (Hebrews 1:3d LSB) Who ... sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

j. The Son is superior to the angels, 1:4-14.

i. He is better than the angels and has inherited a name far above every name that is named.

- (Hebrews 1:4 LSB) Having become so much better than the angels, **as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.**
- (Philippians 2:9 LSB) Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, **and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.**
- (Ephesians 1:20–21 LSB) Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named,** not only in this age but also in the one to come.

ii. He is the Son—begotten of the Father, 1:5.

- (Hebrews 1:5 LSB) For to which of the angels did He ever say, “YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”? And again, “I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?

iii. The angels worship the Son and are his ministers, 1:6-7.

- (Hebrews 1:6–7 LSB) And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.” 7 And of the angels He says, “WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS FLAMING FIRE.”

iv. The Son is God and rules from his eternal throne, 1:8-12.

- (Hebrews 1:8–12 LSB) But of the Son He says, “YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE SCEPTER OF UPRIGHTNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM. 9 “YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.” 10 And, “YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING FOUNDED THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; 11 THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN; AND THEY ALL WILL WEAR OUT LIKE A GARMENT, 12 AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END.”
- (Psalm 45:6 LSB) **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;** A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

v. The Son is promised ultimate victory, 1:13

- (Hebrews 1:13 LSB) But to which of the angels has He ever said, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES AS A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET”?
- (1 Corinthians 15:57 LSB) But thanks be to God, **who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!**

vi. The angels serve those who inherit salvation, 1:14.

- (Hebrews 1:14 LSB) **Are they not all ministering spirits,** sent to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION



LEST WE DRIFT



I. For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.

- (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) **For this reason we must pay much closer attention** to what we have heard, **lest we drift away**.

A. God has now spoken to us through his Son.

- (Hebrews 1:2a LSB) In these last days spoke to us in His Son.

B. We need to hear what he has to say.

i. That Jesus his Son is superior to the angels.

- (Hebrews 2:1a AMP) For this reason [that is, **because of** God's final revelation in His Son Jesus and **because of** Jesus' superiority to the angels].

ii. That Jesus brings cleansing for sins.

- (Hebrews 1:3 LSB) [*Jesus the Son of God*] who is **the radiance of His glory** and **the exact representation of His nature**, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**; who, **having accomplished cleansing for sins**, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

II. We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard or we will drift away.

A. "What they had heard" was in reference to the gospel they had heard from Paul and the apostles.

- (Acts 20:24 LSB) But I do not make my life of any account nor dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and **the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God**.
- (1 John 1:1–2a LSB) What was from the beginning, **what we have heard**, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and touched with our hands, **concerning the Word of Life**— 2 and the life was manifested, **and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life** ...

B. They must never let up but in fact must pay much closer attention to the gospel they had heard.

Much closer ... περισσοτέρως (perissoterōs) ... (even) more, especially; abounds all the more; all the more; even much more; far more; much closer.

Attention ... προσέχω (prosechō) ... to hold to, pay attention to, attend to; give attention.

- (Galatians 2:5 LSB) **But we did not yield in subjection to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you**.

C. Not paying much closer attention to the gospel brings about an inevitable (and usually imperceptible) moving away from the hope of the gospel.

- (Colossians 1:21–23 LSB) And although **you were** formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds, 22 **but now** He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach**— 23 **if indeed you continue in the faith firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard**, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

1:23 ... **moved away ...** μετακινέω (metakineō) ... to shift; to move from one setting or context to another.

What this means is that the context of the person's daily life has shifted and is no longer anchored in the strong promises of God, but some form of false hope has undermined her hope in the salvation promises of God.

D. Paul speaks with this same urgency to the elders of the church in Ephesus (see Acts 20:17).

- (Acts 20:28 ESV) **Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock**, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood**.

E. Although using a different word Paul speaks with the same intent and urgency to Timothy.

- (1 Timothy 4:16 LSB) **Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things**, for as you do this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

III. The person who does not pay much closer attention to the gospel will drift away from the truth of the gospel.

A. The imminent danger here is not a sharp turning away but a slipping away.

Drift away ... παραρρέω (pararreō); to flow by; to flow past; to slip away.

B. Any slippage in our careful attention as to who Jesus Christ is and what he has done will lead to a drifting away from the truth (and the hope) of the gospel.

EXCURSUS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DRIFT AWAY?

1. We need to first consider to whom the letter to the Hebrews is written.
 - A. Hebrews is written to predominantly Jewish Christians—people who are saved.
 - i. These people have believed unto salvation.
 - B. Hebrews is written to predominantly Jewish people who profess to be saved but are not.
 - i. These people believe some of what God says in the Bible.
2. Drifting away ***does not mean*** that a truly saved person can slip away and lose his salvation.



For a person to lose his salvation would mean ...

A. That Christ “lost you” so did not do the Father’s will.

- (John 6:38–40 LSB) For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 **Now this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day. 40 **For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life**, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

B. That God failed in his plan to choose us, bless us and to present us holy and blameless before himself.

- (Ephesians 1:3–4 LSB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **just as He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love**.

C. That God failed in his foreknowledge, in the sanctifying work of the Spirit, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in protecting us.

- (1 Peter 1:1–4 LSB) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 2 **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood**: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. 3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, 4 to obtain an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you, **who are protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

3. Drifting away *does mean*** that a person who truly believes can become useless and unfruitful in her knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- (2 Peter 1:8–10 LSB) For if these things are yours and are increasing, **they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 9 For in whom these things are not present, that one is **blind, being nearsighted**, having **forgotten the purification from his former sins**. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and choosing sure; for in doing these things, you will never stumble.

A. Because she has not diligently exercised her spiritual eyes she has become nearsighted to the extent that she is in effect spiritually blind.

B. She has forgotten the purifying, cleansing of her sins.

C. She has lost the assurance of her calling.

D. She will compromise Scripture and tolerate false gospels based on superficial agreement.

E. She will very possibly spread a false gospel.

4. Drifting away *does mean*** that the person who does not pay much closer attention to what God says may have even the superficial knowledge of the truth which he possesses taken from him.**

- (Mark 4:24–25 LSB) And He was saying to them, **“Beware what you listen to**. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you, and more will be given to you. 25 For whoever has, to him more shall be given; **and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him**.”

- (Luke 8:18 LSB) So **beware how you listen**, for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, **even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him**.

END EXCURSUS

IV. Paying much closer attention we will know that every sin will receive a just penalty.

- (Hebrews 2:2–4 LSB) For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, **and every trespass and disobedience received a just penalty**, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? **That salvation, first spoken by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard**, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

A. The words of the Old Covenant are binding.

- (Hebrews 10:28–29 LSB) **Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy by the mouth of two or three witnesses.** 29 How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as defiled the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
- (Deuteronomy 17:12–13 LSB) **And the man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to minister to Yahweh your God, or to the judge, that man shall die;** thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. 13 “Then all the people will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again.

B. How much greater will be the judgment for rejecting that salvation first spoken by the Lord himself.

- (Mark 1:14–15 LSB) Now after John had been delivered up into custody, **Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God**, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**”
- (Galatians 1:11–12 LSB) For I make known to you, brothers, **that the gospel which I am proclaiming as good news is not according to man.** 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, **but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

- (Hebrews 12:25 LSB) See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. **For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.**

C. That salvation is the gospel as spoken by the Lord and confirmed by the apostles and others who heard firsthand.

- (1 John 1:1 ESV) That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.**
- (Galatians 1:15–16 LSB) But when God, who had set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 **to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him as good news among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

D. God also testified to the authenticity of the gospel with signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Spirit.

THE GREAT SALVATION PLAN OF GOD

—BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY—



The death of the Son of God ransomed a people for God from every tribe and language and nation.

- (Revelation 5:9-10 LSB) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 And You made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."

The transaction between the Father and the Son in the death of Christ was so powerful that it secured absolutely, for all time and eternity, everything needed to bring the bride of Christ safely and beautifully to everlasting joy.

Romans 8:32 may be the most important verse in the Bible, because it establishes the unshakable connection between the greatest event in the universe and the greatest future imaginable.

- (Romans 8:32 LSB) He who indeed did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

Indeed. How will he not! All things. All things!

- (1 Corinthians 3:21-23 LSB) So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

All things ours. Because the Father did not spare the Son. When Christ died, everything—absolutely everything—that his people need to make it through this world in holiness and love was invincibly secured. God the Father predestined it—everything we need—and promised it to us.

1. God's great salvation plan for humans from the very beginning was one of glory and honor toward his human creation, 2:5-8.

- (Hebrews 2:5–8a LSB) **For He did not subject to angels the world to come**, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; **YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS**; 8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him.

A. God did not subject the world to come to angels.

B. God created humans in his own image with glory and honor and gave them dominion over his very good creation and the world to come.

- (Genesis 1:27–28b, 31a LSB) And **God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** 28 God blessed them ... **fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion** ... **And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.**

To grasp the significance of man's original exalted position and God's plan to bring many sons to glory we must revisit the events where glory and honor were lost. **And we must pay much closer attention** or we will miss the wonder and the splendor of our great salvation.

2. Adam and Eve rebelled and forfeited our original position of glory and honor.

A. All humans now fall short of the glory of God.

- (Romans 3:23 LSB) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

B. Eve was deceived and traded away her glory as an image bearer of God for self-glory.

- (Genesis 3:5 LSB) For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, **and you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.
- (Genesis 3:13 LSB) Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" **And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."**

C. Eve traded the truth of God—"you will surely die"—for the lie of the serpent—"You surely will not die!"

- (Romans 1:25 LSB) **For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen.
- (Genesis 2:17 LSB) But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it **you will surely die.**"
- (Genesis 3:4 LSB) And the serpent said to the woman, "**You surely will not die!**"

D. God was telling the truth—Adam and Eve surely died.

- (Romans 6:23a LSB) **For the wages of sin is death.**
- (Hebrews 2:2b LSB) ... **and every trespass and disobedience received a just penalty.**

E. Adam and Eve were thrust out of paradise and into the darkness with no hope of returning.

- (Genesis 3:23–24 LSB) **Therefore Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden**, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 **So He drove the man out**; and at the east of the garden of Eden **He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.**

Adam and Eve had fallen from their position as rulers over God's very good creation to slaves of sin and Satan.

F. The entire world is now under the just penalty of God and under the dominion of Satan—death and judgment are inevitable.

- (Hebrews 9:27 LSB) And inasmuch as it is **appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.**
- (Colossians 3:6–7 LSB) On account of these things, **the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience**, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.
- (Ephesians 5:6 LSB) **Let no one deceive you with empty words**, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

3. God's great salvation plan is to return humans to a position of glory and honor whereby we will rule with Jesus in the world to come.

- (Hebrews 2:8b–10 LSB) **But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels—Jesus**, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.**

A. We do not now see man's return to glory as humans still fall short of the glory of God.

- (Romans 3:23 LSB) **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

B. But what we do see is Jesus experiencing death so that God may bring us to glory.

C. And we see God bringing many sons to glory to perfect Jesus the author of salvation, 2:10.

D. It is fitting that the focus of God's great salvation is primarily about God and his glory, and not us, since all things are **for** God and **through** God.

E. So to understand God's great salvation we must pay much closer attention—→everything is about God and his glory and his purpose.

- (Romans 11:36 LSB) **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**
- (1 Timothy 1:17 LSB) Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, **be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**

F. It is fitting then that God to his glory will bring many sons to glory.

G. And at the same time it was fitting in regard to the divine nature of God that Jesus would be perfected in his role as author of our salvation to his glory.

- (Luke 24:25 LSB) And He said to them, "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 **Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?**"
- (Mark 14:36 LSB) And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; **yet not what I will, but what You will.**"
- (Luke 22:41–42 LSB) And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, **and**

He knelt down and began to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me, **yet not My will, but Yours be done.**"

4. God's great salvation plan began in the mind of God within the triune council of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in eternity past before the created world.

- (1 Corinthians 2:7, 9–10 LSB) But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, **the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages to our glory** ... But just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." 10 **But to us God revealed them through the Spirit**, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

Predestined ... προορίζω [proorizo /pro-or-id-zo/] ... to predetermine, decide beforehand; in the NT of God decreeing from eternity; to foreordain, appoint beforehand.

A. The great salvation plan of God was predetermined in the mind of God before the ages to our glory.

- (Ephesians 1:3–10 LSB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, 5 **by predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will**, 6 **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved.
- (Acts 4:27–28 LSB) For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, **whom You anointed**, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 **to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.**
- (2 Timothy 1:9 NLT) For **God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—**to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

B. God's great salvation plan is the previously hidden wisdom of God.

- (Romans 11:33–36 LSB) Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!** 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE REPAID TO HIM? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. **To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**

C. This wisdom is as far beyond our human categories and ways of thinking as the heavens are above the earth.

Counterintuitive Wonders ... I invite you into a biblical world of counterintuitive wonders. I will argue that these wonders are not illogical or contradictory, but they are different from our usual ways of seeing the world—so different that our first reaction is often to say, "That can't be." **But the "can't" is in our minds, not in reality.** "How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33)." [Ibid. (p. 14).]

- (Isaiah 55:8–9 LSB) For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares Yahweh. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, **So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.**
- (Ephesians 3:20–21 LSB) Now to **Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or understand**, according to the power that works within us, 21 **to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus** to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

D. We only know this wisdom when it is revealed to us by the Spirit.

- (1 Corinthians 2:10–12 LSB) **But to us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.** 11 For who among men knows the depths of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the depths of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the depths graciously given to us by God.**

E. By this revealed wisdom we know the will of God—what he has prepared for those who love him.

- (1 Corinthians 2:9 ESV) But, as it is written, "What **no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him**"—
- (Matthew 25:34 LSB) Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom, which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**
- (James 1:12 LSB) Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, **he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

F. By this revealed wisdom we know that all things will work together for good for those who love God.

- (Romans 8:28–30 LSB) And we know that **for those who love God all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to His purpose. 29 Because those whom He **foreknew**, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers; 30 **and those whom He predestined**, He also called; **and those whom He called**, He also justified; **and those whom He justified**, He also glorified.

5. God's great salvation plan is the only escape from the just penalty for our sin, 2:1-4.

- (Hebrews 2:1–4 LSB) **For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away.** 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every trespass and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 **how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?** That salvation, **first spoken by the Lord**, was **confirmed to us by those who heard**, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit **according to His own will.**

SANCTIFICATION

WOW



THE HOLY BROTHERS & SISTERS OF JESUS

SANCTIFICATION: THE WONDERFUL, ASTONISHING, EXCELLENT, SPLENDID, MARVELOUS, AMAZING PROMISE OF HOLINESS FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE.

THEREFORE, HOLY BROTHERS, YOU WHO SHARE IN A HEAVENLY CALLING, CONSIDER
JESUS, THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION.

(HEBREWS 3:1 ESV)

1. The holy brothers and sisters of Jesus see Jesus and experience the victory that Jesus won when he tasted death on our account, 2:9.

- (Hebrews 2:9 LSB) **But we do see Him** who was made for a little while lower than the angels—**Jesus**, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, **so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.**

- (1 Corinthians 15:56–57 LSB) Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 **but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!**

a. The holy brothers and sisters of Jesus see Jesus for who he is and what he has done in our behalf.

b. We see that Christ tasted death that we might live.

c. Everyone means every person God foreknew and predestined for glory.

- (Romans 8:29–30 LSB) **Because those whom He foreknew**, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn **among many brothers**; 30 and those whom He **predestined**, He also **called**; and those whom He **called**, He also **justified**; and those whom He **justified**, He also **glorified**.

d. Christ tasted death means Christ died for our sins.

- (1 Corinthians 15:3 LSB) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, **that Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures.

e. Christ tasted death so that God could make dead people alive by forgiving our sins and canceling the record of our debt.

- (Colossians 2:13–14 ESV) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses**, 14 **by canceling the record of debt that stood against us** with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

EXCURSUS: A TIMELY WORD ON UNDERSTANDING OUR GREAT SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION ...

I. God sets the bar for life now and forever because only God is God.

- (Isaiah 46:9 LSB) Remember the former things long past, **For I am God, and there is no**

other; I am God, and there is no one like Me.

a. God acts in accordance with God being God.

- (Isaiah 46:10 LSB) **Declaring the end from the beginning**, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, “My counsel will be established, **And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.**”

b. God speaks in accordance with God being God.

- (Psalm 31:5 LSB) Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, **O Yahweh, God of truth.**
- (John 14:6 LSB) Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

God sets the bar for reality—what is true now and forever. God speaks truth to us in the Bible. He breathed out words and had prophets write them down so we could know what is real and right and true.

- (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV) **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

When God speaks, he speaks truth because he is truth. When God creates, what he creates is glorious because he is the God of glory. When he saves, he saves completely and forever because he is infinite and eternal and he finishes what he starts.

With these things in mind then we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard in the words that God has breathed out to us, so we do not drift away from what is right and true.

- (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard**, lest we drift away.

II. Specifically in our study today we must pay close attention to what God says about our sanctification.

Sanctification may at first glance seem to be merely another dull, religious teaching when in reality it is the wonderful, astonishing, excellent, splendid, marvelous, amazing promise of God to make holy all who believe.

a. The act of God’s sanctification in our lives is so powerful and so effective that Christ is honored to call us his brothers.

- (Hebrews 2:11 LSB) For both He [*God the Father*] who sanctifies and those who

are being sanctified are all of One; **for which reason He [God the Son] is not ashamed to call them brothers.**

b. To sanctify means to make holy.

Sanctify ... ἁγιάζω [hagiazo] ... to make holy; consecrate things to God; dedicate people to God; to purify; to cleanse externally; to purify by expiation; to free from the guilt of sin; to purify internally by renewing of the soul. To sanctify means to make as dedicated to God; either in becoming more distinct, devoted, or morally pure.

The word for sanctify is the same word—ἅγιος [*hagios*—that is translated 233 times in the New Testament as holy.

Holy means other ... different ... We are to be other and different. God calls us and transforms us to be other than this world. We learn what that otherness is and how to live that way only as we bow before the Spirit and submit to the teaching of the Bible.

c. God sanctifies people—makes them holy—and calls us to be holy as he is holy.

- (1 Peter 1:15–16 NIV) But **just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;** 16 for it is written: **“Be holy, because I am holy.”**

So what does it mean to be holy—other, different—in everyday life?

We aren't different because we go to church. We are different because we go to church and worship God. We aren't different because we read the Bible. We are different because when we read the Bible the Spirit transforms our lives. We aren't holy because we are religious. The most deeply religious leaders of Jesus's time had no idea what it meant to be holy, even when confronting the holy Son of God.

- (Matthew 12:23–24 LSB) And all the crowds were astounded, and were saying, “Can this man [*Jesus*] really be the Son of David?” 24 **But when the Pharisees heard this, they said,** “This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”

—END EXCURSUS—

2. The holy brothers and sisters will be sanctified—made holy—and brought to glory, 2:10-13.

a. As holy brothers and sisters of Jesus we will be brought as sons and daughters to glory.

- (Hebrews 2:10 LSB) For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory,** to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

3. Sanctification is not an option but the foreordained plan of God to make holy those who are his.

- (1 Peter 1:1–2 LSB) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,** to the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

a. By the Father and through Christ we are sanctified and become the brothers of Christ.

- (Hebrews 2:10–13 NLT) **God,** for whom and through whom everything was made, **chose to bring many children into glory.** And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation. 11 **So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.** 12 For he said to God, “I will proclaim your name to my **brothers and sisters.** I will praise you among your assembled people.” 13 He also said, “I will put my trust in him,” that is, “I and the children God has given me.”

b. We are sanctified by the truth.

- (John 17:17 LSB) **Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.**

c. We are sanctified entirely—God will do it.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 LSB) Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely,** and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.**

d. We are sanctified that we may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- (2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 LSB) But we should always give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord,

because God has chosen you as the first fruits for **salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth**. 14 It was for this He called you **through our gospel, that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

e. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- (Hebrews 10:10 LSB) By this will we have been **sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**.

f. Through sanctification God has perfected us forever.

- (Hebrews 10:14 LSB) **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified**.

g. God will finish what he started.

- (Philippians 1:6 LSB) For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**.

h. The decision for the Spirit to make us holy was made in eternity past when he chose us.

- (1 Peter 1:2 NLT) **God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ**. May God give you more and more grace and peace.
- (Ephesians 1:4–5 LSB) **Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love**, 5 by **predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

i. Christ will present us to himself in all our glory.

- (Ephesians 5:25–27 LSB) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 **so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**, 27 **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless**.

j. Note the contrast: Where we were, where we are and where we will be.

- (Colossians 1:21–23a LSB) **And although**

you were formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds, 22 **but now** He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—** 23 **if indeed you continue in the faith** firmly grounded and steadfast, and **not moved away from the hope of the gospel**, which you have heard.

k. Increasing our love for one another strengthens our hearts to be blameless in holiness.

- (1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 LSB) **And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another**, and for all people, just as we also do for you, 13 **so that He may strengthen your hearts blameless in holiness**, before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

l. Grumbling and disputing undermine our pursuit of holiness.

- (Philippians 2:14–16 LSB) **Do all things without grumbling or disputing**, 15 **so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation**, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 **holding fast the word of life**, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to boast because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

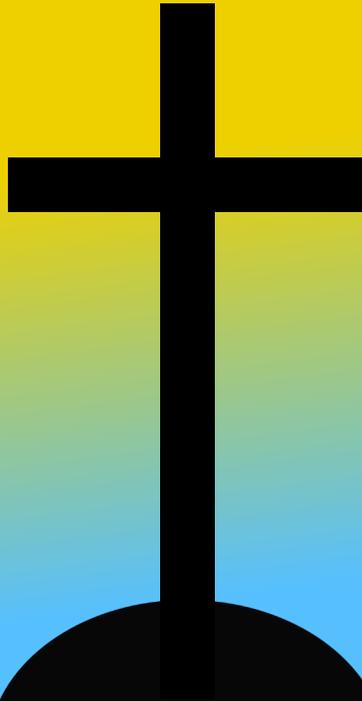
m. God will make us stand in the presence of his glory blameless with great joy.

- (Jude 24 LSB) Now to Him **who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy**.

n. The painful discipline of God the Father is for our benefit that we might share his holiness.

- (Hebrews 12:10–11 ESV) For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, **that we may share his holiness**. 11 **For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it**.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE JOYFUL SOUND?
JESUS SAVES, JESUS SAVES!



NO FEAR

NO FEAR

REST IN PEACE

JESUS SAVES

NO FEAR

JESUS SAVES HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM DEATH

-IN SAVING US FROM DEATH JESUS RENDERS THE DEVIL POWERLESS AND BECOMES OUR MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST-

I. PART ONE: WE NEED TO KNOW THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR JESUS TO SHARE FLESH AND BLOOD WITH US SO THAT THROUGH DEATH HE COULD SAVE US FROM DEATH AND THE FEAR OF DEATH.

- (Hebrews 2:14–15 LSB) Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

A. As God's human creation we are living souls who share in flesh and blood—we are earthy.

- (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47 LSB) So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ... The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

B. It was necessary for Jesus to share flesh and blood with us so that through death he could bring us victory over death and the fear of death.

C. Jesus had to share flesh and blood with us so that through his death we could bear the image of the heavenly and inherit the kingdom of God.

- (1 Corinthians 15:49–50 LSB) And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the corruptible inherit the incorruptible.

D. To save us from death Jesus had to share flesh and blood and submit to his role as slave in the purpose of God even to the point of death on a cross.

- (John 1:14 LSB) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- (Philippians 2:8 LSB) [*Christ Jesus*] ... Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

E. Through his death Jesus rendered the devil powerless—he deactivated the devil's power of death.

Render powerless ... καταργέω [katargeo] ... to render idle, inactivate, inoperative; to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, power; to put an end to, to annul.

II. PART TWO: WE NEED TO HAVE A SOUND, BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVIL'S POWER OF DEATH.

A. Here is some general information regarding the power of death of the devil for us to keep in mind.

1. **The devil is a created being and like all created beings is subject to God.**
2. **The devil is, and always has been, subject to the sovereign rule of God in his actions.**
3. **So whatever his power of death is it likewise is subject to the sovereign rule of God.**

B. Life and death are God's decisions.

- (Deuteronomy 32:39 LSB) See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1. Every day of our lives has already been recorded in God's book.

- (Psalm 139:16 NLT) You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

2. We live from day to day as God wills.

- (James 4:15–16 NLT) What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." 16 Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

3. Satan was not allowed to harm Job physically without God's permission and he was not allowed to kill Job during his time of testing.

- (Job 1:12 NLT) "All right, you may test him," the LORD said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the LORD's presence.
- (Job 2:5–6 LSB) "However, send forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You in Your face." 6 So Yahweh said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, only spare his life."

4. Christ has the keys of death.

- (Revelation 1:18 LSB) And the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

III. PART THREE: WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW CHRIST RENDERED THE DEVIL POWERLESS.

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOD AND THE DEVIL ...

Overview: The devil's power of death relies on psychological schemes (*mind games*) that are based on lies, temptations and accusations.

A. The devil initiated his plan to bring death to God's good creation in the Garden of Eden with Eve.

B. He deceived Eve with a lie and a temptation.

- (2 Corinthians 11:3a LSB) ... as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness.
- (1 Timothy 2:14 LSB) And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into trespass.

THE LIE: You will not die from eating from the tree.

- (Genesis 2:17 LSB) But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
- (Genesis 3:4 LSB) And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!"
- (Romans 5:12 NLT) When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

THE TEMPTATION: Eat from the tree and be like God.

- (Genesis 3:5 LSB) For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

C. The devil knew that they would die—that they would be separated from God and the life God had provided for them.

D. This was his first step toward gaining control over God's human creation.

- (1 John 5:19 LSB) We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

E. The devil lies, tempts and accuses in order to blind people to the truth of the gospel.

- (2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is

the image of God.

F. That is why our first piece of armor against Satan's mind games must be truth.

- (Ephesians 6:11, 14 LSB) Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ... Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEVIL'S METHODOLOGY ...

Overview: The devil uses the sting of death as a basis for his accusations to carry on his campaign of fear and deception.

- A. The devil uses accusations to wound his adversary and to undermine his or her ability to stand.
- B. The accusations of the sting of death are based on the person's death—his separated position from God.
- C. The accusations may be true or false, justified or unjustified, with or without rational basis.

MAINTAINING A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE BATTLE ...

Overview: We need to have a precise, biblical understanding as to just what the sting of death is and how the devil uses this powerful weapon against us.

A. The sting of death is sin.

- (1 Corinthians 15:56 LSB) Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

B. The power of sin is the law—the rules of God, his moral code—which is written on our hearts.

- (Romans 2:15–16 NLT) They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. 16 And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

C. The devil uses a person's guilty conscience to sting him with accusations and condemnation.

D. This stinging generates fear by which the devil uses to manipulate the person.

E. This weapon is so effective and powerful that the devil deceives the whole world.

- (Revelation 12:9b LSB) ... the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.

IV. PART FOUR: WE NEED TO KNOW HOW JESUS BECAME OUR MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST AND HOW THAT RENDERS THE DEVIL POWERLESS TO HARM US.

- (Hebrews 2:16–18 LSB) For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham. 17 **Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, **He is able to come to help those who are tempted.**

A. Christ does not give this help to angels but to the seed of Abraham.

- (Galatians 3:7 LSB) **So know that those who are of faith, those are sons of Abraham.**
- (Galatians 3:9 LSB) So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

B. To give us this help Christ had to be made like his brothers and sisters in all things.

C. To give us this help he had to become our merciful and faithful high priest.

D. As our merciful and faithful high priest he helps us by making propitiation for our sins.

- (1 John 2:1–2a LSB) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.**
- (1 John 4:10 LSB) In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us **and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

E. Christ rendered the devil powerless by taking the sting out of death.

- (1 Corinthians 15:57 LSB) **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!**

F. In making propitiation for our sins Christ rendered the devil powerless by removing absolutely any basis the devil would have to accuse us.

- (Romans 8:1 LSB) **Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**
- (Romans 8:31, 33–34a LSB) What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died.**

G. Christ totally defeated and publicly shamed the devil and the forces of darkness when he canceled our debt of sin by nailing it to the cross.

- (Colossians 2:14–15 LSB) **Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us, He also has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them in Him.**

H. So if a believer lives in fear of death, then that person has been deceived by the devil's lies and is not being led by the Spirit.

- (Romans 8:14–17 LSB) **For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, also heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.**

I. Jesus our brother is our merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.

- (Psalm 57:10 NKJV) For **Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,** And Your truth unto the clouds.
- (Psalm 36:5 NKJV) **Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**

J. As our merciful and faithful high priest he is able to come to help us when we are tempted to sin regardless of where we are or the particular temptation.

JESUS MUST BE TRUE NORTH ON OUR SPIRITUAL COMPASS

JESUS



FIXING OUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS

PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION TO WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT OUR LORD SO THAT WE DO NOT GO ASTRAY IN OUR HEARTS AND SQUANDER OUR HEAVENLY CALLING

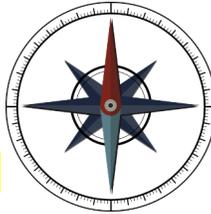
I. OBEYING THE COMMAND TO FIX OUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS SETS OUR SPIRITUAL COMPASS ON JESUS AND KEEPS IT SET ON JESUS, 3:1.

- (Hebrews 3:1 LSB) Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider [NIV—“fix your thoughts on”] the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus.

A. We are commanded as holy brothers and sisters to set our spiritual compass on (to consider, fix our thoughts on) Jesus.

3:1 ... consider ... κατανοέω katanoēō – to pay attention, notice, observe; consider, contemplate; this word has a strong implication that the attention paid is intense, and the contemplation is broad and thorough, resulting in complete understanding.

Fix your thoughts ... This is the diligent use of the mind in its considerations, thoughts, meditations, and conceptions about Jesus Christ, so that they may understand and perceive correctly who and what he is, and what follows as a consequence of this. [Owen, J. (1998). *Hebrews* (p. 55). Crossway Books.]



B. Obeying the command yields confident hope that we will arrive at our destination—heaven.

- (Ephesians 1:18 NLT) I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.
- i. Having our hearts flooded with the light of who Jesus is, what he has done and what he will continue to do forever gives us supreme confidence that our coordinates are accurate.
- ii. Obeying this command is essential if we are to have assurance—confident hope—that we are walking worthy of God and our heavenly calling.

C. We are commanded/exhorted to walk worthy of our calling in multiple places in Scripture.

- (Ephesians 4:1 LSB) Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.
- i. Walking worthy is directly related to bearing fruit and growing in our knowledge of God.
 - (Colossians 1:10 LSB) So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to

please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and multiplying in the full knowledge of God.

ii. Walking worthy is directly related to being firmly rooted and established in our faith.

- (Colossians 2:6–7 LSB) Therefore as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and being built up in Him, and having been established in your faith—just as you were instructed—and abounding with thanksgiving.

iii. All of the above are directly related to the Spirit-to-spirit witness that we are being called into the kingdom and glory of God.

- (1 Thessalonians 2:12 LSB) So that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- (Romans 8:16 LSB) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

D. With our spiritual compass set on Jesus the Holy Spirit grows our understanding as to who Jesus is both intellectually and experientially.

- i. He is the Son of God, heir of all things, Creator of the worlds, so we worship him as God.
 - (Hebrews 1:2 LSB) In these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.
- ii. He is God who sits on his throne and rules as Lord and Master forever, so we submit to his sovereign authority and bow before him as loving servants.
 - (Hebrews 1:8 LSB) But of the Son He says, “YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE SCEPTER OF UPRIGHTNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM.”

E. With our spiritual compass set on Jesus we grow in our understanding as to what Jesus has done in accomplishing cleansing for our sins.

- (Hebrews 1:3 LSB) who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

II. WHEN OUR THOUGHTS ARE FIXED ON JESUS, WE ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A BIBLICAL HEADING BY WHICH WE GROW IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ONGOING MINISTRIES OF JESUS ON OUR BEHALF, 3:1-6.

A. Our heavenly calling is dependent on what Jesus Christ has done, is doing and will do forever.

B. We must fix our thoughts on Jesus so that we understand what it means that Jesus is the Apostle of our confession.

- (Hebrews 3:1 LSB) Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus.

i. Jesus is our Apostle—God’s primary messenger to us of the good news of salvation.

Apostle (noun)... ἀπόστολος [apostolos] ... messenger, sent one; one sent forth with orders.

Sent (verb-apostle)... ἀποστέλλω (apostellō) ... to send someone out, implying for a particular purpose; send a message, send word.

An apostle is one who is sent to represent God before men, and to speak and act on his behalf; a high priest represents men before God and offers a sacrifice for their sins. **Moses was the only Old Testament figure to fulfill both of these functions,** and as such he pointed forward to Jesus, whom we proclaim as the apostle and high priest of our confession. [Phillips, R. D. (2006). *Hebrews* (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; p. 84). P&R Publishing.]

ii. As the Apostle of our confession Jesus was sent by the Father to deliver the good news of the kingdom of God.

- (John 17:18 LSB) **As You sent Me into the world,** I also sent them into the world.
- (Luke 4:43 LSB) But He said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, **for I was sent for this purpose.**”
- (Luke 10:16 LSB) The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me. **And he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.**

iii. Jesus was sent by God that we may know God and have eternal life.

- (John 17:3 LSB) And this is eternal life, **that they may know You,** the only true God, **and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

C. We must fix our thoughts on Jesus so that we understand what it means that Jesus is the High Priest of our confession.

- The Lord Jesus represents us before God.
- Jesus is the objective truth of our confession from which we must never drift away.

Confession ... ὁμολογία [homologia] ... profession, confession; an open avowal (true or false) of some belief or opinion.

iii. Our confession—we preach Christ crucified.

- (1 Corinthians 1:22–23 LSB) For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom, **23 but we preach Christ crucified,** to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness.

D. With our thoughts fixed on Jesus, we will pay much closer attention to the faithfulness and the worthiness of Jesus, 3:2-6.

- (Hebrews 3:2–6 LSB) **Who was faithful** to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. **3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses,** in so much **as the builder of the house** has more honor than the house. **4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.** **5 Now MOSES WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE AS A SERVANT,** for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later, **6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope.**
- i. Moses was faithful to God as servant in his house.
- ii. Jesus is superior to Moses because he is not merely the caretaker but the builder of the house.
- iii. Jesus—“*I will build my church.*” (Matthew 16:18b).
- iv. We are the Church—the house built by Jesus.
 - (Ephesians 2:19–22 LSB) So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, **and are of God’s household,** **20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,** Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, **21 in whom the whole building,** being joined together, **is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord,** **22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of**

God in the Spirit.

- v. We **know** that we are the house built by Jesus **if** we hold firmly to our confidence and hope in Christ.
- (Hebrews 3:6 NIV) But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, **if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.**

III. WHEN OUR THOUGHTS ARE TRULY FIXED ON JESUS, WE ARE MUCH MORE READY TO HEAR AND OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MOMENT HE SPEAKS TO US, 3:7-11.

- (Hebrews 3:7-11 LSB) Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10 "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"

A. We are warned to hear his voice today.

- i. Obeying God in other areas does not compensate for refusing to hear and obey God now in the specific area to which he calls our attention.
- (Mark 10:19-20 LSB) "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."
- ii. We must hear God and obey him today—now, at this moment—and do his will without delay.
- (Mark 10:21-22 LSB) And looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 **But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving,** for he was one who owned much property.
- iii. Delaying hearing/obeying God's voice sets in motion the hardening of the heart, and the person becomes further obstinate and stubborn.

B. We are warned urgently in this text to make sure that we fix our thoughts on Jesus.

- i. Not fixing our thoughts on Jesus leads to the heart going astray and not knowing the ways of God.
- ii. Think about it: What better way to know the ways of God than to fix our thoughts on Jesus?

C. The faithful follower of Jesus will always have his spiritual compass set on Jesus.

D. Example: The ancient Israelites revealed that their hearts had gone astray and that they had lost sight of who God was when they grumbled.

- (Numbers 14:26-27 LSB) Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me."

CONCLUSION: Today is the time to check your spiritual compass. Later may be too late.

THE APOSTLE PAUL WANTS US ALL TO BE AWARE OF THIS: We need to hear this now. Most of them had the wrong compass setting and arrived across the river from the promised land with an unbelieving heart.

- (1 Corinthians 10:1-5 LSB) **For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers,** that our fathers were **all** under the cloud and **all** passed through the sea; 2 and **all** were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and **all** ate the same spiritual food; 4 and **all** drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5 **Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased. For THEY WERE STRUCK DOWN IN THE WILDERNESS.**
- (Matthew 7:13-14 LSB) **Enter through the narrow gate;** for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 **For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life,** and there are few who find it.

GOD'S REST

LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A SINCERE HEART ...

(HEBREWS 10:22A LSB)



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

(HEBREWS 3:11 ESV)

I. AN URGENT OBLIGATION: As brothers in Christ we are to be vigilant in warning all those who profess Christ of the impending danger of an evil, unbelieving heart, 3:12.

- (Hebrews 3:12 LSB) See to it brothers, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

HOW DO WE SEE TO IT? WE CAN'T MAKE THE DECISION FOR THE PERSON. SO, AGAIN, **HOW** DO WE SEE TO IT?

A. WARNING: We see to it by warning people of the grave danger of not believing God.

- As much as is possible, we see to it that no one in our fellowship has an evil, unbelieving heart.
 - (Romans 12:18 LSB) If possible, **so far as it depends on you**, being at peace with all men.
- An evil, unbelieving heart is a very real threat and a significant danger within the professing body of believers.
- An evil, unbelieving heart leads a person to the most tragic of consequences—falling away from the living God.

AN EVIL, UNBELIEVING HEART -> FALL AWAY FROM GOD
VERSUS
A SINCERE HEART -> ENTER THE HOLY PLACES OF GOD

CONTRAST

B. EXHORTING: We see to it by exhorting and encouraging people to believe God and draw near to him.

NOTE THE CONTRAST ...

- We encourage people away from an **evil, unbelieving heart** that causes a person to **fall away from the living God**.
- We encourage people toward a **sincere heart** by which a person **enters the holy places of God**.
 - (Hebrews 4:16 LSB) Therefore **let us draw near with confidence** to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - (Hebrews 7:25 LSB) Therefore He is able also to save forever **those who draw**

near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- (Hebrews 10:19–22a LSB) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a sincere heart** in full assurance of faith.

iii. The antidote to an evil, unbelieving heart is believing and obeying God.

iv. The person who believes God and walks in obedience has a sincere heart and enters the holy places of God, i.e. he walks in holiness.

C. TRAINING: We see to it by encouraging people to be led by the Spirit and train in the fundamentals of believing God through an obedient, disciplined approach to God through Scripture.

i. Pay closer attention to what God says.

- (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) For this reason **we must pay much closer attention** to what we have heard, lest we drift away.

ii. Do what God says.

- (Joshua 1:7 LSB) Only be strong and very courageous **to be careful to do according to all the law** which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn aside from it to the right or to the left, so that you may be prosperous wherever you go.
- (James 1:22 LSB) **But become doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

- (James 1:26 LSB) If anyone thinks himself to be religious **while not bridling his tongue but deceiving his own heart**, this man's religion is worthless.

iii. Immerse ourselves in what God says so that it dominates our thoughts and actions.

- (Joshua 1:8 LSB) This book of the law **shall not depart from your mouth**, but you **shall meditate on it day and night**, so that **you may be careful to do** according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful, and then you will be prosperous.

iv. Intentionally, decisively and consistently refuse the counsel of the world and instead delight in what God says—the counsel of God.

- (Romans 12:2 LSB) **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **so that you may approve what the will of God is**, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.
- (Psalm 1:1–2 LSB) How blessed is the man who **does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the way of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!** 2 **But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, And in His law he meditates day and night.**
- (2 Corinthians 6:14–15 LSB) **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers**; for **what partnership** have righteousness and lawlessness, or **what fellowship** has light with darkness? 15 Or **what harmony** has Christ with Belial, or **what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?**

v. Love what God says and come to love the benefits of God directing our lives.

- (Psalm 119:105 LSB) Your word is **a lamp to my feet** And **a light to my path**.
- (Psalm 119:133 LSB) **Establish my steps in Your word**, And do not let any wickedness overpower me.
- (Psalm 119:172 LSB) **Let my tongue answer with Your word**, For all Your commandments are righteous.
- (Psalm 119:97–99 LSB) Oh how I love Your law! **It is my meditation all the day.** 98 Your commandments make me **wiser** than my enemies, For they are mine forever. 99 I have **more insight** than all my teachers, For **Your testimonies are my meditation**.
- (Proverbs 30:5 LSB) **Every word of God is tested**; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

II. AN ENDURING OBLIGATION: Today and every day as brothers in Christ we are to warn all those who profess Christ of the danger of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, 3:13-15.

- (Hebrews 3:13–15 LSB) But encourage one another **day after day**, as long as it is still

called "TODAY," **so that** none of you will be **hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**, 15 while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."

A. If it is "today," then it is a day to exhort and encourage one another to believe God and avoid becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- i. Hardened by the deceitfulness of sin the sinner does not believe himself to be a sinner.
- ii. He has been deceived to such a degree that he is incapable of even acknowledging his sin.
- iii. He is not thinking as God thinks and wrongly perceives himself to be a good person.

- (Romans 3:23 LSB) **For all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.
- (Romans 3:10–12 ESV) As it is written: "**None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.**"

iv. Apart from a work of the Holy Spirit he will never change his mind (*repent*) or say the same thing as God (*confess*) regarding his sin.

B. If we are in Christ, then we will say the same thing as God and hold firm in Christ until the end.

Confidence – substance – an assurance of mind or firm belief in the truth and reality of a fact; especially its underlying integrity, stability, or veracity.

i. Holding fast to the end is evidence of our assurance of and firm belief in the truth of God and the reality that the lens of Scripture reveals to us.

- (Hebrews 3:6 LSB) But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house— whose house we are, **if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope**.

ii. We will not hold fast to the end if we walk in willful ignorance that is a result of a hard heart.

- (Ephesians 4:17–18 LSB) Therefore this I say, and testify in the Lord, that you walk **no longer just as the Gentiles also walk**, in the **futility** of their mind, 18 being **darkened** in their mind, **alienated**

from the life of God because of **the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.**

iii. **The contrast between the saved and the unsaved:**
The unsaved person is alienated from the life of God because of the hardness of his heart ... the saved person enters the holy places of God with a sincere heart.

C. We must understand the importance of “today” as we evaluate our lives in view of holding fast to the end.

- i. Today means everyday—in this moment, always.
- ii. When a person chooses when and what to obey, he unwittingly hardens his heart and provokes God.

III. AN OMINOUS OBLIGATION: As brothers in Christ we are to specifically warn those in our churches of a near and present danger—that God will deny them access to his rest because of their disobedience and unbelief, 3:16-19.

- (Hebrews 3:16–19 LSB) For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear **that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?** 19 **So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.**

A. The disobedient will not enter God's rest.

B. Their unbelief keeps them out.

C. Most of those who came out of Egypt were vehemently (*forcefully, passionately, intensely*) denied access to God's rest.

- (Hebrews 3:11 LSB) **AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."**
- (1 Corinthians 10:5–6 LSB) Nevertheless, **with most of them** God was not well-pleased. For **THEY WERE STRUCK DOWN IN THE WILDERNESS.** 6 **Now these things happened as examples for us,** so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

- (1 Corinthians 10:10–12 LSB) **Nor grumble, as some of them did,** and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 **Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction,** upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived. 12 **Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.**

GOD'S REST



- **THE PROMISE TO ENTER REMAINS ...**
- **THEREFORE, LET US FEAR ...**

INTRODUCTION: ESTABLISHING THE SETTING

It seems the best approach to grasp the teaching of the letter to the Hebrews is to understand the setting of the letter to be a pastor writing to his church—a fellowship which he knew consisted of both the saved and the unsaved. We can tell this from the content and the urgent tone of the letter.

We also know that he cared for his people and was concerned for the eternal destiny of each one of them. He was diligent in reaching out to the entire church. He was passionate in his responsibility before God to care for and shepherd the entire flock and to do his best to bring God's message to everyone in the church.

Having those things in mind should help us understand his writing in general and more specifically explain why he begins this section the way he does ... *"let us fear."*

He knew how necessary it was for the unsaved to fear the consequences of their unbelief, just as he knew how necessary it was that the saved fulfill their obligation of mercy and love in steering the unbelieving toward fear to snatch some of them from the fires of hell.

- (Jude 22–23 LSB) **And on some, who are doubting, have mercy; 23 and for others, save, snatching them out of the fire; and on others have mercy with fear,** hating even the tunic polluted by the flesh.

SUMMARY AND RELEVANCE: WE LIKEWISE ARE CALLED TO RESCUE THE PERISHING WITHIN OUR CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

1. We are exhorted to use fear to save some from their unbelief, 3:18-4:1.

- (Hebrews 3:18–4:1 LSB) **And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.** 1 Therefore, **let us fear,** lest, **while a promise remains of entering His rest,** any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it.

A. The promise of entering God's rest remains, but God swears that the disobedient will not enter his rest.

B. Bringing a person to fear the consequences of his disobedience is sometimes what is needed to save him from his unbelief.

- i. Unbelief results in disobedience.**

- ii. Everyone believes something.**

- iii. Biblically unbelief means that the person doesn't believe God.**

- iv. The best, most loving action toward those who have an unbelieving heart is to bring them to fear the consequences of their disobedience.**

C. The disobedient ones addressed here were in danger of falling back into Judaism and their previous misconceptions of God and salvation.

D. As a church we are to "see to it" and bring this fear into the lives of those who are disobedient in our fellowship to purge them of their unbelief.

- (Hebrews 3:12 LSB) **See to it brothers, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**

E. Fear may be used for good as a powerful weapon to free the captive mind of the unsaved by turning their thoughts to God.

- i. By default humans demand the right to exercise free will in choosing what they believe to be right and wrong, good and evil.**

- ii. But the freedom they think they have is in reality an enslaved mind set on self and ending in death.**

- (Romans 8:6 LSB) **For the mind set on the flesh is death,** but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

- (Romans 6:16 LSB) Do you not know that when you go on presenting yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey,** either of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

- iii. Fear when used as intended in this text may be enough to save some and change the direction of the person's mind from death to life and peace.**

- iv. Helping someone to fear as directed in this text may save them from their foolishness.**

- (1 Corinthians 1:18 LSB) For the word of the cross **is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.**

2. The good news of the promise to enter God's rest remains but only those who hear it with faith will profit from the good news, 4:2.

- (Hebrews 4:2 LSB) **For indeed we have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they**

also; but the word that was heard did not profit those who were not united with faith among those who heard.

A. A person only profits from the good news when he hears with faith.

- (Galatians 3:2 LSB) This is the only thing I want to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
- (Galatians 3:5 LSB) So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

B. To hear with faith means we hear and believe.

C. God could not make it any more clear that the one who does not believe him will not enter his rest.

- (Hebrews 3:11 LSB) AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."

D. Fear when used as intended in this text may also bring the person into the presence of God where he or she can hear what is necessary to enter God's rest.

- (Hebrews 4:1 LSB) Therefore, let us fear, lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it.

E. When fear has done its saving work, the person changes his mind and forsakes his way and thoughts for God's way and thoughts.

- (Isaiah 55:7–11 LSB) Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to Yahweh, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares Yahweh. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what pleases Me, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

3. Those who believe enter God's rest just as surely as those who are disobedient will not enter his rest, 4:3-7.

- (Hebrews 4:3–7 LSB) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken somewhere in this way concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; 5 and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST." 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news proclaimed to them failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 He again determines a certain day, "TODAY" saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."

A. If we believe, we enter God's rest.

B. Today is the day to believe God.

C. If we do not believe, God swears that we will not enter his rest.

D. God invites us to the same rest he enjoyed when he rested on the seventh day.

E. We enter God's rest through Christ.

- (Matthew 11:28–30 LSB) Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

4. The promise of entering God's rest remains for the people of God, 4:8-9.

- (Hebrews 4:8–9 LSB) For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

5. Entering God's rest is by grace through faith—no works.

- (Hebrews 4:10 LSB) For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.
- (Romans 4:4–5 LSB) Now to the one who works,

his wage is not counted according to grace, but according to what is due. 5 **But to the one who does not work, but believes** upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

- (Ephesians 2:8–9 LSB) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 **not of works**, so that no one may boast.
- (2 Timothy 1:9 LSB) Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.
- (Titus 3:5a LSB) He saved us, **not by works which we did in righteousness**, but according to His mercy.

6. To be diligent to enter God's rest is to strive to believe God above everything else—it is a battle for the mind.

- (Hebrews 4:11 LSB) Therefore let us **be diligent to enter that rest**, lest anyone fall into the same example of disobedience.

A. The diligence here is not working for our salvation but striving in our heart and soul to believe God and find rest in him.

- (Jeremiah 6:16 LSB) Thus says Yahweh, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; **And you will find rest for your souls**. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

B. The person who is not diligent in this way ultimately fails in three ways.

- i. He loses the battle for his mind.
- ii. He never comes to believe God.
- iii. He falls further into disobedience resulting in belief in a false gospel.

C. Entering God's rest in Hebrews is the same concept Jesus speaks of as entering the way that leads to life (salvation) through the narrow door and the narrow gate.

- (Luke 13:23–24 LSB) And someone said to Him, “Lord, **are there just a few who are being saved?**” And He said to them, 24

“**Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.**”

- (Matthew 7:13–14 LSB) **Enter through the narrow gate**; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and **there are many who enter through it**. 14 For the gate is narrow and **the way is constricted that leads to life**, and there are few who find it.

CONCLUSION ...

OBSERVATIONS: Some observations concerning entering the door or gate of salvation.

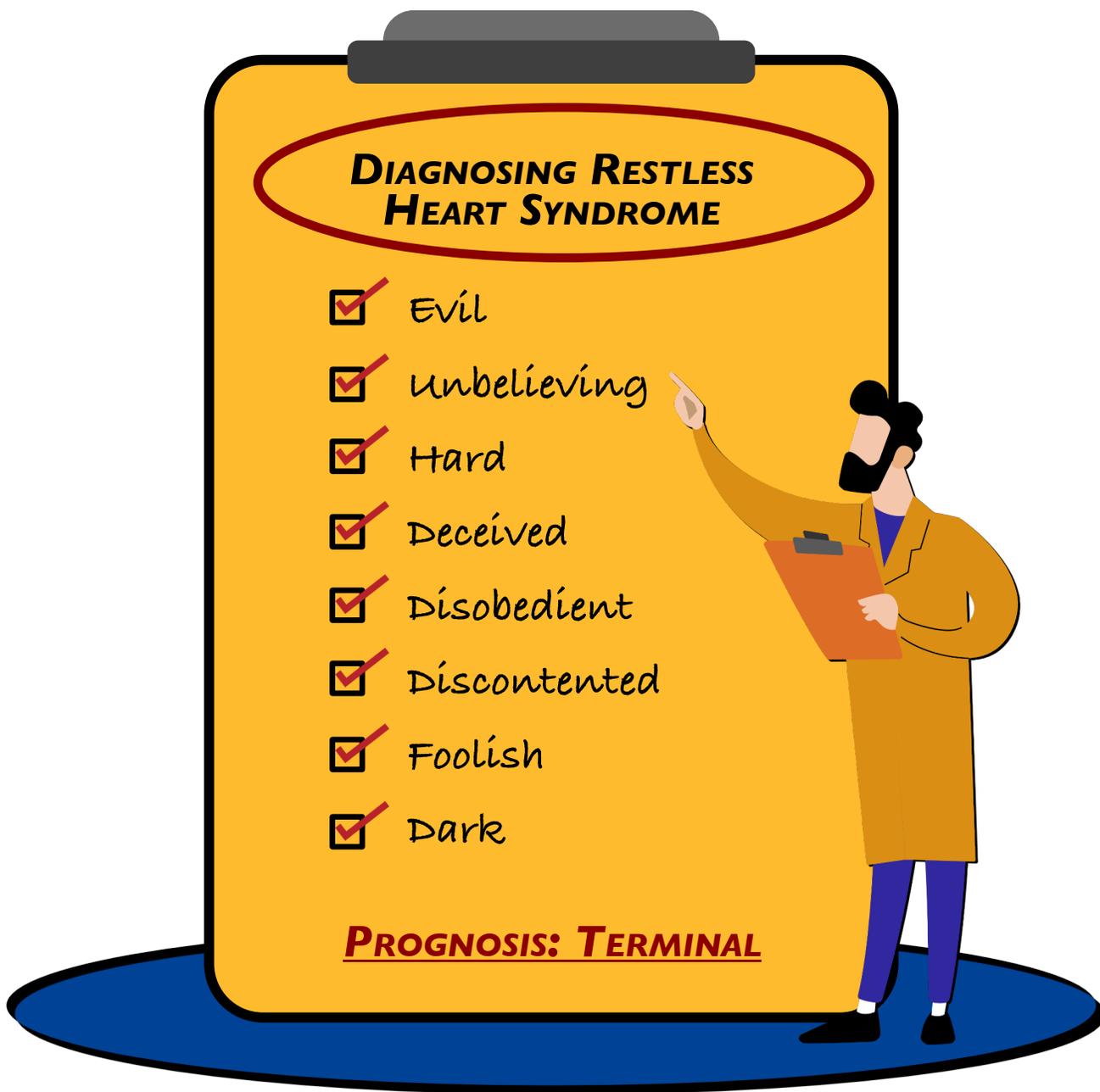
1. The person is to strive to enter—diligence.
2. Many will not be able to enter the door that leads to life.
3. Many will enter the wide gate that leads to destruction.
4. The many who enter through the wide gate are satisfied with entering a way that promises life without examining where it leads.
5. We are commanded to enter a certain gate—the narrow gate.
6. The narrow gate opens to the way that leads to life.
7. Few even find the gate that opens to the way that leads to life.

DEDUCTIONS: Some deductions from the previous observations.

1. Striving to enter seems to fit very well with the admonition in Hebrews to pay much closer attention.
 - (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard**, lest we drift away.
2. Many people who seek salvation and the way that leads to life do not strive for the truth but are easily satisfied with a promise of life.
3. We should strive to believe and share a gospel that saves, not one that merely accommodates.
 - (2 Corinthians 2:17 LSB) For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, **but as from sincerity, but as from God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ**.
4. There is only one gospel that saves.
 - (Galatians 1:8 LSB) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, **should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to the gospel we have proclaimed to you**, let him be accursed!

FINDING THE REAL ME

—DISCOVERING THE WRETCHED MAN (OR WOMAN) INSIDE—



SURGERY REQUIRED ASAP

1. THE GOAL: To be diligent to enter God's rest and as much as is possible help others to enter, 4:11.

- (Hebrews 4:11 LSB) Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall into the same example of disobedience.
- ***Better ... (Hebrews 4:11 ESV) Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

To be diligent is ... to strive, to be eager; to exert one's self; to have or show keen interest, intense desire.

A. The battle is between **believing God** and entering his rest (salvation) and **not believing God** and not entering his rest (damnation).

- (Hebrews 4:3a LSB) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."

B. The battle for the believer is ongoing as we must be diligent in hearing and believing God and diligent in turning away from our human religions, philosophies and traditions.

C. As previously exhorted we are to be diligent in paying much closer attention, 2:1.

- (Hebrews 2:1 ESV) Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

D. The urgency and necessity to hear God and believe him now (today) cannot be overemphasized.

E. We can identify several perilous tendencies of the person who refuses to hear God's voice **today**.

- (Hebrews 3:7-11 ESV) Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' "

THE PERSON WHO REFUSES TO HEAR GOD TODAY ...

hardens his heart, puts God to the test, goes further astray in his heart, doesn't know the ways of God, does not enter God's rest, becomes increasingly disobedient and unable to believe God and ultimately rejects the gospel.

- (Hebrews 3:15,19 ESV) As it is said, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ... 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.
- (Hebrews 4:6-7 ESV) Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 again he appoints a certain day, "**Today**," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

F. The person who refuses to hear God's voice today has an evil, unbelieving heart that continues to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- (Hebrews 3:12-13 ESV) Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

i. This person has a foolish heart that grows darker and a mind that becomes more futile daily.

- (Romans 1:21 LSB) For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.

ii. He is alienated from the life of God because of a hard heart.

- (Ephesians 4:18 LSB) Being darkened in their mind, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.

iii. He removes his heart far from God while deceiving himself further with superficial acts of devotion and service.

- (Isaiah 29:13 LSB) Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their mouth And honor Me with their lips, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their fear of Me is in the command of men learned by rote."

iv. He has a stubborn heart that is far from righteousness.

- (Isaiah 46:12 LSB) Hear Me, you stubborn of heart, Who are far from righteousness.

2. THE MEANS: Submitting to the sharp incisions into my innermost being by the word of God is how I see who I am and avoid “the same sort of disobedience” as the ancient Israelites, 4:12.

• (Hebrews 4:12 LSB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, **and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

• **Judge ...** [*kritikos*] ... means to able to judge or discern; critique; characterized by careful evaluation and judgment (of someone or something).

A. The purpose of God’s word is to thoroughly examine us with the intent of showing us who we are.

B. The word of God piercing our evil, unbelieving hearts is the only way to accurately diagnose and judge our innermost thoughts and desires.

C. Our only hope is for the Holy Spirit of God to use the word of God as his scalpel to cut through the hardened layers of the deceitfulness of sin.

• (Jeremiah 17:9–10a NLT) **The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? 10 But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives.**

3. THE METHOD: The piercing work of the word of God exposes the thoughts and intentions of my heart and is comprehensive, exhaustive and effective at the highest level of accountability, 4:13.

• (Hebrews 4:13 LSB) And there is **no creature hidden from His sight**, but **all things are uncovered and laid bare** to the eyes of **Him to whom we have an account to give.**

A. **Comprehensive:** No one is hidden from his sight.

Comprehensive: complete and including everything that is necessary; all-embracing; of large scope; inclusive; having an extended mental range or grasp.

B. **Exhaustive:** All things are uncovered (literally “naked”) and laid bare in the sight of God Almighty.

Exhaustive: including all possibilities; thorough; treating all parts or aspects without omission; complete and including everything; examining, including, or considering all elements or aspects.

C. **Effective:** This happens at the highest level of accountability so the judgment will stand.

Effective: producing a decided, decisive, or desired

effect; achieving the results that are hoped for, intended or expected.

D. We can be confident that the comprehensive, exhaustive, effective nature of this judgment at the highest level of accountability will finally and completely reveal to us who we truly are in the eyes of God.

E. Remember: The ultimate intent of the deep, sharp incisions of the word is to produce hearing with faith which keeps us from falling into the same example of disobedience as the ancient Israelites.

F. The person who consequently accepts God’s evaluation and then receives the good news with faith will be blessed with superabounding assurance as to his right standing before God Almighty.

• (Romans 8:31, 33–34 LSB) **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ... 33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died**, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

G. This person will be naked but not afraid as Adam and Eve were because he is covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

• (Genesis 3:10 LSB) And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, **and I was afraid because I was naked**; so I hid.”

• (2 Corinthians 5:21 LSB) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

• (Psalm 32:1–2 LSB) **How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!** 2 How blessed is the man whose iniquity Yahweh will not take into account, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

• (Psalm 32:5 LSB) **I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not cover up**; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh;” **And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Selah.

Think about it! For the one who has been washed by the blood of the Lamb and covered in Christ’s righteousness ... the restlessness and discontent of the human soul that began in the Garden of Eden is gone forever.



4. THE SHOCKING CONCLUSION: My heart surgery was an astounding success, and I now am able to not only enter God's rest but also with confidence I enter the holy places of God.

- (Hebrews 10:19–20 ESV) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.

How dramatically things have changed in my life. Before I was alienated from God with no hope and denied access to his rest. But now I enter the holy places of God with confidence.

A. I have heard the good news with faith.

B. I have obeyed and believed in Jesus Christ.

- (1 John 3:23a LSB) And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

C. The good news (*the gospel*) has been bearing fruit and changing my life from day one.

- (Colossians 1:6 NLT) This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

D. I have a new heart and a new spirit.

- (Ezekiel 36:26a LSB) Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.

BOOM!
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I FIND ME AND BELIEVE GOD!

POW!
IF GOD IS FOR ME WHO CAN BE AGAINST ME!

E. I am a new person in Christ.

- (2 Corinthians 5:17 LSB) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

F. My new heart is wholly true to the LORD.

- (Hebrews 10:22a ESV) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.
- (1 Kings 8:61 ESV) Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.
- Wholly ... [shalem] ... complete, safe, peaceful, perfect, whole, full, at peace; perfect; finished; safe, unharmed.

5. TOTAL VICTORY: Those who find themselves naked and wretched before God but as a result hear the good news with faith enter God's rest and enjoy total victory in the Jesus Christ.

- (Romans 7:24 ESV) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 ESV) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (1 John 5:4–5 LSB) For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the overcoming that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- (Romans 8:37 LSB) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

VICTORY IN JESUS



RECEIVING MERCY AND FINDING GRACE

—LIVING BEFORE THE THRONE OF GRACE—

**THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

(1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 LSB)

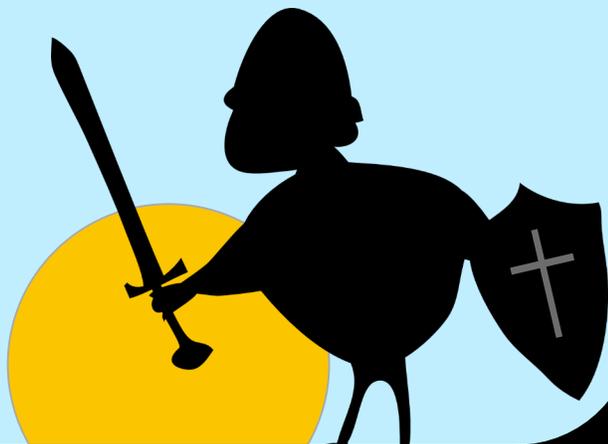


**AND HE HAS SAID TO ME, “MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR POWER IS PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS.”**

(2 CORINTHIANS 12:9A LSB)

**I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM
WHO STRENGTHENS ME.**

(PHILIPPIANS 4:13 LSB)



**WE HAVE ULTIMATE VICTORY IN JESUS ... HERE'S HOW
WE WIN OUR DAILY BATTLES**

REVIEW: The living, active, sharp word of God has pierced us to our innermost being and has exposed the wretched man or woman inside.

- (Hebrews 4:12–13 LSB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give.

Having been laid bare in the eyes of God we come to a place of decision. We either believe the good news of God (the gospel) as to our pitiful, naked position and enter his rest ... or we refuse to believe God, further harden our hearts toward God and remain in unbelief.

I. UNBELIEVERS: These people refuse to believe who God says they are—wretched in the sight of God as revealed by the word of God.

- A. The people in this group reject God's version as to who they are—that they are not good.
- (Mark 10:18 LSB) And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”
 - (Genesis 6:5 LSB) Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- B. Because they reject God's version they never come to realize that they are wretched and naked.
- (Revelation 3:17 LSB) Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.

II. BELIEVERS: These people believe God as to their wretched condition and hear God and believe his good news and enter his rest.

The war over sin and death has been won, but we still need the continuing ministry of the sharp, piercing word of God to live before the throne of grace to win the daily battles of life.

TRANSITION: The next three verses (Hebrews 4:14-16) provide a powerful transition for the path of victory for the wretched man (or woman) in group two who has believed and has entered the rest of God.

I. It is essential that we continue to submit to the piercing, uncovering ministry of the word of God throughout our time on earth.

- A. The Holy Spirit will use the word of God to pierce and cut through the lies we believe about ourselves to uncover and lay bare who we are in the eyes of God.
- B. Believing God, or not believing God, is not like flipping a switch.
- C. Believing what God says about our sinful state is crucial to believing in Christ for salvation and living in the victory Christ has won for us.
- D. The person who believes in Christ but does not fully accept what Scripture reveals about his sin and lostness will never have full assurance of salvation.

II. Continuing to submit to the piercing, uncovering ministry of the word is essential for winning our daily battles over sin.

- A. For success in our daily battles with sin we need the ministry of the word to keep our wretchedness front and center.
- B. Our victory in Christ is the basis for victory in our daily battles with sin.
- (1 Corinthians 15:57 LSB) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!
- C. We need to understand the blessing—how the word of God and the work of our great high priest, Jesus Son of God, bring us to the throne of grace.

THE BLESSED LIFE OF THE ONE ...

- 1) who humbles himself before God and his word,
 - 2) who joyfully anticipates the powerful work of the word of God yielding a harvest of righteousness
 - 3) and who (*even in the midst of the sorrowful training process*) fully rests in the work of our great high priest, Jesus Son of God, in the presence of God.
- (Hebrews 12:11 LSB) And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, but to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

III. Since we have a great high priest who entered the very presence of God on our behalf, we boldly and assuredly take hold of our confession, 4:14.

- (Hebrews 4:14 LSB) Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of our confession.
- A. Our great high priest passed through the heavens.
- B. This means he passed beyond all creation to the highest of high places into the presence of God.
- C. Our great high priest is the sacrifice upon which our holy, righteous standing before God is based.
- (Hebrews 10:11–12 LSB) And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.
- D. He represents us before God based on who he is and what he has done which is why we have such confidence to take hold of our confession.
- i. The necessary sacrifice: Jesus the Son of God gave his life for us.
 - ii. Our great high priest: Jesus the Son of God represents us before God.
 - iii. The right hand of God: Jesus the Son of God took his place of sovereign authority .
- E. So take hold of that—Jesus the Son of God is our confession ... “we preach Christ crucified” ...

Confession ... ὁμολογία [homologia] ... profession, confession; i.e. what one professes, confesses. The body of truth that a person professes and/or confesses to be what he believes; the doctrines (teachings, beliefs) that a person holds to be true, such as the gospel.

F. We hold fast to his gospel.

- (1 Corinthians 2:2 LSB) For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.
- (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 LSB) Now I make known to you, brothers, the gospel which I proclaimed as good news to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I proclaimed to you as good news, unless you believed for nothing.

- (Hebrews 3:1 LSB) Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus.
 - (Hebrews 3:6 LSB) But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope.
 - (Hebrews 3:14 LSB) For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.
 - (Hebrews 10:23 LSB) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.
- G. Holding fast maintains and grows our confidence in our confession—the gospel—we realize that there is neither nothing else nor nothing more needed.

My Faith Has Found A Resting Place

My faith has found a resting place, Not in device or creed, I trust the ever-living One, His wounds for me shall plead.

I need no other argument, I need no other plea, It is enough that Jesus died, And that He died for me.

Enough for me that Jesus saves, This ends my fear and doubt, A sinful soul I come to Him, He'll never cast me out. *(Lidie Hornsby Edmunds)*

- (1 Timothy 6:12 LSB) Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
- (2 Corinthians 9:13a LSB) Because of the proven character given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ.

IV. Our high priest perfectly and compassionately represents us in the presence of God as one who is well aware of the conflict with sin, 4:15.

- (Hebrews 4:15 LSB) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.
- (1 John 2:1 LSB) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

V. Therefore believing in the promised, continuing, effective work of God through the Spirit and the word we draw near with confidence to the throne of grace to find the help we need, 4:16.

- (Hebrews 4:16 LSB) **Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

A. There is one throne of God—one place of highest authority from which God sovereignly rules over all creation for all eternity.

- (Ephesians 1:20–21 LSB) Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and **seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named,** not only in this age but also in the one to come.

B. The throne of God is the throne of grace for those who believe the good news and enter his rest.

C. The same throne is a throne of judgment to the unsaved—those to whom God swears will not enter his rest because of a heart of unbelief.

D. The throne of God is never the throne of judgment for those who believe—who are in Christ Jesus.

- (Romans 8:1 LSB) **Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

E. The throne of grace—the throne of God—is the seat of God’s riches, power and authority.

F. We are to draw near to the throne of grace with the confident expectation that we will receive mercy.

G. It is important to note that as we approach the throne of grace we first receive mercy, then we find grace to help in time of need.

H. The sharp, piercing word of God faithfully humbles us and prepares us to receive mercy.

I. Upon receiving mercy we then find grace to help in our time of need.

J. Here is the grace we find at the throne of grace to help us in our time of need which is always.

- (John 1:16–17 LSB) **For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.** 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- (2 Corinthians 9:8 LSB) **And God is able to make every grace abound to you, so that in everything at every time having every sufficiency,** you may have an abundance for every good deed.
- (Ephesians 2:4–5 LSB) **But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.**
- (1 Peter 5:5b LSB) And all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**
- (2 Timothy 1:9 LSB) **Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.**
- (Romans 11:5–6 ESV) **So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.** 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; **otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**

K. God’s saving work in our lives has zero chance of failure—God will finish what he has begun.

- (Philippians 1:6 LSB) For I am confident of this very thing, **that He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus.
- (Philippians 2:13 LSB) **For it is God who is at work in you,** both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- (1 Thessalonians 5:24 LSB) **Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.**



REST IN JESUS OUR REST

... BECAUSE NO ONE UNDERSTANDS LIKE JESUS

**... NO ONE UNDERSTANDS US AND CARES FOR US LIKE JESUS WHO IS OUR
PERFECT HIGH PRIEST AND THE SOURCE OF OUR ETERNAL SALVATION ...**



PART ONE

THERE IS A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD (HEBREWS 4:9–16)

1. There is a rest for the people of God, 4:9.

- (Hebrews 4:9 LSB) So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

2. God rested from his works and the one who enters his rest believes God and stops working to justify himself before God, 4:10.

- (Hebrews 4:10 LSB) For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

3. Our rest is based on the works of God which he sent Jesus the Son to finish which he did with the final work being his death on the cross.

- (John 5:36 LSB) But the witness I have is greater than the witness of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness about Me, that the Father has sent Me.
- (John 14:10 LSB) Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.
- (John 19:28–30 LSB) After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been finished, in order to finish the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. 30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

4. The Father gave his approval of the finished works of the Son when he raised him from the dead.

- (Acts 13:30 LSB) But God raised Him from the dead.
- (Romans 1:4 LSB) Who was designated as the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 LSB) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also

received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

5. We are to be diligent to enter “that rest” where we actually rest or we will fall into the same type of disobedience as the ancient Israelites, 4:11.

- (Hebrews 4:11 LSB) Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall into the same example of disobedience.
- A. We are to be diligent to enter “that rest”—the one in which we cease from all works.
- B. The disobedience warned against is not fully trusting God and consequently not resting in the salvation that God alone can provide.
- C. Continuing to work for what God has promised to provide is not humble religion but sinful pride.
 - (Romans 4:4–5 LSB) Now to the one who works, his wage is not counted according to grace, but according to what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.
- D. Coming to Jesus we find rest for our souls—the good way that Jeremiah prophesied.
 - (Matthew 11:28–30 LSB) Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
 - (Jeremiah 6:16 LSB) Thus says Yahweh, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

6. The sharp, piercing word of God will identify which rest we are trusting in as the Spirit reveals the thoughts and intentions of our heart, 4:12.

- (Hebrews 4:12 LSB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, **and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

7. We should thank God for the ministry of his word as it exposes all our religious pretense and uncovers and lays us bare to the eyes of God, 4:13.

- (Hebrews 4:13 LSB) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, **but all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give.**

8. Once we are stripped down to our nothingness and realize that we have nothing except belief in Jesus Son of God upon which to stand, then we are ready to take hold of our confession, 4:14.

- (Hebrews 4:14 LSB) Therefore, since we

have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us take hold of our confession.**

9. We have a high priest who perfectly and powerfully sympathizes with us through this entire humbling, cleansing process, 4:15.

- (Hebrews 4:15 LSB) **For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses,** but One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.

10. Now we draw near to the throne of grace abounding and resting in the confident expectation of God's mercy and grace to help us in our time of need, 4:16.

- (Hebrews 4:16 LSB) **Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace,** so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

PART TWO

JESUS IS OUR REST—OUR SOURCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION (HEBREWS 5:1-10)

5:1 For ... This section provides further justification for believing God and resting in his provision of mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. We abound in hope when we grow in **our understanding of and our relationship to** Jesus Son of God—our high priest and the source of eternal salvation.

1. When we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ—the source of our eternal salvation—we abound in hope and faith and we rest in him.

- (2 Peter 3:18 LSB) **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
- (John 10:10 LSB) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**

2. Jesus Son of God fulfilled and exceeded the qualifications for priesthood and was appointed to be our high priest forever, 5:1-6.

- (Hebrews 5:1-6 LSB) **For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men** in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, 2 being able to deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3 and because of it, he is obligated, just as for the people, to also offer sacrifices for sins in the same way for himself. 4 And no one takes this honor to himself, **but receives it when he is called by God,** even as Aaron was. 5 In this way also Christ did not glorify Himself to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, **"YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"**; 6 just as He says also in another passage, **"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."**

A. The Son was taken from among men.

B. God specifically called the Son to be our high priest.

C. Christ exceeded the qualifications—he was sinless, he was called according to the order of Melchizedek.

D. The reference here to Melchizedek provides further proof of the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus in position and duration.

- (Genesis 14:18 LSB) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; **now he was a priest of God Most High.**
- (Psalm 110:4 LSB) Yahweh has sworn and will not change His mind, **“You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”**

- i. Jesus is superior to OT priests.
- ii. His priesthood is forever.

3. Jesus Son of God was perfected for the office of high priest through his suffering during the days of his flesh, 5:7-10.

• (Hebrews 5:7–10 LSB) He, **in the days of His flesh**, offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 **And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation**, 10 **being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.**

A. There is no question as to Jesus' deity in regard to either his perfection or his holiness.

B. *“In the days of his flesh”* tells us that he was perfected as high priest during his time on earth.

C. The Son completed his mission to fulfill the role of high priest by living a righteous life in his humanity which led to his death on a cross.

D. Even as God's Son Jesus was not exempt from the necessary path of obedience set before him.

- (Philippians 2:5–8 LSB) Have this way of thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 **who, although existing in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, **by being made in the likeness of men**. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death**, even death on a cross.

E. It was necessary that Jesus learn to feel the complete range of human experience and emotion as a man living on this earth.

F. This process took place over “the days of his flesh” and was not just the climactic battles in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.

G. Jesus was heard because of his reverence.

H. Our God provides us with very powerful, compelling reasons as to why we should totally rest in him and believe that he is more than able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

- (Hebrews 4:15 LSB) **For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.**
- (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God**, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

I. Upon completion of his righteous life of obedience which led to his death on a cross Jesus had fulfilled his mission to be high priest and the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

J. Jesus Son of God was designated by God in eternity past as our high priest and this was realized “in the days of his flesh.”

- (Ephesians 1:3–7 LSB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, 5 **by predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will**, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace

K. No one understands like Jesus.



THE HIDDEN PERILS OF SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

MILK DRINKERS BEWARE

READ THE WARNING LABEL

**HAPPY COW
MILK COMPANY**



WARNING: A milk only diet will cause dullness of hearing, dimwittedness, lost sense of direction, inability to eat solid, healthy food, memory loss, inability to discern good from evil.



DRINK MORE MILK



WARNING: A milk only diet will cause dullness of hearing, dimwittedness, lost sense of direction, inability to eat solid, healthy food, memory loss, inability to discern good from evil.



What/who is a milk drinker? Milk drinkers are the spiritually immature identified by the writer of Hebrews as infants in the faith who live on milk and who have come to need milk because they cannot eat solid food.

- (Hebrews 5:13 LSB) For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

1. Hidden Peril #1: Milk drinkers become severely limited in their ability to comprehend information that is vital to their spiritual growth, 5:11a.

Peril: A serious and immediate danger; a state of danger involving risk; exposure to danger; threats.

Hidden: Being or kept out of sight or not readily apparent; concealed, secret, disguised, covert.

- (Hebrews 5:11 LSB) **Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.**
- A. Milk drinkers are incapable of comprehending this instrumental teaching concerning the high priestly position and work of Jesus Son of God.
- B. They **had become** dull of hearing.
- C. They apparently had not heeded the previous warning to pay much closer attention to what they had heard.
- (Hebrews 2:1, 3a LSB) **For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,** lest we drift away.

2. Hidden Peril #2: By not giving due respect and attention to what God has said milk drinkers become dull of hearing, 5:11b.

- (Hebrews 5:11 LSB) Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, **since you have become dull of hearing.**
- A. They are rebuked for their sinful behavior, not mere ignorance, because they had become dull of hearing and could not meaningfully hear this teaching on the high priesthood of Christ.
- B. Dull of hearing is a sinful state of ignorance occurring when a person drifts away from solid doctrine because of their sluggish approach to hearing God's word with the intent of obedience and transformation.

- (2 Timothy 4:3–4 LSB) **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled,** they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 **and will turn away their ears from the truth** and will turn aside to myths.

C. The person becomes dull of hearing as they enter this sinful state from a previous state of proper attention to hearing what he had heard.

- i. **Become ...*** to become as a condition; to enter or assume a certain state or condition.
- ii. **Dull ...*** sluggish; slow to learn, understand, or react; lacking intellectual acuity; slothful, lazy.
- iii. **Hearing ...*** the ability to hear with understanding (and to act accordingly).

3. Hidden Peril #3: Milk drinkers become dependent on milk for spiritual nourishment because they cannot digest solid food, 5:12.

- (Hebrews 5:12 LSB) **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you** the elementary principles of the oracles of God, **and you have come to need milk and not solid food.**
- A. At this point in their lives they should be able to teach the A, B, C's of basic Christian doctrine but instead they need to be retaught these things.
- B. There is a difference between being able to teach these things and being a teacher of God's word.
- i.* A mature believer should be able to teach the basic doctrines of the faith in an unofficial manner in the context of everyday life and the church.
 - ii.* An immature believer who needs to be retaught becomes useless and unfruitful in what they have previously learned and know.

- (2 Peter 1:8–9 LSB) **For if these things are yours and are increasing**, they render you neither **useless nor unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. **9 For in whom these things are not present**, that one is **blind**, being **nearsighted**, having **forgotten** the purification from his former sins.

iii. Some people confidently teach the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

- (1 Timothy 1:7 LSB) **Wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions**.

iv. Being a teacher of the word of God is not something to be taken on apart from the calling and gifting of God.

- (James 3:1 LSB) **Do not, many of you, become teachers**, my brothers, **knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment**.
- (Ephesians 4:11–12 LSB) **And He Himself gave some** as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, **and some as pastors and teachers**, **12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ**.

C. Those who need to be retaught the spiritual A, B, C's have developed a serious digestive problem forcing them to a dependence on milk alone for nourishment.

D. Milk drinkers are spiritual infants and need to be treated as such.

4. **Hidden Peril #4:** Spiritually immature milk drinkers are no longer unaccustomed to the teaching of righteousness, 5:13.

- (Hebrews 5:13 LSB) \ For everyone who partakes only of milk **is not accustomed to the word of righteousness**, for he is an infant.
- A. You could not find a more profound example of “use it or lose it” than the older Christian who has become spiritually immature and has lost his experience and skill in the word of righteousness.
- (Luke 8:18 LSB) **So beware how you listen**, for **whoever has**, to him more shall be given; and **whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him**.

B. **The logic:** A person is no longer accustomed to what he no longer uses—i.e. he is not experiencing the word of God if he is not living by the word of God. (Cf. Deuteronomy 8:3.)

C. The spiritual infant who lives on milk is unskilled in the ability to know what is right—an ability that comes with a mature faith in Christ.

5. **Hidden Peril #5:** Milk drinkers often rule the day in a church fellowship—setting the standard and making more milk drinkers.

A. The spiritually immature set the standard in many/most churches and unfortunately those coming into leadership follow their example.

- (Matthew 23:15 LSB) **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites**, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; **and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves**.

B. Often the spiritual standards in the church body are set by older Christians who are spiritually immature and no longer experience true righteousness—thus they do not know true righteousness.

C. These older Christians present themselves as mature and appear to be mature but are in fact spiritual infants who rationalize and cultivate the sinful behavior we so often find in the church.

D. Some examples in the local church that the standard of spiritual maturity has been skewed is the justification for things such as outbursts of anger and other deeds of our sinful nature.

- (2 Corinthians 12:20 LSB) For I am afraid **that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish**; that perhaps there will be **strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances**.

- (Galatians 5:19–20 LSB) **Now the deeds of the flesh are evident**, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, **strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions**.

E. One noteworthy reason that jealousy, strife and anger exist in our churches is that the men in leadership are spiritual infants and lead as mere men.

- (1 Corinthians 3:1–3 LSB) And I, brothers, **was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men, as to infants in Christ.** **2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it.** **Indeed, even now you are still not able,** **3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?**

6. Hidden Peril #6: Milk drinkers cannot digest solid food—i.e. sound doctrine, 5:14a.

- (Hebrews 5:14 LSB) **But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.**
- A. The spiritually immature have not been trained by practicing (doing) the word of righteousness and so are neither skilled nor experienced in discerning good from evil.
- Good ...** καλός [kalos] speaking of what is morally good; beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, praiseworthy; noble.
 - Evil ...** κακός [kakos] ... morally bad or wrong; of a bad nature; base, wicked.
 - Milk drinkers** practice righteousness to be noticed by people and so consequently they cannot discern good from evil and have no reward in the eyes of our Father in heaven.
 - (Matthew 6:1 LSB) **Beware of doing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.**
 - (1 John 3:10a ESV) By this it is evident **who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God.**
- B. The spiritually mature intentionally discipline and train themselves to practice righteousness to develop their skill in discerning good from evil.
- (1 John 2:29 LSB) If you know that He is righteous, **you know that everyone also who does righteousness has been born of Him.**
 - (1 John 3:7 LSB) Little children, let no one deceive you. **The one who does**

righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

- (1 Timothy 4:6–7 LSB) In pointing out these things to the brothers, **you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.** **7 But refuse godless myths fit only for old women. On the other hand, train yourself for the purpose of godliness.**

- C. Milk drinkers often assume (or are placed in) places of leadership **based on** their experience in the church **but not on** experience and skill in true righteousness.

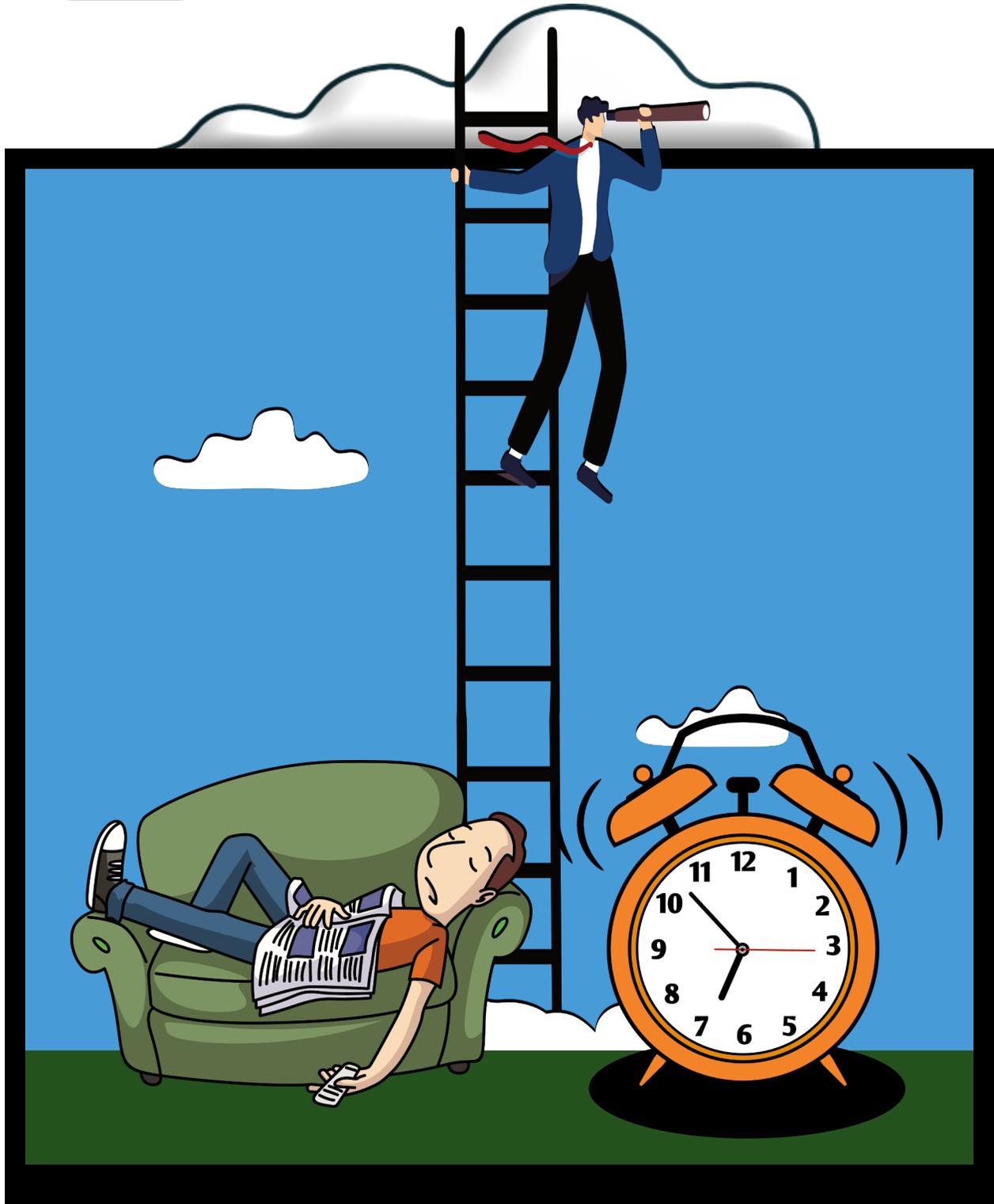
7. Hidden Peril #7: Milk drinkers have become incapable of discerning good from evil, 5:14b.

- (Hebrews 5:14 ESV) **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**
- A. Mature believers are able to discern good from evil because they hone (*smooth and sharpen*) their powers of discernment by constantly practicing/doing the truth.
- (John 3:21 ESV) **But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.**
- B. Immature believers are not able to discern good from evil because they cannot digest solid food.
- C. Unfortunately this does not stop the spiritually immature from insisting on their standards of right and wrong, good and evil.
- D. Not being able to discern good from evil does not stop the spiritually immature from having and vehemently holding to their own standard of good and evil—righteousness.
- (Philippians 3:9 LSB) **And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which is from God upon faith.**



MOVING ON TO BETTER THINGS ...

—MAYBE IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP, STOP PLAYING AND LET THE LORD MOVE US ON TO THE BETTER THINGS THAT BELONG TO SALVATION—



! 1. It is time to press on to maturity, 6:1-2.

- (Hebrews 6:1–2 LSB) Therefore **leaving** the elementary teaching about the Christ, **let us press on** to maturity, **not laying again a foundation** of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of teaching about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

The phrase, "Let us go on," should be translated, "**Let us be carried forward.**" It is God who enables us to progress as we yield to Him, receive His Word, and act on it. [Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 295). Victor Books.]

"Press on" ... φέρω [phero] ... means to be borne along; to move along while one is being sustained, supported, propelled, or driven; of a gust of wind. **The NIV captures this concept.**

- (Hebrews 6:1 **NIV**) Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ **and be taken forward to maturity.**

A. The spiritual person presses on by presenting his life to God to be carried on to maturity and godliness through obedience and transformation.

- (Romans 12:1–2a LSB) Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God**, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

B. Leaving and pressing on are simultaneous—it is in effect the same decisive action.

- i. He abandons his dull, sluggish approach to the elementary teachings about Christ.
- ii. He pays much closer attention to the Scriptures regarding the gospel.
- iii. He moves on to maturity understanding the life and death implications of those teachings.

C. The person who presses on does not play with the building blocks of the elementary teachings—"laying again" the foundation.

D. He builds on the foundation and finds clarity regarding the "so great" salvation of God of which we are to not neglect (cf. 2:3).

Clarity ... clearness or lucidity as to perception or understanding; freedom from indistinctness or ambiguity; the state of having a full, detailed, and orderly mental grasp of something.

- i. He finds clarity in regard to the significance and meaning of the foundation.
- ii. He finds clarity in regard to the supremacy and centrality of Christ as our foundation.

E. We are to build carefully on the true foundation.

- (1 Corinthians 3:10–11 LSB) According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. **But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

F. The person who has become dull of hearing is like a child who merely plays on the foundation.

- i. He undermines his understanding of and confidence in the foundation—Jesus Christ.

Undermine ... erode the base or foundation of; to subvert or weaken insidiously or secretly; to ruin by degrees; to wash away supporting material from under.

- ii. His understanding of the elementary teachings has been so eroded that he needs to be taught these basic principles again.

- (Hebrews 5:12a ESV) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, **you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.**

G. The person who does not build regresses and is left to rely only on what he thinks he has and that also will eventually be taken from him.

- (Luke 8:18 LSB) **So beware how you listen, for whoever has**, to him more shall be given; and **whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.**

H. He does not practice the word of righteousness and so foolishly builds his spiritual house without giving proper attention to the foundation.

- (Hebrews 5:14 LSB) But solid food is for the mature, **who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.**
- (Matthew 7:24–27 LSB) **Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them**, may be compared to **a wise man who built his house on the rock.** 25 And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew and fell against that house; **and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.** 26 **And everyone hearing these words of Mine and not doing them**, may be compared to a foolish man **who built his house on the sand.** 27 And the rain descended, and

the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; **and it fell—and great was its fall.**

2. We press on to maturity by the will of God, 6:3.

- (Hebrews 6:3 LSB) And this we will do, **if God permits.**

The author and the readers will press on into the full comprehension and experience of the whole range of Christian doctrine. **But this will occur only if God is permitting. That is, any arrival at maturity by readers or author depends in the last analysis upon the sovereign enabling of God.** [Hagner, D. A. (2011). *Hebrews* (p. 88). Baker Books.]

- A. Pressing on by the will of God (“if God permits”) agrees with the use of the Greek as discussed earlier—**φέρω [phero] which means to be borne along; to move along while one is being sustained.**
- B. We obey and press on to maturity as God does his good work in our lives and we do his good pleasure.
- (Philippians 1:6 LSB) **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus.
 - (Philippians 2:12–13 LSB) So then, my beloved, **just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

3. Some will not be moved along by God to maturity but will fall away, 6:4-8.

- (Hebrews 6:4–8 ESV) For it is **impossible**, in the case of those who have once been **enlightened**, who have **tasted** the heavenly gift, and have **shared** in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have **tasted** the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 **and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance**, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

I used the ESV here to show the word order in the Greek text. **Impossible** precedes the participles that describe the people in this group who fall away.

6:6 ... fallen away ... παραπίπτω [parapipto] ... to fall beside a person or thing; to slip aside; to deviate

from the right path, turn aside; to fall away (from the true faith); to leave a certain state or condition.

A. This is speaking of a particular group of people who fall away and do not receive God’s blessing.

B. They had already been warned to not be like their ancestors—the ancient Israelites who fell away after the exodus from Egypt.

- (Hebrews 3:7–12 ESV) Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, **“Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,** on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, **‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’** 11 As I swore in my wrath, **‘They shall not enter my rest.’** 12 **Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.**

C. Falling away does not mean losing their salvation as many other Scriptures clearly teach that a person cannot lose his salvation.

- (John 10:27–29 LSB) My sheep hear My voice, **and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.** 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; **and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.**
- (John 6:38–39 LSB) For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 **Now this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.**

D. None of the phrases identifying this group definitively address the status of their salvation.

E. Good ground drinks the rain, yields useful fruit and receives God’s blessing.

- (Hebrews 6:7 LSB) **For ground that drinks the rain** which often falls on it and **brings forth vegetation** useful to those for whose sake it is also **tilled, receives a blessing from God.**
- (Isaiah 55:10–11 LSB) **For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,** And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And giving seed to the sower

and bread to the eater, 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what pleases Me, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

F. Bad ground yields thorns and thistles because it is unfit (as in unapproved and not standing the test) and receives God's judgment.

- (Hebrews 6:8 LSB) But if it yields thorns and thistles, it is unfit and close to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.
- (Matthew 13:20–22 LSB) And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

G. It is impossible to restore them because their view of a lesser Christ than the Christ of Scripture holds him up to contempt by rejecting his sacrifice.

- (Hebrews 6:6 LSB) And having fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

H. It is impossible for the person who falls away to change his mind about who Christ is and the salvation work he has accomplished.

I. They never come to grasp “on Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

J. They never come to understand the depth, finality and completeness of Christ's finished work on the cross.

- (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 LSB) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

K. They do not obey Christ and enter by the narrow gate but instead choose the wide gate to destruction.

- (Matthew 7:13 LSB) Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.
- (Matthew 7:21 LSB) Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

 4. Through diligence we avoid becoming dull and realize the full assurance of the hope of the better things that belong to salvation, 6:9-12.

- (Hebrews 6:9–12 LSB) But we are convinced about you, beloved, of things that are better and that belong to salvation, though we are speaking in this way. 10 For God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and continuing to minister to the saints. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not become dull, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

A. The writer/pastor of Hebrews is convinced of better things for most of them.

B. But he warns—“*speaking in this way*”—because of his concern for the salvation of some in the church.

C. God is righteous and fair in his evaluation of our lives and will not forget our work and love in ministering to the saints of God.

- (Galatians 6:10 LSB) So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

D. It is by faithful diligence that we realize the full assurance of hope until the end of our lives.

E. So do not become dull but become imitators of those who faithfully endure in the promises.

- (Ephesians 5:1–2 LSB) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

WE HAVE AN ANCHOR

THE ENDURING HOPE AND BLESSING OF THE DILIGENT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ...





1. The diligent followers of Jesus Son of God are filled with hope, 6:11-12.

- (Hebrews 6:11–12 LSB) And we desire that each one of you show **the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end**, 12, **so that you may not become dull**, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- A. The spiritually diligent realize the full assurance of hope as they endure to the end.
- B. The spiritually diligent have an ever-increasing ability to hear God in contrast to the diminishing ability of the spiritually dull.
- (Hebrews 5:11 LSB) Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, **since you have become dull of hearing**.
 - (Luke 8:18 NLT) **So pay attention to how you hear**. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. **But for those who are not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken away from them**.
- C. The spiritually diligent increase in their skill in understanding truth and righteousness, good and evil, while the spiritually dull regress in these things.
- (Hebrews 5:13 ESV) For everyone who lives on milk is **unskilled in the word of righteousness**, since he is a child.
 - (Hebrews 5:14 LSB) But solid food is for the mature, **who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil**.



2. The work and love in ministry of the diligent followers of Jesus affirm their hope, 6:9-10.

- (Hebrews 6:9–10 LSB) But we are convinced about you, beloved, **of things that are better and that belong to salvation**, though we are speaking in this way. 10 **For God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and continuing to minister to the saints**.

- A. Their work and love qualify their ministry as being of the better things that belong to salvation
- B. They are exhorted to maintain this **same diligence**.
- C. Specifically this means they are to maintain their earnestness in serving the saints and honoring the name of God.

D. Honorable ministry in the name of God builds the character of God into our lives which increases our assurance and strengthens our endurance.



3. The diligent followers of Jesus draw near to God through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

- (Hebrews 7:19 NLT) For the law never made anything perfect. But now we have confidence in a better hope, **through which we draw near to God**.

A. Being spiritually diligent is drawing near to God.

- i. We confidently receive mercy and find grace.
- (Hebrews 4:16 LSB) Therefore let us **draw near** with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- ii. We are affirmed in Christ's intercessory work that he is able to save us forever.
- (Hebrews 7:25 LSB) Therefore He is able also to save forever **those who draw near to God through Him**, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- iii. We receive cleansing from our evil consciences.
- (Hebrews 10:21–22 NLT) And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, 22 **let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean**, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

B. The spiritually diligent realize the full assurance of hope **because they believe the God of hope**.

- (Romans 15:13 LSB) **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- (Hebrews 4:2 LSB) For indeed we have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they also; **but the word that was heard did not profit those who were not united with faith among those who heard**.

i. We are rewarded for believing God.

- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for **he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him**.

ii. We are cleansed and purified from our double-

mindedness.

- (James 4:8 LSB) **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

C. Some draw near but some fall away—the dividing line is our diligence in following Jesus Son of God.

In stark contrast to the spiritually diligent the spiritually dull neither hear God nor believe him and as a consequence they fall away.

- (Hebrews 3:12 LSB) See to it brothers, that there not be in any one of you **an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**
- (Hebrews 6:5–6a, 8 LSB) And having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 **and having fallen away.**
- (Matthew 24:11–13 LSB) Many false prophets will arise and will deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness is multiplied, **most people's love will grow cold.** 13 **But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.**

D. The spiritually diligent experience the blessings of living in faith and patience as those who expect to inherit the promises of God.

- (Hebrews 6:12 LSB) So that you may not become dull, **but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**



4. God makes his promises to us in such a way to give us strong encouragement to take hold of his promises, 6:13-18.

- (Hebrews 6:13–18 LSB) For when God made the **promise** to Abraham, since He could **swear** by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “I WILL GREATLY BLESS YOU AND I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY YOU.” 15 **And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.** 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 **In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose,** guaranteed it with an oath, 18 **so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set**

before us.

A. God greatly desires to show us—the heirs of the promise—the unchangeableness of his purpose.

- (Romans 8:28 LSB) **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.**

B. It is very important that we give our attention to the example of Abraham who patiently waited and obtained the promise.

C. He shows us the unchangeableness of his purpose so that we will take refuge in his promise.

D. Taking refuge in God we find strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

E. Taking hold of the hope set before us we find tremendous strength and nourishment to endure.

- (Psalm 34:8 LSB) **O taste and see that Yahweh is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!**



5. We have this hope of the sure and confirmed promises of God for all eternity as an anchor for the soul, 6:19-20.

- (Hebrews 6:19–20 LSB) **This hope we have as an anchor of the soul,** a hope both sure and confirmed **and one which enters within the veil,** 20 where a forerunner has entered for us—Jesus, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

A. Our hope is our anchor.

B. Our souls are anchored now in this hope.

C. This hope is sure and confirmed by our great high priest Jesus Son of God who enters within the heavenly holy of holies for us.

D. Drawing near to God in his most holy place is one of the most amazing privileges we have as believers in Jesus Son of God.

E. Drawing near to God is impossible apart from the work of our high priest Jesus Son of God.

- (1 Samuel 6:19 LSB) Then He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh **because they had looked into the ark of Yahweh.** He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because Yahweh had struck the people with a great slaughter.

We are refugees from the sinking ship of this present world-order, so soon to disappear; our hope is fixed on the eternal order, where the promises of God are made good to his people in perpetuity. Our hope, based upon his promises, is our spiritual anchor. The figure of the



anchor is not pressed; all that is meant is that “we are moored to an immovable object”—and that immovable object is the throne of God himself, established in the heavenly holy of holies. [Bruce, F. F. (1990). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rev. ed., pp. 154–155). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

**NOW THE MAIN POINT
IS THIS ...**

**WE HAVE SUCH A
HIGH PRIEST**



High priest forever, Priest/King, no earthly genealogy, perfection comes through, indestructible life, order of Melchizedek, priest by sworn oath of God, guarantee of better covenant, permanent priesthood, able to save forever, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens, sacrifice/offering for sins, once-for-all sacrifice for sins, Son appointed by oath of the Father, made perfect forever, sat down at right hand of Majesty, minister in the holy places, more excellent ministry, mediator of a better covenant based on better promises.

1. Jesus Son of God became our high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, 6:19-20.

- (Hebrews 6:19–20 LSB) This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and confirmed and one which enters within the veil, 20 where a forerunner has entered for us—**Jesus, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? JESUS, HAVING BECOME A HIGH PRIEST FOREVER?

When the Bible uses terms such as “*having become, might become, learned obedience and having been made perfect*” when speaking of Jesus, it is always in relation to his humanity.

Saying that Jesus “might become” or be “made perfect” is never putting into question his full, eternal nature as God himself.

- (Philippians 2:5b–7 LSB) **Christ Jesus, 6 who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7** but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, **by being made in the likeness of men.**

The Son of God had to become a human so he could fulfill the mission that was planned according to the divine council of our triune God through his infinite wisdom in eternity past to save those whom he called.

- (Ephesians 1:4 LSB) **Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,** that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love.
- (Romans 8:30 LSB) **And those whom He predestined,** He also **called;** and those whom He called, He also **justified;** and those whom He justified, He also **glorified.**

JESUS BECAME OUR HIGH PRIEST FOREVER ... 1) through his *life experience* on earth, **2)** by the *sworn oath* of the Father and **3)** by serving as a *faithful Son* over the Father’s house.

Life Experience ...

- A. The Son of God had to be born on this earth as the infant Jesus to be one of us and live a righteous life.
- (Hebrews 2:17–18 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God,** to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, **He is able to come to help those who are tempted.**

- B. Our High Priest had to fully human to become our wrath taker—to make propitiation for our sins.
- C. He had to experience life on earth as a human to become a merciful and faithful High Priest.
- D. He had to experience temptation to be able to help those who are tempted.

Faithful Son ...

- E. It was necessary that our High Priest be faithful to God who appointed him as High Priest.
- (Hebrews 3:1–3 LSB) Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus, 2 **who was faithful to Him who appointed Him,** as Moses also was in all His house. 3 For **He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses,** in so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.
- F. Christ fulfilled his mission by being faithful as a Son over God’s house.
- (Hebrews 3:5–6 LSB) Now **MOSES WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE AS A SERVANT,** for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later, 6 **but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house**—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope.
- G. Jesus the Son of God completed the authentication of his priestly office when he passed through the heavens.
- H. He entered into the highest place of authority and holiness and represents us before God and yet also sympathizes with our weaknesses..
- (Hebrews 4:14–15 LSB) Therefore, since we have a great high priest **who has passed through the heavens,** Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but One who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.**

Oath of the Father ...

- I. Our High Priest did not take this honor to himself.
- (Hebrews 5:4–6 LSB) And no one takes this honor to himself, **but receives it when he is called by God,** even as Aaron was. 5 In this way also **Christ did not glorify Himself to become a high priest,** but **He who said** to Him, “YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”; 6 **just**

as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

- (Hebrews 7:20–21 LSB) And inasmuch as it was not without an oath 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, **but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER.'"**)

J. Our High Priest submitted to suffering to learn obedience to become complete and fulfill the necessary requirements for the office of high priest although he was the Son of God.

- (Hebrews 5:8–10 LSB) Although He was a Son, He **learned obedience** from the things which He suffered. 9 And **having been made perfect**, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 **being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek**.
- (Philippians 2:8 LSB) Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death**, even death on a cross.

2. To understand what it means that Jesus is our high priest according to the order of Melchizedek we need to answer at least two questions, 6:20-7:3.

- (Hebrews 6:20–7:3 LSB) **Where a forerunner has entered for us**—Jesus, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. 1 For this **MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, who met ABRAHAM AS HE WAS RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS and BLESSED HIM**, 2 **TO WHOM ALSO ABRAHAM APPORTIONED A TENTH PART OF ALL**, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of **righteousness**, and then also king of Salem, which is king of **peace**. 3 **Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life**, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest continually.

The two questions are ...
Who is he? Why is he mentioned here?

QUESTION 1: WHO IS MELCHIZEDEK?

A. Melchizedek is mentioned in three places in Scripture—in Genesis, Psalms and Hebrews.

- i. In Genesis Melchizedek is a historical figure—probably the king of a city state.

ii. He blessed Abraham after Abraham defeated the kings who had taken Lot captive. (See the summary of the account above in Hebrews 7:1.)

- (Genesis 14:17–18 LSB) Then after he came back from striking down Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 **And Melchizedek king of Salem** brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. (Cf. Hebrews 7:1.)

iii. The priestly order of Melchizedek is spoken of in Psalm 110 in reference to the Lord.

- (Psalm 110:4 LSB) Yahweh has sworn and will not change His mind, "**You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**" (Quoted in Hebrews 5:6.)

iv. The Son of God is proclaimed to be a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

- (Hebrews 5:9–10 LSB) **And having been made perfect**, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 **being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek**.

QUESTION 2: WHY IS HE MENTIONED HERE?

(What is his relevance to the priesthood of Jesus?)

- B. He is a connection with the Old Testament to help us understand and contrast the old covenant and the old priesthood **based on the law** with the new covenant and the new priesthood based on Jesus Son of God—who is **filled with grace and truth**.
- C. He is a reference point for the people in this fellowship who were predominantly Jews with ties to the Law and the Old Covenant.

HERE IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE HELPFUL REFERENCE POINTS ...

- i. The priesthood of Jesus was not the same priesthood as that in the Old Testament.
- ii. Many or most of the people in this church fellowship in Hebrews were Jews.
- iii. They needed to see the contrast between the high priesthood of Jesus Son of God and the priesthood of the law.
- iv. Some of them were in danger of falling back into trusting in the old covenant which was inferior to the new covenant which the Son represented.

v. Broader application: We need to be aware of the ongoing temptation to fall back into what is familiar instead striving for what is true.

D. Melchizedek provides a reference point for those who struggle with letting go of the old ways and are in danger of trusting in a lesser Savior and a lesser covenant with God.

- i. From the beginning the writer of Hebrews has emphasized the necessity of holding fast to the superiority and eternity of the Son.
- ii. Only believing in Jesus the Son of God as fully revealed in Scripture guards our hearts and minds from falling into a state of unbelief.

3. We have this hope as an anchor of the soul that our High Priest Jesus Son of God “checks all the boxes” and will save us to the uttermost—completely and forever.

A. As our high priest he assures and confirms our hope within the most holy place.

B. Jesus has entered the most holy place on our behalf to represent us before God as our high priest forever.

C. The big issues before the throne of God are righteousness and peace.

- (Romans 4:3 LSB) For what does the Scripture say? **“ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS COUNTED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**
- (Romans 4:5 LSB) But to the one who does not work, **but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.**
- (Romans 4:23-24, 5:1 LSB) Now not for his sake only was it written **THAT IT WAS COUNTED TO HIM**, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be counted, as those who believe upon Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead ...1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- i. Jesus is—as seen from the example of Melchizedek—the King of righteousness and the King of peace.
- ii. Jesus paid the price for our sins to settle the issue of righteousness.
- iii. Through his death on the cross we have been

made righteous and have the righteousness of God put to our account.

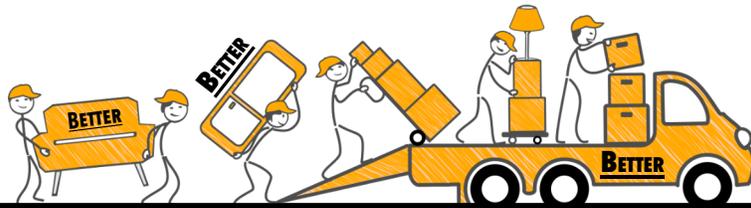
- (Romans 3:22–23 LSB) Even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- (2 Corinthians 5:21 LSB) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**
- (Philippians 3:9 LSB) **And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith.**

D. Jesus will forever present us before God in the holy of holies as righteous based on his righteous life and his death on the cross.

E. We now have peace with God forever because we are justified through faith in Christ.

F. We have peace with God forever because Jesus Son of God represents us as our high priest before the throne of God forever.

G. He was the sacrifice and he will represent us in our righteous standing before the throne of God based on the sacrifice.



MOVING ON UP TO PERFECTION IN JESUS

✓ **BETTER HOPE**

✓ **BETTER EVERYTHING**

✓ **BETTER COVENANT**



***PERFECTION ... COMPLETION, ACCOMPLISHMENT, JOB WELL DONE**

WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, PART 2

1. Jesus Son of God is Superior and Different: Our high priest is priest neither by the commandment of the law nor by the genealogy of the Aaronic priesthood, 7:4-10.

- (Hebrews 7:4–10 LSB) **Now observe how great this man was TO WHOM ABRAHAM, the patriarch, GAVE A TENTH of the spoils.** 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi, who receive the priest's office, have a commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brothers, although these are descended from Abraham. 6 **But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them had collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.** 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. 8 And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

- A. Melchizedek was a great man—a historical figure in Abraham's time.
- B. He blessed Abraham as he was on his way back after defeating the kings who had taken Lot captive.
- C. Abraham received the blessing and gave Melchizedek a tithe of the plunder.
- D. This demonstrates the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham the patriarch of the Jews.
- E. And it further demonstrates the distinction between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek.
- F. Melchizedek as a type of Christ this gives further, scriptural proof to those in this Hebrew fellowship of Christ's superiority to Abraham and Levi.

2. God never intended the ministry of the Levitical priesthood to prepare and present the people of God as holy in the presence of God, 7:11-17.

- (Hebrews 7:11–17 LSB) **Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood** (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), **what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of**

Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? 12 **For when the priesthood is changed,** of necessity there takes place a change of law also. 13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become such **not according to a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.** 17 For it is witnessed about Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

- (Hebrews 10:1 LSB) **For the Law,** since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, **can never,** by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, **make perfect those who draw near.**

Perfection ... The Greek word {τελειωσις} means a completing, a perfecting; fulfillment, accomplishment. It is the act of making something complete and without defect or blemish.

- A. The idea of perfection is that God will one day present his chosen ones before himself in holiness.
- B. The work of perfection—completing the task of holiness in the people of God—required a change in priesthood and a change in the law.
- C. The change was away from the Levitical priesthood that was dictated by the law to the superior priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.
- D. God's completing work of perfection has always been God's ultimate goal—it was **never** God's plan for perfection to come through the ministry of the law and the Levitical priesthood.

- (Romans 8:3a LSB) **For what the Law could not do,** weak as it was through the flesh, **God did:** sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin.

- E. The Son was called to do exactly what the law and the Levitical priesthood could never do—present his people as holy in the presence of Majesty on high.

- (Hebrews 12:22–24a NLT) No, **you have come to** Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. 23 **You have come to** the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. **You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.** 24 **You have come to Jesus,** the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people.
- (Ephesians 5:25–27 LSB) ... **just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,** 26 **so that He might sanctify her,** having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory,** having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, **but that she would be holy and blameless.**

F. The work of perfection required a priest with the power of an indestructible life—a life which was beyond the bounds of the legal requirements and bodily descent of the OT Levitical order.

G. The Son became our perfect high priest so that he could bring us to perfection.

- (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest** in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- (Hebrews 2:10 LSB) **For it was fitting for Him,** for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, **to perfect the author of their salvation** through sufferings.
- (Hebrews 5:9–10 LSB) **And having been made perfect,** He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

3. God swore the Son into the office as priest forever to guarantee the better covenant that would bring us to perfection, 7:18-22.

- (Hebrews 7:18–22 LSB) **For, on the one hand,** there is a setting aside of a former commandment **because of its weakness and**

uselessness 19 **(for the Law made nothing perfect),** and on the other hand there is a bringing in of **a better hope, through which we draw near to God.** 20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER’”); 22 so much more **Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant.**

A. The ministry of the Levitical priesthood was set aside because of its weakness and uselessness in bringing God’s people to perfection.

- The Law never made anything perfect.
- The ministry of the former commandment cannot do what it was never intended to do.
- Works of the law will never bring about God’s perfect result in his people.

- (Romans 3:20 ESV) **For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight,** since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
- (Romans 3:28 LSB) For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**
- (Galatians 2:16 LSB) Nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ,** even we have believed in Christ Jesus, **so that we may be justified** by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.
- (Galatians 3:10 ESV) **For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse;** for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

B. Jesus brings in a better hope and has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

C. The bringing in of a better hope set aside the former commandment—the placeholder, pointer.

- (Hebrews 6:17 LSB) In the same way God, **desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed it with an oath.**

D. The law—including the instruction for the Levitical priesthood—was good but was never intended to

perfect us through salvation and thus bring us into the holiness and glory of God.

- (Romans 7:12 LSB) So, **the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**

4. The former priests came and went but Jesus continues forever, 7:23-28.

- (Hebrews 7:23–25 LSB) And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers **because they were prevented by death from continuing,** 24 **but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.** 25 **Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

A. The former priests of the Levitical priesthood stopped serving because they died (or reached the age of 50).

B. In contrast Jesus continues forever.

C. **Save forever** is better translated **save completely.**

D. Jesus is able to save completely those who (*continue to*) draw near to God through him.

E. He always lives to make intercession for us.

"I have prayed for you," he said to Simon Peter at the Last Supper, "that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). If it be asked what form his heavenly intercession takes, what better answer can be given than that he still does for his people at the right hand of God what he did for Peter on earth?

It is important to emphasize this, for the character of our Lord's intercession has at times been grotesquely misrepresented in popular Christian thought. **He is not to be thought of as** "an orante [*one who is praying or pleading*], standing ever before the Father with outstretched arms, like the figures in the mosaics of the catacombs, and with strong crying and tears pleading our cause in the presence of a reluctant God; **but as a throned Priest-King, asking what he will from a Father who always hears and grants his request.**" [H.B. Swete] [Bruce, F. F. (1990). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rev. ed., pp. 174-175). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

5. Jesus Son of God is the main point—he is the only one who fits our need for such a high priest.

- (Hebrews 7:26–8:2 LSB) **For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest,** holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and **exalted above the heavens;** 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever. 1 **Now the main point in what is being said is this: we have such a high priest,** who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

A. Jesus as our high priest was fitting for us—Jesus is God's perfect plan to save us forever.

B. He has the perfect character and standing.

i. He is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.

ii. He is exalted above the heavens.

- (Ephesians 1:20–21 LSB) Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,** and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

iii. He made one sacrifice once for all when he offered himself.

- (Hebrews 10:14 LSB) **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

iv. He is the Son who has been made perfect forever.

v. The main point is the Son is just the high priest we need—*fitting for us*—who would complete the work of our perfection and sit down at the right hand of Majesty.

vi. The Son of God, our Priest/King, is our minister in the holy places.

OUR NEW LIFE IN THE NEW COVENANT

THE MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY OF OUR HIGH PRIEST JESUS SON OF GOD



joy

As we pay much closer attention to what we have heard concerning our great salvation and live the new life of the new covenant ...

- **Our joy will be inexpressible and full of glory,**
- **Our hope will abound by the power of the Holy Spirit,**
- **Our love for God will be filled to overflowing by the Spirit,**
- **Our faith will grow exponentially,**
- **Our experience of the blessing of God will abound as never before.**

1. Our high priest ministers life to us through the new covenant as our sitting King/Priest, 8:1.

- (Hebrews 8:1 LSB) Now the main point in what is being said is this: we have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.
- A. Jesus Son of God finished his sacrificial work and sat down at the highest place of authority.
- B. From there he ministers as our high priest forever.
- C. One of his ministries is as our advocate.
- (1 John 2:1-2 LSB) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

2. Our high priest ministers in the holy places in the true tabernacle, 8:2-5.

- (Hebrews 8:2-5 LSB) A minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."
- A. Our high priest ministers in the full reality of the holy places and in the true tabernacle that is not made with hands.
- (Hebrews 9:11 LSB) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.
- B. He did not qualify as an earthly priest to offer a sacrifice in a system that was only a copy, a shadow, of the holy places and the true tabernacle in heaven.
- C. The copy/shadow was made according to the divine blueprint that served the purpose of pointing ahead to the reality of the heavenly things.

3. Our high priest ministers in the more excellent ministry that he has obtained, 8:6-7.

- (Hebrews 8:6-7 LSB) But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.
- A. Our high priest has obtained an infinitely more superior ministry as the mediator of a better covenant.
- B. The better covenant has been enacted on better promises—the "I wills" of God.
- Enacted ... νομοθετέω [nomotheteo] ... to be legislated; to establish by legal and authoritative act; specifically to make into law; to put something into action, especially to make something law; to establish by law; ordain or decree.
- C. The better covenant was needed because the first covenant was not faultless.

4. Our high priest is the mediator of the new covenant, 8:8-9.

- (Hebrews 8:8-9 LSB) For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL COMPLETE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; 9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.
- A. Through the prophet Jeremiah God prophesied the day when he would complete a new covenant.
- B. The new covenant would not be like the old covenant God had with their fathers when he brought them out of Egypt.
- C. The new covenant would not have the faults of human sinfulness whereby even though God led them by the hand they did not continue in the covenant.
- D. The old covenant where God set life and death before Israel was bilateral in that it required their love and obedience to Yahweh to receive the blessing of Yahweh.
- (Deuteronomy 30:15-19a LSB) See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and calamity; 16 in that I am commanding you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His

commandments and His statutes and His judgments, **that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your God may bless you** in the land where you are entering to possess it. 17 **But if your heart turns away and you will not listen, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them,** 18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. 19 **I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.**

5. The new covenant would be a unilateral covenant based on the sovereign will and promises of God, 8:10-12.

- (Hebrews 8:10–12 LSB) **FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND UPON THEIR HEARTS I WILL WRITE THEM. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.** 11 **“AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.** 12 **“FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE.”**

A. From his position of power, wisdom and authority God promised to make a new covenant based on his sovereign grace—“I will make”.

B. Here are the terms of the new covenant.

I. I will put my laws into their minds.

II. I will write my laws upon their hearts.

III. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The true people of God know God as their God and do not need to be taught by others or directed to know the Lord, for they will all know him because of their new heart and mind.

- (John 10:25–28a LSB) Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me. 26 **But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.** 27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;** 28 **and I give eternal life to them.**

IV. I will be merciful to their iniquities.

V. I will remember their sins no more.

- (Micah 7:18–20 LSB) **Who is a God like You, who forgives iniquity** And passes over the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not hold fast to His anger forever **Because He delights in lovingkindness.** 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities. **And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.** 20 **You will give truth to Jacob** And lovingkindness to Abraham, Which You swore to our fathers From the days of old.

6. The Lord made and enacted the new covenant for the sake of his holy name.

A. The Lord will prove the holiness of his name by his work in their lives through the new covenant.

- (Ezekiel 36:22–27 LSB) Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says Lord Yahweh, **“It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations, to which you have come.** 23 **I will prove the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh,”** declares Lord Yahweh, **“when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.** 24 **And I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land.** 25 **Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.** 26 **Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,** and you will be careful to do My judgments.”

B. He gives the people of the new covenant a new heart and puts a new spirit within.

- (Romans 8:14, 15 LSB) **For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ... The Spirit Himself testifies with our [new] spirit that we are children of God.**

C. Those who forgive as God forgives reveal possession of the new heart and the new spirit of the new covenant and do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

- (Ephesians 4:30–32 LSB) **And do not grieve**

the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 **Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has graciously forgiven you.**

- (Colossians 3:12–13 LSB) So, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; 13 bearing with one another, **and graciously forgiving each other**, whoever has a complaint against anyone, **just as the Lord graciously forgave you, so also should you.**

7. The new covenant is so efficacious and of such glory as to make the old covenant obsolete, 8:13.

- (Hebrews 8:13 LSB) When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Efficacious: successful in producing a desired or intended result; yielding the intended effect.

A. The glory of the new covenant so surpasses the glory of the old covenant as to make it as if it has no glory.

- (2 Corinthians 3:5–11 LSB) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, **but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant**, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 **But if the ministry of death**, in letters having been engraved on stones, **came with glory**, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was being brought to an end, 8 **how will the ministry of the Spirit not be even more in glory?** 9 **For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.** 10 **For indeed what had been glorious, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.** 11 For if that which was being brought to an end was with glory, **much more that which remains is in**

glory.

B. When the new covenant is fully enacted in the millennial kingdom the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh.

- (Habakkuk 2:14 LSB) For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, As the waters cover the sea.

C. Those who live in the new covenant live in the light.

- (John 3:21 LSB) **But he who practices the truth comes to the Light**, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been done by God.

D. Those who live in the new covenant know that the true light is already shining and that this world and its darkness are passing away.

- (2 Corinthians 5:17 LSB) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; **the old things passed away**; behold, new things have come.
- (Isaiah 65:17 LSB) For behold, I am creating a new heavens and a new earth; **And the former things will not be remembered or come upon the heart.**
- (1 John 2:8 LSB) On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, **because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.**
- (1 John 2:17 LSB) **And the world is passing away**, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.
- (Ephesians 5:6–8 LSB) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them, 8 for you were formerly darkness, **but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.**

- (Romans 15:13 LSB) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

JESUS IS THE WAY



**NOW OPEN
THE HOLY PLACES
OF GOD**

ENTER BY THE NARROW GATE. FOR THE GATE IS WIDE AND THE WAY IS EASY THAT LEADS TO
DESTRUCTION, AND THOSE WHO ENTER BY IT ARE MANY. FOR THE GATE IS NARROW AND THE WAY
IS HARD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND THOSE WHO FIND IT ARE FEW.
(MATTHEW 7:13-14 ESV)

1. Scene #1: We are given an overview of the specific descriptions and instructions that God gave Moses for divine worship in the first covenant for the sake of illustration, 9:1-5.

- (Hebrews 9:1–5 LSB) Now even the first covenant had **requirements of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary**. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared: the first part, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread, which is called the holy place. 3 And behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tablets of the covenant. 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. **Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.**

This overview of the requirements for divine worship and the earthly sanctuary are illustrative for our purposes. They prepared the hearts and minds of those who were obedient as they faithfully waited for a high priest of the good things to come.

(Hebrews 9:11 LSB) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.

- A. God gave Moses specific instructions concerning how and where to worship him.
- B. These are the requirements for divine worship in the first covenant that God made with the Israelites.
- C. The tabernacle mentioned here is the tent that God instructed Moses to assemble, not the temple that Solomon built.
- D. This earthly sanctuary was divided into two sections—The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- E. In following God's specific instructions for divine worship the ancient Jews demonstrated that they had faith in God.
- F. The details given for this illustrative overview are sufficient for us to focus on its purpose.

2. Scene #2: The overview continues and the Holy Spirit points out the extent and intention of the symbolism of these things, 9:6-10.

- (Hebrews 9:6–7 LSB) Now when these things have been so prepared, **the priests are continually entering the first part of the tabernacle performing the divine worship, 7 but into the second**, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself **and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance**.

The stated descriptions that are given for the two rooms of the tabernacle ...

- A. The first room:** Work, work and more work. The priests continually perform the prescribed acts of divine worship in the first part of the tabernacle—the Holy Place (9:6).
- B. The second room:** But in the second part of the tabernacle—the Most Holy Place—there is worship by only one person on only one day of the year (9:7).

On that day the high priest enters with blood to offer for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

EXCURSUS: A BRIEF STUDY OF THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE (9:7B) ...

Fact #1: A person stands guilty before God and faces punishment for all of his or her sins whether intentional and unintentional.

- (Leviticus 5:17–19 LSB) Now if a person sins and does any one of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, but he was unaware, **still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment**. 18 He is then to bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering. **So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his error in which he sinned unintentionally and did not know it, and it will be forgiven him. 19 It is a guilt offering; he was certainly guilty before Yahweh.**
- (Leviticus 16:16 LSB) So he shall make atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions **in regard to all their sins**; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Fact #2: It is possible for a person to sin intentionally but not know what they are doing.

- (Luke 23:34 ESV) And Jesus said, “Father, **forgive them, for they know not what they do.**” And they cast lots to divide his garments.
- (Acts 7:60 LSB) Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “**Lord, do not hold this sin against them!**” And having said this, he fell asleep.
- (1 Corinthians 2:8 LSB) **Which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**
- (1 Timothy 1:13 LSB) Even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. **Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.**

Fact #3: We sin in ways of which we are not aware.

- (Psalm 19:12–14 NLT) **How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults.** 13 Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don’t let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. 14 **May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**
- (Psalm 40:12 LSB) For evils beyond number have surrounded me; **My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; They are more numerous than the hairs of my head, And my heart has failed me.**
- (Psalm 90:8 LSB) You have set our iniquities before You, **Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**
- (Psalm 139:23–24 LSB) **Search me, O God, and know my heart;** Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 **And see if there be any hurtful way in me,** And lead me in the everlasting way.

Fact #4: We sometimes sin in ignorance but we are culpable because we do not prepare our minds to not be ignorant and so we fall back into conformity to our old ways.

Culpable: meriting condemnation; deserving of blame; considered responsible.

- a. Willful ignorance: The person who chooses to not obey and prepare his mind for action chooses to remain in conformity to his old life of ignorance.

- (1 Peter 1:13–14 ESV) Therefore, **preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded,** set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 **As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.**
- (Romans 12:2 LSB) **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

- b. Our lack of preparedness leads to living the old life which is conformity to this world which is sin of which we are culpable.

Former ignorance ... sinful ignorance—the lack of knowledge or education; especially that leads to reprehensible behavior; esp. of divine things; of moral blindness.

- (Ephesians 4:17–18 LSB) Therefore this I say, and testify in the Lord, **that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their mind, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them,** because of the hardness of their heart.

Fact #5: Ignorance is no excuse.

- (Romans 1:18–20 ESV) For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.** 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. **So they are without excuse.**

—END EXCURSUS—

The Holy Spirit clarifies what the symbolism means for the present time ...

- (Hebrews 9:8–10 LSB) The Holy Spirit is indicating this, that the way into the holy places has not yet been manifested while that first part of the tabernacle is still **standing,** 9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which **cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,** 10 since they

relate only to food and drink and various washings, requirements for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

C. The divine worship of the old covenant had its place but has been rendered obsolete now that the new covenant has been manifested (*clearly revealed*).

D. Jesus is the hard way to God that few find.

Those who cling to the old covenant because they believe it still has merit (standing) do not see Christ for who he is and so do not comprehend the meaning of his entrance into the holy places of God.

(John 14:6 ESV) Jesus said to him, **"I am the way,** and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

(Matthew 7:13–14 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide **and the way is easy** that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and **the way is hard** that leads to life, **and those who find it are few.**

- i. This person is blind to the work of Christ because he refuses to accept his inability to merit God's favor in regard to his salvation.
- ii. To accept his inability to help would be to confess his total depravity before a holy God and his pride will not allow that.
- iii. The way is hard and few find it because the way of salvation is totally contrary to the working of the fallen, human mind and spirit.
- iv. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.

(Ephesians 2:8 ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

- E. Neither the old covenant nor any other system of religion has anything to offer that can cleanse the conscience of the worshiper.
- F. The divine worship of the old covenant—the gifts and sacrifices—can only bring the worshiper to a place of temporary reconciliation while waiting for the fulfillment in Messiah.
- G. The requirements of the old covenant could only prepare a person to believe in the hope to come.
- H. The Old Testament saints never had the guilt of sin fully removed from their consciences.

3. **Scene #3: Christ appeared and entered the holy places through his blood, 9:11-14.**

- (Hebrews 9:11–14 LSB) **But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle,** not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, **He entered the holy places once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.** 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

- A. Christ appeared as our High Priest of the good things to come and everything changed.
- B. Christ entered the holy places through his blood once for all into the presence of God.
- C. This act of service as our High Priest obtained eternal redemption for us.
- D. By his entrance we also gained entrance to the presence of God.
- E. The blood of goats and bulls could provide only ceremonial cleansing of the body.
 - (Hebrews 9:13 NLT) Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer **could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity.**
- F. How much more does the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
 - i. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse a person's conscience from the nagging, hounding feeling deep within his soul that he must do something if he is to merit right standing before God.
 - ii. Some commentators translate the expression as "cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death."
 - iii. Clinging to good works leads to death.
 - iv. Only the person with their conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ can serve the living God.

CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR



PURIFY ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I SHALL BE CLEAN; WASH ME,
AND I SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW.

(PSALM 51:7 LSB)

1. Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, 9:15.

- (Hebrews 9:15 LSB) And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, **so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the trespasses that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called** may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

A mediator is someone who acts as a link between parties; **sometimes specifically selected [as Christ was];** one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant.

A. Christ Jesus is the only mediator between God and humans.

- (1 Timothy 2:5 LSB) For there is one God, and **one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.**

B. Christ is the mediator of the new covenant which is the basis of salvation for all the saints of God—both Old and New Testament.

C. Christ's death "has taken place" to redeem those under the first covenant who believed.

D. The Old Testament saints were saved by believing in a promised, coming redemptive act of God which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Abraham believed this:

- (John 8:56 LSB) **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day,** and he saw it and was glad.
- (Genesis 15:6 LSB) Then he [Abraham] **believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.**
- (Romans 4:3 ESV) For what does the Scripture say? **"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."**
- (Romans 4:16 LSB) For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be according to grace, **so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the seed,** not only to those who are of the Law, **but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham,** who is the father of us all.

Moses believed this:

- (John 5:46 LSB) For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, **for he wrote about Me.**

All the Prophets believed this:

- (John 1:45 LSB) Philip found Nathanael and said to him, **"We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the**

Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

- (1 Peter 1:10–11 LSB) Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries, **inquiring to know what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He was predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.**

2. Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant because his blood cleanses the conscience of dead works, 9:13-15.

- (Hebrews 9:13–15 LSB) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14 how much more will the blood of Christ,** who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** **15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant,** so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the trespasses that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

A. Christ offered himself without blemish through the Spirit as a sacrifice to God.

B. The blood shed from this sacrifice cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve a living God.

C. By virtue of the cleansing work of his blood Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant.

D. His death took place for the redemption of the trespasses under the first covenant.

E. By this redemption those who have been called may now receive the promise of eternal inheritance (life).

EXCURSUS: What does it mean to have our conscience cleansed from dead works to serve the living God?

1. **Dead works ...**

A. Christ is the mediator because his blood cleanses our conscience from dead works.

B. Our conscience needs cleansed of dead works so that we may serve the living God.

C. Dead works (or good deeds) are attempts to merit

right standing before God by adherence to a perceived moral, legal or religious obligation.

- D. Dead works are useless in relation to our right standing with God.
- E. Dead works are counterproductive—they lead away from life and to death.

2. Our conscience ...

- A. Our conscience is our God-given, human sense of right and wrong, good and evil.
- B. Our conscience needs cleansed because Adam and Eve corrupted the human conscience when they chose to operate the conscience—know good and evil—independently of God.

3. Adam and Eve began with a clear conscience and in perfect standing with God their Creator.

- A. There was intimate fellowship and no hindrances between them and Yahweh.
- B. They were given the opportunity at creation to work for and serve the living God.
- C. God laid out his plan for them to be fruitful and to rule over the entire earth.

- (Genesis 1:27–28a LSB) And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

D. Everything God gave them was very good.

- (Genesis 1:31 LSB) And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

4. But Adam and Eve rejected the very good life God gave them as humans blessed by their Creator.

- A. Tempted by the serpent Adam and Eve chose the life the serpent offered which was the opportunity to be like God knowing good and evil.

- (Genesis 3:5–6 ESV) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Several things happened at this point ...

- B. For the first time Adam and Eve knew evil.
- C. Their conscience was operative but corrupted.
- D. Adam and Eve performed the first dead works when they covered themselves and hid from the presence of Yahweh.

Note: The first religious act of humans to cover their shame was to sew plant leaves together to cover their private parts ... but this was merely a precursor to all the foolishness that would follow ... until a person realizes that only the blood of Christ covers our nakedness.

- (Genesis 3:7–101 LSB) And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 Then they heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the midst of the trees of the garden. 9 Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”
 - i. They sensed that what they had done was wrong and not knowing what else to do they covered themselves.
 - ii. They sensed fear and guilt in God’s presence so they hid in the trees.

5. Our “new” conscience – what that means ...

- A. Our conscience has been cleansed from dead works.
- B. Our conscience has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and sanctified by the will of God.
- C. We have repented of our ways and believe in God alone for salvation.
- D. We now have the mind of Christ as the blood of Christ has cleansed our minds and souls from our foolish, sinful efforts to make things right with God.
- E. We are now ready to serve the living God.
 - (1 Corinthians 2:16 NLT) For, “Who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?” But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

END EXCURSUS

3. Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant because his necessary death had taken place for the redemption of those who had been called to receive the promise of eternal inheritance, 9:15-22.

- (Hebrews 9:15–22 LSB) **And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant**, so that, **since a death has taken place for the redemption of the trespasses that were committed under the first covenant**, **those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** 16 For where a covenant is, **there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.** 17 For a covenant is **valid** only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was **inaugurated** without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, **"THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU."** 21 And in the same way, both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled with the blood. 22 **And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

A. All those who have been called since the beginning of time on earth are redeemed based on the shed blood and the death of Jesus Christ.

B. The death—thus the blood—of Christ validated and inaugurated the new covenant.

C. The shed blood of Christ is the basis for God forgiving and cleansing our sins throughout all the ages/dispensations.

- (1 John 1:9 LSB) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness.



Jesus Christ's sacrificial death on the cross is God's offering to God —the just payment for our sins.

Everything else is dead works.

GOD'S OFFERING TO GOD

DEAD WORKS



The once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the one time for all time sacrifice for our sins that was predetermined in eternity past by the sovereign will of God and carried out on earth in the human body that God had prepared for him.

This once for all offering sets aside, cancels, supersedes, invalidates, nullifies and renders irrelevant and obsolete all other offerings (read good works, good deeds, etc.) to God based on and by virtue of the superiority and uniqueness of the sacrifice offered — Jesus Son of God — according to the written testimony of God himself in his holy word.

+

1. God's offering to God—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross—was a once for all, one-time event at the consummation of the ages, 9:23-28.

- (Hebrews 9:23–28 LSB) Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, mere copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy places year by year with blood that is not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

A. Jesus Son of God offered himself once to God the Father to put away sin and to bear the sins of many.

B. This saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross is represented throughout the New Testament as a once for all, one-time event.

- (Romans 6:10 LSB) For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
- (Hebrews 7:27 LSB) Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because

this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

- (Hebrews 9:12 LSB) And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy places once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
- (Hebrews 10:10 ESV) And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- (1 Peter 3:18a LSB) For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might bring you to God.

C. Christ's sacrifice cleansed our way to enter the holy places of God.

D. His death on the cross was at the consummation (end) of the ages—the precise moment in time which God had determined before he created this world.

- (1 Corinthians 2:7–8 LSB) But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages to our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

E. Christ came into our world to bring everything together at the fullness of the times.

- (Galatians 4:4–5a LSB) But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law.
- (Ephesians 1:7–10a LSB) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches

of His grace 8 which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and insight, 9 making known to us **the mystery of His will**, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him 10 **for an administration of the fullness of the times**, that is, **the summing up of all things in Christ**.

F. As humans are destined to die once and face the judgment so Christ died once to bear the sins of many and save us from the judgment.

G. Christ will appear a second time for salvation for those who eagerly await him.

2. **The sacrifices under the Law could never accomplish the final reality of perfecting the worshiper and taking away sins, 10:1-4.**

- (Hebrews 10:1–4 LSB) For **the Law**, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, **can never**, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, **make perfect those who draw near**. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have consciousness of sins? 3 **But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.** 4 **For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

A. The Law was only a shadow of the reality of the good things to come and could never perfect those who draw near by taking away their sins.

B. If the Law could do this, then the sacrifices would have ceased—mission accomplished .

C. The continual sacrifices served to remind them of their sins, but not to forgive their sins, because it is impossible for the sacrifice of the blood of animals to take away sins.

3. **Jesus Christ came into the world with a body prepared by God to do the will of God in offering that body as a sacrifice for sin, 10:5-9.**

- (Hebrews 10:5–9 LSB) Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, **BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME**; 6 IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. 7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME, IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME, **TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.**'" 8 After saying above,

"SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, **I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.**" **He takes away the first in order to establish the second.**

A. The **only** sacrifice that God desired and that he would take pleasure in was the sacrifice of Jesus (God) offering the body that God had prepared for him.

B. This was the will of God as recorded in Scripture.

- (Psalm 40:6–8 LSB) **Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired**; My ears You have opened; **Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required**. 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. 8 **I desire to do Your will, O my God**; Your law is within my inner being."

C. The sacrifices and offerings of the first covenant were neither what God ultimately desired nor took pleasure in because they could not make the worshipers perfect to draw near to God.

- (Hebrews 9:9 LSB) which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both **gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.**

D. These sacrifices and offerings were now dead works in the eyes of God.

Any thoughts that the sacrifices and offerings of the first covenant were helpful or necessary needed to be repented of (6:1) and cleansed from the conscience (9:14) of the worshipers so they could receive the one offering of God—which is Christ alone—and by which they could draw near to God.

When a person's conscience has been cleansed by the blood of Christ he comes to realize that all other sacrifices and offerings other than the sacrifice of Christ will never make him or her ready to enter the presence of God or ready to serve and worship God.

- (Hebrews 9:14 LSB) How much more will **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

E. Christ successfully completed the will of God and gave his body as a sacrifice so that we might have forgiveness of sins.

- (John 4:34 LSB) Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish [τελειῶ] His work.”

F. When Christ fulfilled God’s will and sacrificed his body to pay for our sins, he established the new covenant and took away the old covenant.

4. It is God’s will that by the once for all sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ we are being sanctified—being made holy, 10:10-18.

- (Hebrews 10:10–18 LSB) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time UNTIL HIS ENEMIES ARE PUT AS A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, 16 “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,” He then says, 17 “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.” 18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

- A. Our sanctification rests on the once for all time sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, 10:10.
- B. In contrast to the daily offerings of the Levitical priests, Christ offered once sacrifice for sins for all time, 10:11-13.
- C. By this one offering he has perfected forever all those who are being sanctified, 10:14.
- D. Speaking to those who are being sanctified, the Holy Spirit testifies that the LORD will put his laws on their hearts and write them on their minds, 10:15-16.
- E. And the Spirit testifies that the LORD will remember their sins and lawless deed no more, 10:17.
- F. When sin has been forgiven, there is no longer offering for sin, 10:18.

5. **CONCLUSION:** Summarizing our thoughts and drawing some conclusions as to what we have learned so far in Hebrews.

- A. A main emphasis of Hebrews has been the perfection of the worshiper—the completed, finished work of God—that allows him or her to enter God’s rest and draw near to God.
- B. The gospel—the death of Jesus Christ on the cross—is the way in which those who believe can enter God’s rest and draw near to God.
 - (Hebrews 4:2–3a NLT) For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn’t share the faith of those who listened to God. 3 For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others, God said, “In my anger I took an oath: They will never enter my place of rest.”
- C. The offering of Christ renders every other offering obsolete and useless—even the God-given requirements of divine worship in the old covenant.
 - (Hebrews 7:18–19a LSB) For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect).
- D. The offering of Christ makes all other offerings—biblical and otherwise—to be dead works.
- E. All good works, good deeds, religious expressions of worship, etc. are dead works for which the person needs to repent or face the coming judgment.
- F. So we should deduce that any act we perform in our service and worship by which we believe we gain favor or merit with God is a dead work for which we need to repent.
- G. Only those who have come to God by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone are able to please God in service and worship.
- H. Our proper service to and worship of God are directly related to our belief in the true gospel.



Near to God ... or Far Away

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

GO ON WILLFULLY SINNING



WHAT DOES MY LIFE REVEAL?

AM I NEAR TO GOD OR FAR AWAY?

WHAT DOES MY LIFE REVEAL? TWO OPTIONS ...

OPTION 1: MY LIFE REVEALS SOMEONE WHO ENTERS THE HOLY PLACES OF GOD AND DRAWS NEAR TO HIM.

LET'S TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT INVOLVES.

1. All humans fall short of the glory of God and begin life on earth a humanly incalculable and incomprehensible distance from God.

- (Romans 3:23 LSB) **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**
- (Psalm 103:12 LSB) **As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**

A note of explanation for using this verse ... When God removes our sin it is a humanly incalculable and incomprehensible distance from his holy places. The distance between sin and a holy God must be infinite. It seems then that God's use of the phrase "as far as the east is from the west" in regard to our sin may be a helpful to us in understanding the infinite gap between sinful humans and a holy God.

2. **But we don't know it:** A substantial part of the problem is that we humans do not know and have no way of knowing in and of ourselves how far off—how separated and how alienated we are—from God.

- (Ephesians 2:12–13 ESV) **Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,** alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**
- (Romans 3:11 ESV) **No one understands;** no one seeks for God.
- (Romans 3:16–17 ESV) In their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and **the way of peace they have not known.**
- (Ephesians 4:18 ESV) They are **darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
- (Colossians 1:21–22 LSB) And although

you **were formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds,** 22 but now He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

3. We cannot know/see the truth of how far we are from God until he opens our blind eyes.

- (Isaiah 29:18 LSB) On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, **And out of darkness and thick darkness the eyes of the blind will see.**
- (Isaiah 35:5 LSB) **Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.**
- (Psalm 146:8 LSB) **Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind;** Yahweh raises up those who are bowed down; Yahweh loves the righteous.
- (1 Corinthians 2:10 LSB) **But to us God revealed them through the Spirit,** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
- (1 Corinthians 2:14 LSB) But a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, **and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined.**

4. We are directed to enter the holy places of God and draw near to him by the blood of Jesus—the one way to enter the presence of the Father.

- (Hebrews 10:19–22 LSB) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- (John 14:6 LSB) Jesus said to him, **"I am the way,** and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father but through Me.**

5. The confidence spoken of here is the open, honest, free and fearless, joyful courage, boldness and assurance of the person who trusts solely in the sufficient work of the blood of Jesus.

10:19 Confidence ... boldness; the trait of being willing to undertake activities that involve risk or danger; especially that involve being honest and straightforward in attitude and speech; without concealment; without ambiguity or circumlocution; free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance.

Circumlocution is the use of many words where fewer would do, especially in a deliberate attempt to be vague or evasive.

6. The truly confident person puts no confidence in the flesh—his own abilities or standing.

- (Philippians 3:3 LSB) For we are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus **and put no confidence in the flesh.**
- (Philippians 3:9 LSB) **And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith.
- (2 Corinthians 3:4–5 LSB) **And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.**
- (1 John 2:28 LSB) And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He is manifested, **we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**
- (1 John 4:17 LSB) By this, love has been perfected with us, **so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment**, because as He is, so also are we in this world.

7. We need to have some beginning point, at the very least, as to what it means to draw near to God.

A. One absolute essential in drawing near to God is that we must draw near with our heart.

- (Isaiah 29:13 LSB) Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their mouth And honor Me with their lips, **But they remove their hearts far from Me**, And their fear of Me is in the command

of men learned by rote.”

Remove ... far ... to be disassociated; to be unconnected relationally with another, conceived of as being far away from another; to be or become far, be or become distant, be removed, to send far away.

B. Many humans do not believe that we cannot know apart from God that we cannot draw near to him and so their rebellious hearts lead them to add sin to sin.

- (Isaiah 30:1 LSB) “Woe to the rebellious children,” declares Yahweh, “**Who execute counsel, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin.**”

8. Here some good, sound steps to get us on our way to drawing near to God.

A. Love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength.

Think about it. How could we be more near to God than loving him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength?

- (Mark 12:30 ESV) And you shall love the Lord your God **with all your heart** and **with all your soul** and **with all your mind** and **with all your strength.**

B. Keep the word of God and abide in his love.

- (John 15:10–11 LSB) If you **keep My commandments**, you will **abide in My love**; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so **that My joy may be in you**, and **that your joy may be complete.**

C. Make it our aim to please God in everything we do.

- (2 Corinthians 5:9 ESV) So whether we are at home or away, **we make it our aim to please him.**
- (Colossians 1:10 NIV) So that you may **live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way**: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

To make it our aim ... means to aspire; to have pleasing God as our cherished desire or a lofty goal.

D. Honor God and give him thanks.

- (Romans 1:21 ESV) For although they knew God, **they did not honor him as God or**

give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

E. Trust God fully.

- (Proverbs 3:5 LSB) **Trust in Yahweh with all your heart** And do not lean on your own understanding.

F. Glorify God in everything we do.

- (1 Corinthians 10:31 LSB) Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**
- (1 Peter 4:11b LSB) **So that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ**, to whom belongs the glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

9. Christ has inaugurated a new and living way for us to live by the blood of Jesus.

- (Hebrews 10:20–21 LSB) **By a new and living way which He inaugurated for us** through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God.

A. Those who draw near to God have confidence because they rely on the blood of Jesus as the full payment for sin.

B. He is the new and living way that was put into effect and made available when he bore our sins in his body on the cross.

to inaugurate v. – to put into effect or make available (for use) for the first time.

- (John 10:9 LSB) I am the door; **if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved**, and will go in and out and find pasture.

C. Those who are near to God have confidence because they have a great priest over the house of God.

- (Ephesians 2:19–21 LSB) So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, **and are of God's household.**

D. We can determine if we are near to God and so are not sinning willfully after receiving the truth by three powerful evidences.

- (Hebrews 10:22–25 LSB) **Let us draw near with a sincere 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 confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful. 24 **And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, **and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

LORD WILLING, WE WILL FOCUS ON A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THESE THREE POWERFUL EVIDENCES NEXT WEEK.

Powerful evidence #1: We draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.

Powerful evidence #2: We hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

Powerful evidence #3: We consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.

Consider – to give careful thought or consideration to something.

OPTION 2: MY LIFE REVEALS SOMEONE WHO GOES ON WILLFULLY SINNING AND WILL ONE DAY FACE THE TERRIFYING JUDGMENT OF GOD.

There is no middle ground. There is not drawing somewhat near to God. There is one way to come into the presence of the Father and that one way is by the blood of Jesus Son of God.

If the powerful evidences listed above are absent from our lives, or if we are depending on any human alterations to right standing with God, then know this ...

Willful sinners that keep on willfully sinning have before them the terrifying expectation of judgment.

- (Hebrews 10:26–27 LSB) **For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 **but a terrifying expectation of judgment** and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

**OUR REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
BEFORE A HOLY GOD**



WHAT ARE OUR REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS BEFORE A HOLY GOD? THE BIBLE GIVES US TWO ...

- **REALISTIC EXPECTATION #1: LIVE FOREVER WITH GOD IN HEAVEN.**

Since our life with God begins here on earth, our lives will give evidence of our eternal destination. In the Bible God gives those who believe in him and his gospel all the information necessary to have the realistic expectation to be with him in glory when our days on earth end. His very clear and deliberate intent is that we will have full assurance of joy as we anticipate that day when we shall be in his presence.

- **REALISTIC EXPECTATION #2: FACE THE TERRIFYING JUDGMENT OF GOD.**

Those who do not have this full assurance and joyful anticipation of being with the Lord are left with only the fear and dread of death and wishful thinking. These are the pitiful ones who have refused to believe God while on earth and are blind to the coming judgment.

REALISTIC EXPECTATION #1: The realistic expectation of life with God in heaven when we by the blood of Jesus draw near to the presence of God in full assurance of faith, hold fast our confession of hope without wavering and are intent on stimulating one another to love and good deeds.

- (Hebrews 10:19–25 LSB) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a sincere 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 confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

1. Our confidence to enter the holy places of God by the blood of Jesus is a living reality based solely on the saving power of Jesus Son of God.

- (1 Corinthians 1:18 LSB) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, **but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.**
- (1 Corinthians 1:23–24 LSB) But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 **but to those who are called**, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

A. We trust in Jesus Christ as our sacrifice.

B. We trust in the Son of God as our merciful and faithful high priest.

2. There are *three powerful evidences* that demonstrate the work and fruit of the Spirit in the lives of those for whom this is a living reality.

▶ **A. DRAW NEAR:** We draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith when our evil conscience is cleansed and our bodies are washed by the word.

- (Hebrews 10:22 LSB) **Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

Full assurance: πληροφορία [plerophoria] complete confidence; a confidence that is full and complete in someone or something; most certain confidence.

- (Hebrews 6:11–12 LSB) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence **so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end**, 12 **so that you may not become dull**, but imitators of **those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**
- i. This person lives with the wealth of full assurance because the blood of Christ cleanses his evil conscience of the faulty logic of self-effort in regard to the reality of his standing before a holy God.
- (Colossians 2:2 LSB) So that their hearts may be encouraged, having been held together in love, **even unto all the wealth of the full assurance of understanding**, unto the full knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself.

- (Hebrews 9:13–14 ESV) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, **sanctify for the purification of the flesh**, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God**.
- ii. We draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith when our bodies are daily sanctified by the washing of the pure water of the word of God.
- (1 John 1:9 LSB) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins **and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.
 - (Ezekiel 36:25 ESV) **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.**
 - (1 Corinthians 6:11 LSB) And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
 - (Ephesians 5:25–27 LSB) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 **so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.
 - (Titus 3:5–6 LSB) He saved us, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

▶ **B. HOLD FAST:** We hold fast to what we believe and say to be true without wavering because we know that God is faithful to his promise.

- (Hebrews 10:23 LSB) Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful.
- (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 LSB) Now I make known to you, brothers, **the gospel which I**

proclaimed as good news to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 **by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I proclaimed to you as good news**, unless you believed for nothing.

▶ **C. GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT:** We give careful thought as to how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.

- (Hebrews 10:24–25 LSB) And let us **consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 **not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some**, but encouraging one another, **and all the more as you see the day drawing near**.

Consider ... to give careful thought or consideration to something; to consider attentively, fix one's eyes or mind upon.

We must first give careful thought to what is meant by love and good deeds.

i. **Our work:** We are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do the work of God.

- (Ephesians 2:10 LSB) **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand **so that we would walk in them**.

ii. **Our love:** We are commanded to relate to God by loving God with **all** our heart, **all** our soul, **all** our mind and **all** our strength.

iii. **Our worship:** When we forsake assembling together, we reveal our true belief that God, the worship of God and the people of God are not as important as the things of this world.

- (Hebrews 10:25a LSB) **Not forsaking** our own assembling together, **as is the habit of some**.

iv. **Our urgency:** We are to encourage one another and even more as we see the day drawing near.

- (Hebrews 3:13–14 LSB) **But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "TODAY," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**.

v. **Summary:** We will stand before God one day to give an account—our love for God, our work for God and our words will provide testimony as to our realistic expectation and destination.

- (Hebrews 4:13 LSB) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, **but all**

things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give.

- (Romans 14:12 LSB) So then **each one of us will give an account of himself to God.**
- (Matthew 12:36–37 LSB) But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, **they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.** 37 For **by your words** you will be justified, and **by your words** you will be condemned.

REALISTIC EXPECTATION #2: The terrifying expectation of falling into the hands of the living God.

- (Hebrews 10:26–31 LSB) **For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth,** there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 **Anyone who has set aside** the Law of Moses dies without mercy by the mouth of two or three witnesses. 29 **How much worse punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God,** and has **regarded as defiled the blood of the covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has **insulted the Spirit of grace?** 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

1. This person goes on willfully sinning even after receiving the truth that would change the realistic expectation of his life.

- A. This is not just any person who has rejected the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- B. This person has received sufficient knowledge of Christ and the gospel and has set it aside.

2. We learn what this setting aside means from the example of those who set aside the Law of Moses.

EXAMPLES OF SETTING ASIDE THE LAW ...

- A. The animals they brought for sacrifice were to be without blemish.
 - (Leviticus 3:1 LSB) Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to bring near one from the herd, whether male or female, **he shall bring it**

near without blemish before Yahweh.

- (Deuteronomy 15:21 LSB) But if it has any **defect**, such as **lameness** or **blindness**, or **any serious defect**, **you shall not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God.**

B. They set aside the Law when they brought animals to sacrifice that were defiled.

- (Malachi 1:6–8 NLT) The LORD of Heaven's Armies says to the priests: "A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. **If I am your father and master**, where are the honor and respect I deserve? **You have shown contempt for my name!**" "But you ask, 'How have we ever shown contempt for your name?'" 7 "**You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar.**" "Then you ask, 'How have we defiled the sacrifices?'" "You defile them by saying the altar of the LORD deserves no respect. 8 **When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased?** Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

3. Here are the three indictments—formal charges—brought against those who set aside the sacrificial and priestly work of Christ alone.

- A. They have trampled underfoot the Son of God.
- B. They have regarded as defiled the blood of the covenant.
- C. They have insulted the Spirit of grace.
- D. They will face a "much worse punishment" than those in the OT who offered defiled sacrifices.

4. The great sin addressed here is "setting aside" God's version of life for my version of life.

The one who lives his version of life has only one realistic expectation and that is **"THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES."**

WE **ARE NOT** OF THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK ...

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

(Hebrews 10:23 LSB)



WE **ARE** OF THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN GOD ...

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

(Hebrews 10:39 LSB)

1. We do not shrink back from the great conflict but bring our minds to it—the good, the bad, the humiliating ... and the joy, 10:32-34.

- (Hebrews 10:32–34 LSB) But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and afflictions, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you also showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted with joy the seizure of your possessions, knowing that you have for yourselves a better and lasting possession.

A. We bring to mind the reality of the battle as we knew it when we first were brought into the light and courageously and joyfully endured the great conflict.

- (1 Peter 2:9b ESV) ... that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- (Acts 26:18 LSB) To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

B. We bring to mind how courageously and faithfully we withstood the enemy in the midst of sufferings.

- For the sake of Christ we may suffer being made a public spectacle by people who insult, belittle and pressure us.
 - (2 Corinthians 12:10 LSB) Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions and hardships, for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - (Philippians 3:7–8 LSB) But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.
 - (Matthew 5:11 LSB) Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

- (Luke 6:22–23 LSB) Blessed are you when men hate you, and exclude you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

- Our suffering may result from coming alongside those who were being mistreated in this way.
- We bring to mind the compassion we had for those who suffered and the joy with which we accepted loss because of our fellowship with them.
- We bring to mind the assuring knowledge we had of a better and lasting possession.

EXCURSUS: THE POWERFUL AND NECESSARY YET PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT, SUFFERING AND ENDURANCE.

I. Those who do not shrink back but live by faith need the endurance that God supplies.

- (Hebrews 10:36 ESV) For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
- (Philippians 4:13 LSB) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

II. The reality that the Bible presents is that God produces endurance through our suffering.

- (Romans 5:2–3 ESV) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance.

III. Endurance produces hope that serves as an anchor for the soul.

- (Romans 5:4–5 LSB) And perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- (Hebrews 6:18–19 LSB) So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and confirmed and one which enters within the veil.

IV. The thought of rejoicing in our suffering so that we might endure is a paradox to the unregenerate human mind—it is foolishness to him.

A paradox is ... a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true.

V. So a transformation must take place: Our minds must be renewed by the reality that the word of God provides for us so that we may see and live in our world as God sees it.

- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 NLT) **For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!** 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. **For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.**

VI. With our renewed minds we will joyfully anticipate the work that God will do in our lives through our various trials.

- (James 1:2–4 NIV) **Consider it pure joy,** my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 **because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.** 4 **Let perseverance finish its work** so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
- (Hebrews 12:11 LSB) **And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful,** but sorrowful, **but to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

VII. With our renewed minds we enjoy God's blessing as the Spirit of glory and of God rests on us.

- (1 Peter 4:14–15 LSB) **If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed,** because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 **Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.**

VIII. Those who live by faith know and live in view of the overwhelming, compelling Scriptural testimony regarding the relationship between suffering, endurance and lives that bring praise, glory and honor to God.

- (Romans 12:12 LSB) **Rejoicing in hope,** **persevering in affliction,** **being devoted to prayer.**

- (2 Corinthians 6:10 LSB) **As sorrowful but always rejoicing,** as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
- (2 Corinthians 7:4 LSB) Great is my boldness toward you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I have been filled with comfort; **I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.**
- (Galatians 5:22–23 LSB) But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** 23 **gentleness, self-control.** Against such things there is no law.
- (1 Thessalonians 1:6 LSB) You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, **having received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit.**
- (1 Peter 1:6–7 LSB) **In this you greatly rejoice,** even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 **so that the proof of your faith,** being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, **may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- (1 Peter 4:12–13 LSB) Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you,** which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you. 13 **But to the degree you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.**

—END EXCURSUS—

2. We do not shrink back: We do not throw away our confidence that rewarded us with the blessing of endurance and promise, 10:35-38.

- (Hebrews 10:35–38 LSB) **Therefore, do not throw away that confidence of yours, which has a great reward.** 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. 37 **FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.** 38 **BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH, AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.**

A. The reward of our confidence is a vivid awareness of the reality of where we are before Almighty God.

- i. We find ourselves doing the will of God and receiving the promises of God.
 - ii. We live with a vivid awareness of the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - iii. We live with a vivid awareness that the saved of God—the righteous ones—live by faith.
 - iv. We live with a vivid awareness of the difference between those who believe God and those who shrink back.
 - v. We live with a vivid awareness of the fate of those who shrink back—those in whom God has no pleasure.
- B. Those who do not endure and hold fast in the hope of the gospel do not have the reward of living in the will of God and receiving the promises of God.**

C. Those who throw away their bold confidence do not believe that he who promised is faithful.

- (Hebrews 10:23 LSB) **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.**

D. Not living with bold confidence in our daily lives is equivalent to—same as—throwing it away.

- i. This person has backed away from the conflict and unwittingly surrendered to the enemy.
- ii. He has lost sight of the goal and may be more concerned with escaping the battle than enduring as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- iii. He will descend into timidity, fearfulness and ultimately compromise.
- iv. He will compromise the truth to lessen the intensity of the conflict.
- v. He has lost his vision of godly service.

3. But we are not of those who shrink back: We are of those who live by faith, 10:39.

- (Hebrews 10:39 ESV) **But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.**

A. We do not shrink back.

B. We are the saved of God who live by faith.

C. We have faith that endures and preserves our souls.

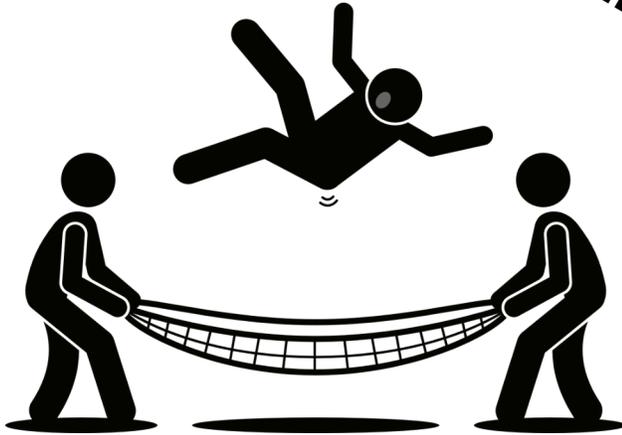
D. The foundation of our lives is believing God.

- (Habakkuk 2:4 LSB) **Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.**
- (Romans 1:16–17 LSB) **For I am not ashamed of the gospel,** for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, **"BUT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH."**
- (Galatians 3:11 LSB) Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for **"THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."**

CONCLUSION: In times of turmoil and confusion the righteous know what to do ... we go and stand at our guard post ... and we wait for God to speak ...

- (Habakkuk 2:1–3 LSB) I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the fortification; **And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me And how I may respond when I am reproved.** 2 Then Yahweh answered me and said, "Write down the vision And write it on tablets distinctly, That the one who reads it may run. 3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It pants toward its end, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come; it will not delay."

IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?



SAVING FAITH

WILL MY FAITH SAVE ME?



1. Defining saving faith.

Saving faith is faith that saves us from hell and gives us eternal life. Saving faith is believing in, trusting in and relying on Jesus Christ to save us from our sins and to rescue us from the impending judgment of the lake of fire and to one day bring us to himself in glory. Saving faith is based fully and completely on the person (who he is) and work (the gospel) of Jesus Christ alone.

EXCURSUS: A timely overview of the person and work of Jesus Christ in Hebrews to set our context.

Since saving faith is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ it would seem to be very profitable for us to review these important truths as presented and proclaimed in the letter to the Hebrews.

PART ONE: The Person of Jesus Christ

I. Jesus is announced officially and publicly as the Son of God by God himself.

- (Hebrews 1:1–3a LSB) God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, 3 who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.

A. Jesus is the mouthpiece of God and has been appointed the heir of all things.

B. The worlds were created through him.

- (John 1:2–3 LSB) He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

C. Jesus Son of God is God—the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature.

II. Jesus is announced as God who rules forever.

- (Hebrews 1:8 ESV) But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.”

III. Jesus is our merciful and faithful high priest.

- (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, so

that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

IV. Jesus is our perfect high priest.

- (Hebrews 7:26, 28b LSB) For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from inners and exalted above the heavens ... but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, who has been made perfect forever.

PART TWO: The Work of Jesus Christ

I. Jesus upholds all things and accomplished cleansing for sins.

- (Hebrews 1:3b LSB) ... and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

II. Jesus rendered the devil powerless.

- (Hebrews 2:14 LSB) Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

III. Jesus became the source of eternal salvation.

- (Hebrews 5:9 LSB) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

IV. Jesus became the guarantee of a better covenant through his eternal priesthood.

- (Hebrews 7:22, 24 LSB) so much more Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant. ... but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

V. Jesus saves forever those who draw near to God through Him.

- (Hebrews 7:25 LSB) Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

VI. Through his own blood he entered the holy places and obtained eternal redemption.

- (Hebrews 9:12 LSB) And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy places once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

VII. Jesus did the will of the Father and offered his body as a single sacrifice for sins.

- (Hebrews 10:9a, 10, -12 ESV) Then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” ... 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.
- (Hebrews 10:14 ESV) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

END EXCURSUS

2. Here is a definition of saving faith based on our context in Hebrews 10:39.

Saving faith is faith that does not shrink back from the conflict but preserves the soul.

3. The preserving work of God through saving faith prevents the recipient from shrinking back to destruction.

- (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- A. This is not a contrast between faith and unfaith but between faith that saves and faith that does not save.
 - B. Those who shrink back to destruction have faith but it is not faith that endures and saves.
 - C. This is the same misleading faith as in Matthew 7 that thrives on the easy way that leads to destruction.
 - (Matthew 7:13 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

The same word for destruction is used in Hebrews 10:39 Matthew 7:13. This destruction speaks of perishing, ruined vessels; it is eternal misery in hell.

- D. Many on a coming day who have faith that is not saving faith will be rejected by the Lord.
 - (Matthew 7:22-23 ESV)22 On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not

prophecy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” 23 And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”

E. The person who has saving faith does not shrink back but presses on toward the upward call of God.

- (Philippians 3:13-14 LSB) Brothers, I do not consider myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

4. Saving faith is strong, confident faith that trusts God to preserve the soul.

- (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- A. Saving faith maintains strong confidence in Jesus Christ and the work he accomplished on the cross.
 - B. Faith ... πίστις [pistis] ... means conviction of ... belief in something.
 - C. Saving faith means belief, trust, confidence in and reliance upon God to save us from our sins.
 - D. Saving faith preserves the possessor by protecting him from loss or danger—in this case eternal misery in hell.

5. We need to understand that in the context the faith referenced in Hebrews 11:1 is saving faith.

- A. Saving faith not only saves us but reveals the reality of what we actually have faith in.
- B. Saving faith not only saves us but provides evidence of what we believe through the Holy Spirit.
- C. The one who possesses saving faith receives evidence in his spirit by the witness of the Holy Spirit of the reality in which and by which he lives—that for which he truly hopes.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 CSB) Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 NLT) Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.
- D. This is why we have such assurance and confidence in the work of Christ and the promises of God.
- E. This assurance and conviction demonstrate the

active, ongoing nature of saving faith in relationship to the Spirit's work in our lives.

- (Hebrews 11:1 LSB) Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen.

11:1 assurance ... title deed — a legal document to effect a transfer of property and to show the legal right to possess it.

The philosophers used this term to distinguish "reality" from mere "appearance." [Cockerill, G. L. (2012). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (pp. 520-521). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.]

Assurance ... that which has foundation, is firm; that which has actual existence; a substance, real being; the substantial quality, nature, of a person or thing; the steadfastness of mind, firmness, courage, resolution.

Conviction ... convicting evidence – evidence that makes someone fully agree, understand, and realize the truth or validity of something; especially based on argument or discussion.

F. This assurance and conviction are imbedded deep in our soul as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

G. This is why the person who has saving faith knows without a doubt that he is one of God's very own by the witness of the Spirit.

- (Romans 8:15–16 LSB) **For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again,** but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 **The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.**

H. The person who has saving faith has this knowledge and this assurance **only** because the Spirit of God is revealing the thoughts of God to him.

- (1 Corinthians 2:9–12 ESV) But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"— 10 **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.** 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but**

the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

I. Saving faith provides such compelling evidence to the possessor that he looks past the temporal and lives in the reality of the eternal.

- (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.
- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 LSB) For our momentary, light affliction is working out for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 **while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;** for the things which are seen are temporal, **but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Look in 2 Corinthians 4:18 ... means to look at, observe, contemplate; to mark; to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to; to turn one's interests or expectations towards something and respond accordingly.

TEST: IS MY FAITH SAVING FAITH?

- (2 Corinthians 13:5 LSB) **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

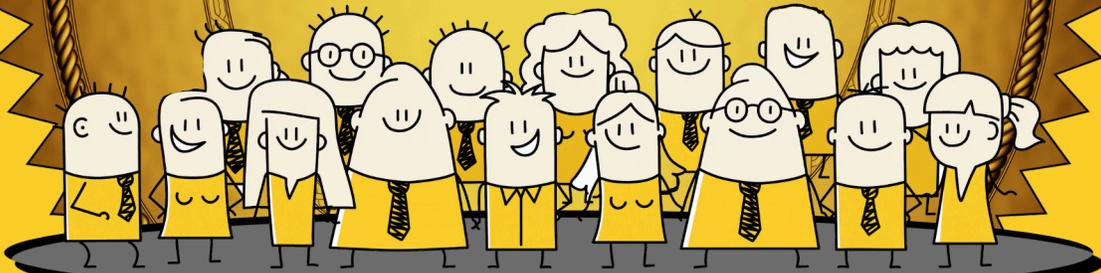


GOD IS OUR WITNESS

APPROVED OF GOD

**BUT WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO SHRINK
BACK AND ARE DESTROYED, BUT OF THOSE
WHO HAVE FAITH AND PRESERVE THEIR SOULS.**

(HEBREWS 10:39 ESV)



FAITH ... FOR BY IT THE MEN OF OLD GAINED APPROVAL.

(HEBREWS 11:2 LSB)

God is our witness. The approved of God are “of those who have faith” and who express that faith by living in reverential obedience to God in the present while having our minds set on the things above—the future hope and promises of God. As we draw near to God in reverential obedience the things that are yet future and unseen become more near and actual and reveal the context of the present reality in which we live. This is the powerful witness of God working in our lives providing further, compelling evidence that we are the approved of God—those who enter the rest of God and are welcomed into the holy places of God.

1. THE APPROVED OF GOD: God himself stands as witness on behalf of those who have saving faith, 11:1-2.

- (Hebrews 11:1–2 LSB) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 **For by it the men of old gained approval.**
- A. By faith the Old Testament saints gained God's approval.

In 11:2 we are told that the men of old gained approval. The term means to be approvingly testified of; to be or become affirmed favorably by firsthand authentication. The one giving witness here is God himself—he approvingly testifies and favorably affirms by firsthand authentication that we are approved in his sight.

The Greek word is **μαρτυρέω** [mar-too-reh-o/] ... and means to be a witness, to bear witness, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced.

- B. From days of old until present times saving faith has always been the only means of gaining God's approval.
 - (Genesis 15:6 LSB) **Then he [Abram] believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.**
 - (Romans 4:9b ESV) For we say **that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.**
 - (Romans 4:13 LSB) **For the promise to Abraham or to his seed** that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, **but through the righteousness of faith.**
- C. God's witness about the men of old was that they believed in God and consequently obeyed him.
- D. This is God's approval—God stands as witness and judge and testifies to our righteous standing based on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- E. Those who are approved of God live with “other-worldly” assurance regarding the future—this is “the reality of what we hope for” as witnessed to us by the Spirit to our spirit.
- F. Our daily choices provide **evidence** of this present reality of the Spirit's witness—**evidence** that we faithfully live in submission to the word and will of God in hope of things to come.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 NLT) **Faith shows the reality of what we hope for;** it is the **evidence** of things we cannot see.

2. THE APPROVED OF GOD: By faith we know the origins of our world, 11:3.

- (Hebrews 11:3 ESV) **By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God,** so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
 - A. **By faith we understand that God spoke the universe into existence.**
 - B. **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth in six literal days.**
 - (Genesis 1:1 LSB) **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

In Genesis 1:3 God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. Nine times (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29) in Genesis “God said” and brought our world into existence out of nothing. Ex nihilo (Latin) means out of nothing or from nothing. **Our seen world was “not made out of things that are visible.”**

- (Exodus 20:11a LSB) **For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth,** the sea and all that is in them.
- (Psalm 33:6 LSB) **By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made,** And by the breath of His mouth all their host.
- C. Understanding the biblical teaching of the holiness of God helps us grasp this concept—that God is other than we are; that he is above us and superior to us in every way as the Uncreated One.
 - (Psalm 90:2 LSB) Before the mountains were born Or You brought forth the earth and the world, **Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**
 - (Exodus 9:14 ESV) For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, **so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.**

- (Isaiah 46:9 ESV) Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.
- D. Understanding the holiness of God—his otherness—is a tremendous help for us as we seek to accept and live by his ways and thoughts.
- (Isaiah 55:8–9 LSB) “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares Yahweh. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- E. Our faith grows in proportion to our increasing awareness that God knows all and sovereignly rules over all—the known and the unknown.
- F. Now ... by faith ... of course we believe that he spoke our world into being.
- G. “Shrink-to-fit”: The error of the intellectual processes of evolution is shrinking the thoughts of the infinite mind of God to fit tiny, finite, darkened categories of human understanding.

This is the fatal flaw of every form of evolution—not accepting what God says because it does not fit human comprehension. But, of course, it is beyond our comprehension. God is God and we are not. We choose to believe what he says about himself in the Bible or we choose to believe what is within our comprehension.

Basically we choose to believe God or ourselves.

- H. When humans insist on denying the clearly seen evidence of a Creator God, they will spiral further downward into futility and darkness.
- (Romans 1:20–21 LSB) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- I. Implications: How can people understand the world in which they live if they are blind to the origins of this world and its Creator?

3. THE APPROVED OF GOD—God gives testimony of those who are righteous and pleasing to him with the examples of Abel and Enoch, 11:4-5.

- A. Abel believed God and was approved by God as being righteous, 11:4.
- (Hebrews 11:4 LSB) By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he was approved as being righteous—God approving his gifts—and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
 - He offered a better sacrifice than Cain.
 - God gave witness—approving his gifts.
 - God gave witness to his righteousness and Abel still speaks 6,000 years later.
- B. By faith Enoch was approved as being pleasing to God, 11:5.
- (Hebrews 11:5 LSB) By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for prior to being taken up, he was approved as being pleasing to God.

4. THE APPROVED OF GOD—We are given a statement of fact and the example of Noah to emphasize a crucial truth concerning faith—that without faith it is impossible to please God, 11:6-7.

- (Hebrews 11:6–7 LSB) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
- A. The statement of fact is that without faith it is impossible to please God.
- B. The person who draws near to God in faith must believe that God is and believe that God is a rewarder of those who seek him.
- C. Noah’s example helps us to understand that without faith it is impossible to please God.
- D. Noah believed that God is.
- Noah lived in a world as the only person of whom it is stated that God found favor—an evil, God-denying world on the brink of judgment.
 - (Genesis 6:5–8 LSB) Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And

Yahweh regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 And Yahweh said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I regret that I have made them.” 8 **But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.**

- ii. Noah showed that he believed God existed by receiving the warning of an unknown phenomenon that the world had never seen and would never see again—a worldwide flood.
 - (2 Peter 2:5 LSB) And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, **when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.**
- iii. Noah obeyed all that God commanded in view of the warning and the coming judgment God.
 - (Genesis 6:22 LSB) **Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.**

E. Noah believed that God is a rewarder of those who seek him.

- i. Noah endured in faith looking with hope to God’s promise.
 - (Genesis 6:18 LSB) But **I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.**
- ii. Noah endured in faith (*probably took about 55-75 years to build the ark*) with the salvation of his family in mind.
- iii. The reality Noah lived in view of—the hope God offered him to save himself and his family—and **the work he did with that hope in mind were evidence of his faith.**
- iv. Noah was approved by God and an heir of righteousness because he believed God.

F. Noah was able to believe God for the unknown because of his reverence for God.

G. He lived in reverence to God—a reality in which God was beyond him and his ways were beyond him while at the same time trusting and obeying him in the moment.

YAHWEH IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE; YAHWEH’S THRONE IS IN HEAVEN.

(PSALM 11:4A LSB)

O YAHWEH, OUR LORD, HOW MAJESTIC IS YOUR NAME IN ALL THE EARTH!

(PSALM 8:9 LSB)

BUT YAHWEH IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE. LET ALL THE EARTH BE SILENT BEFORE HIM.

(HABAKKUK 2:20 LSB)

WORSHIP YAHWEH IN THE SPLENDOR OF HOLINESS; TREMBLE BEFORE HIM, ALL THE EARTH.

(PSALM 96:9 LSB)

LET ALL THE EARTH FEAR YAHWEH; LET ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD STAND IN AWE OF HIM.

(PSALM 33:8LSB)

THE FAITHFUL ONES



**BUT WE ARE NOT LIKE THOSE WHO TURN AWAY FROM GOD TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION.
WE ARE THE FAITHFUL ONES, WHOSE SOULS WILL BE SAVED.**

(HEBREWS 10:39 NLT)

1. **The faithful ones** have entered God's rest.

- (Hebrews 4:1–3a ESV) Therefore, **while the promise of entering his rest still stands**, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 **For good news came to us just as to them**, but the message they heard did not benefit them, **because they were not united by faith with those who listened**. 3 **For we who have believed enter that rest**.
- (Hebrews 3:18–19 LSB) **And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?** 19 So we see that **they were not able to enter because of unbelief**.
- (Hebrews 4:11 ESV) **Let us therefore strive to enter that rest**, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

2. **The faithful ones** are approved by God.

- (Hebrews 11:2 LSB) For by it [*true saving faith*] the men of old gained approval.

3. **We know the faithful ones** have true, saving faith because it would be impossible for them to be approved and to please God without such faith.

- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) **And without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who draws near to God **must believe that He is** and **that He is a rewarder** of those who seek Him.

Faith, indeed, is ... the disposition which should be characteristic of the creature in relation to his Creator; for faith is that trustful reliance which finds expression in willing obedience and submission to the sovereign word of God, in grateful acknowledgment of the unmixed goodness of all his works, and in confident recognition of the complete trustworthiness of his promises. As the account of the fall in Genesis 3 shows, the failure of faith manifests itself in rebellion against God's authority, questioning of his goodness, and denial of the truth of his word. **To abandon faith is to behave as though God were not there.** [Hughes, P. E. (1977). *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (p. 460). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

We need to stop and think about this plain, simple statement—“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

- A. Impossible means impossible ... **ἀδύνατος** [adunatos] ... not having power, without strength, impotent, weakly; unable to be done; not capable of occurring or being accomplished.
- B. The person without faith does not believe that God “is” and it is impossible for him to please God.
- C. To believe God that “is” is to believe not only that he exists but also that he exists as who he is revealed to be in Scripture.
- D. It is impossible for the person who does not believe that God “is” to draw near to God.
 - i. Not believing God “is” is more than merely rejecting or denying the existence of a god.
 - ii. Not believing that God “is” not only denies his existence but is an intellectual position which in effect declares that God is not there.
 - iii. Not believing that God “is” denies the character of God—his nature and identity as separate, superior and above all creation as the uncreated One who sovereignly rules over humans.
 - iv. It follows then that not believing that God “is” is ultimately a rejection of God and his authority over humans.
- E. The person without faith does not believe that God rewards those who seek him, and so it is impossible for that person to please God.
 - i. He does not see the profit in seeking a relationship with his Creator God.
 - ii. He does not see the reward in pursuing God's wisdom and direction for his life.
- F. **Summary:** If a person does not have faith in God, then it is **impossible** ... for that person to please God.

4. **The faithful ones** live in view of the reality of the unseen kingdom of God.

- A. The faith of the faithful is substantive and revealing.
 - (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.
- B. The faith of the faithful reveals the substance of what they believe to be true—the reality in which they live in view of what they believe to be eternally important.
- C. This substance of faithful living gives evidence as to what the person actually believes concerning God, spiritual things and the future.

For instance, the person with true saving faith believes that he has an actual, literal, eternal dwelling place—*heavenly real estate*—that Jesus went ahead to prepare for him.

- (John 14:2 ESV) In my Father's house are many rooms. **If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?**
- (Hebrews 10:34 ESV) For you had compassion on those in prison, **and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**

This substantive belief in the promises of God demonstrates the validity of our faith and provides powerful external and internal witness and evidence of our trust in and reliance on God and his coming kingdom.

D. The faithful one finds his foundation for and perspective of life in the context of the unseen world and eternity as it is revealed in the word of God.

E. The person with saving faith seeks and has his mind set on things above.

- (Colossians 3:1–2 LSB) Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.**

F. Faith is setting our minds on the things of God in contrast to “unfaith” in setting our minds on the things of humans.

- (Matthew 16:22–23 ESV) And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. **For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**”

G. The mind set on the flesh is an “unfaith” mind that cannot please God and is hostile to God.

- (Romans 8:5–8 ESV) For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit **set their minds on the things of the Spirit**. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 **For the mind**

that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

H. The mind set on earthly things is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

- (Philippians 3:18–20 ESV) **For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.** 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, **with minds set on earthly things.** 20 **But our citizenship is in heaven,** and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The person with saving faith looks to the things that are unseen and eternal.

- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 ESV) For this light momentary affliction **is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,** 18 **as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.** For the things that are seen are transient, **but the things that are unseen are eternal.**

TRANSITION: THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES PROVIDE MORE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF THE FAITHFUL ONES—THOSE WHO HAVE ENTERED GOD'S REST, HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY GOD, HAVE SAVING FAITH AND HOPE IN HIS PROMISES.

5. The faithful ones live in view of the promise of one day living in the city God, 11:8-12.

- (Hebrews 11:8–12 LSB) **By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed** by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and **he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise, 10 **for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.** 11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, **since she regarded Him faithful who had promised.** 12 Therefore there were born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many **AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.**

THE REALITY OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH—THEY BELIEVED GOD AND LIVED IN HOPE OF HIS PROMISES.

- A. Abraham obeyed God's call to go based on God's promise of a future inheritance.
- B. Abraham obeyed God's call and went out not knowing where he was going.
- C. During Abraham's sojourn on Earth he was looking for the city of God—his promised destination.
- D. Abraham left what he could see and what was familiar to him for the unseen, unknown promise of God.
 - (2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV) **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**
 - (Hebrews 10:38 ESV) But my righteous one **shall live by faith**, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.
 - (Romans 1:17 ESV) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "**The righteous shall live by faith.**"
- E. Application for us: Living in view of the city of God frees us to rest fully in the promises of God and trust him with our lives on earth.
- F. Abraham's obedience gives strong evidence of his genuine faith.
- G. Abraham willingly gave up wealth and position here as he look beyond earth to the heavenly city of God.
- H. Sarah received the ability to have a baby at ninety years old because she believed God and trusted him to be faithful to his promise **...since she regarded Him faithful who had promised ...**

6. The faithful ones die in faith, 11:13-16.

- (Hebrews 11:13–16 LSB) **All these died in faith, without receiving the promises**, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been remembering that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now, they aspire to a better country, that is, a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He prepared a city for them.

- A. The faithful ones are faithful to the end—they die in the Lord—believing in and trusting him for life.
 - (Revelation 14:12–13 LSB) **Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, **Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!**" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."
- B. The faithful ones do not shrink back.
 - (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) **But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction**, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- C. The faithful ones joyfully welcome the promises of their future with God.

They died in anticipation of but not having received the fulfillment of all the promises.
- D. The faithful ones openly, freely profess their status as strangers and exiles on the earth.
- E. The faithful ones make it clear they are seeking their true home.
- F. Having their minds set on their new country, the faithful ones avoid the temptation of returning to the land they left.
- G. The old country is now a distant memory as they have their sites set on a better country—on heaven.
- H. God is proud of the faithful ones and has prepared a city for them.



VERIFIED TEST RESULTS

✓ Abraham

✓ Isaac

✓ Jacob

✓ Joseph

✓ Amram

✓ Jochebed

✓ Moses

✓ _____

✓ _____



PASSING THE FAITH TEST
—BELIEVING GOD FOR LIFE—

PART ONE:
ABRAHAM, THE MAN WHO BELIEVED GOD.

1. Abraham is arguably the greatest example of faith in the Bible based on the extensive and in depth accounts of his life and his decisions of faith.

- A. Abraham believed God.
- B. His faith journey began in Ur of the Chaldeans and continued and grew throughout his life.
- C. Abraham believed God in such a way that God counted it to him as righteousness.
 - (Genesis 15:6 ESV) **And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**
- D. Abraham's life of strong confidence in and obedience to God defines biblical faith.

Faith (pistes) means ... to believe; believing to the extent to have strong confidence in, and reliance upon, someone or something; often with the object of trust understood.

2. God tested Abraham throughout his life beginning at Ur and when he was tested at these various junctures ... by faith he obeyed God, 11:17-19.

- (Hebrews 11:17–19 LSB) **By faith Abraham, when he was tested,** offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only son, 18 to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he also received him back.
- A. Abraham was one of God's righteous ones who lived by faith—he believed God.
 - (Romans 1:17b ESV) As it is written, "**The righteous shall live by faith.**"
- B. Living by faith was his modus operandi and so offering up Isaac was by faith.
- C. Abraham passed the test and his willingness to offer up Isaac—an obedient work of faith—demonstrates the genuine and complete nature of his faith.
 - (James 2:21–23 ESV) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22

You see that faith was active along with his works, **and faith was completed by his works**; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness**"—and he was called a friend of God.

Completed ... τελειόω [teleioo] ... to perfect; to make complete of its kind and without defect or blemish; to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end; to complete (perfect); add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full; to be found perfect; to accomplish.

3. For Abraham to pass the faith test and offer up Isaac he had to trust in the Lord with all his heart.

- A. Trusting in the Lord with all his heart meant turning away from any scenarios that he would create in his mind as a result of leaning on his own understanding.
 - (Proverbs 3:5–7 ESV) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him,** and he will make straight your paths. 7 **Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.**
- B. Abraham considered that God might raise Isaac from the dead but he didn't consider God's very simple solution of providing an actual, literal lamb.
 - (Genesis 22:8 ESV) Abraham said, "**God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering,** my son." So they went both of them together.
 - (Genesis 22:12–13 LSB) And He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the boy, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me." 13 **Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there was a ram after it had been caught in the thicket by its horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.**
- C. Biblical faith is fully and completely trusting in the Lord and fully and completely **not** trusting in our own understanding.
 - (1 Corinthians 2:1–5 LSB) And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with superiority of word or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the witness of God. 2

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 **so that your faith would not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**

D. Being tested in this way proves more to us in regard to understanding who we are and what we are made of than it proves or reveals to God.

E. To be tested means to be put to the test in order to ascertain the nature of someone, including imperfections, faults, or other qualities.

The Greek word is πειράζω [piradzo] and means to try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor; to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself.

4. Abraham did not believe God with the intent of working for his right position before God.

- (Romans 4:1–8 ESV) What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”** 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 **And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,** 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

PART TWO: OTHERS WHO ALSO BELIEVED GOD.

1. Isaac passed the faith test when he blessed Jacob and Esau believing God for his promise of things to come, 11:20.

- (Hebrews 11:20 LSB) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

2. Jacob passed the faith test as he was dying in faith (see 11:13), worshiping God and leaning on his staff but still blessed each of the sons of Joseph, 11:21.

- (Hebrews 11:21 LSB) By faith Jacob, **as he was dying**, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and **WORSHIPED**, leaning **ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF**.
- (Hebrews 11:13 LSB) **All these died in faith, without receiving the promises**, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

3. Joseph passed the faith test as he was dying in faith (see 11:13) and looked ahead to the promised exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, 11:22.

- (Hebrews 11:22 LSB) By faith Joseph, **when he was dying**, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave commands concerning his bones.

4. Amram and Jochebed passed the faith test because they trusted God more than they feared the king and so they hid Moses, 11:23.

- (Hebrews 11:23 LSB) By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.
- (Exodus 1:22 LSB) And Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, **“Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile,** and every daughter you are to keep alive.”
- (Exodus 2:1–3 LSB) And a man from the house of Levi went and took a daughter of Levi as a wife. 2 And the woman conceived and bore a son; and she saw that he was beautiful, so she hid him for three months. 3 But she could not hide him any longer. So she took for him an ark of papyrus reeds and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and put it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.
- (Exodus 6:20 ESV) **Amram** took as his wife

Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years.

- (Numbers 26:59 ESV) **The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi**, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister.

5. The faith tests of Moses, 11:24-29.

A. Moses passed the faith test by choosing the insults, disgrace and public reproach of following Christ as greater riches than the enjoyment of the passing pleasures of sin, 11:24-26.

- (Hebrews 11:24–26 LSB) By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 regarding the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

B. Moses passed the faith test by leaving Egypt— looking to the unseen King of all and not fearing the king of the land, 11:27.

- (Hebrews 11:27 LSB) By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the rage of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

C. Moses passed the faith test by trusting God and keeping the Passover, 11:28.

- (Hebrews 11:28 LSB) By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

D. Moses passed the faith test by leading the Israelites through the Red Sea as if they were walking on dry land, 11:29.

- (Hebrews 11:29 LSB) By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land, and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

WE ARE THE FAITHFUL ONES ...

APPROVED BY GOD ...

BELIEVING GOD FOR LIFE ...



WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK ...

THE HALL OF FAITH WHAT MATTERS

BY FAITH ... ABEL, ENOCH, NOAH, ABRAHAM,
SARAH, ISAAC, JACOB, JOSEPH, MOSES, RAHAB,
GIDEON, BARAK, SAMSON, JEPHTHAH, DAVID, SAMUEL,
THE PROPHETS AND OTHERS ...



WE BELIEVED GOD

WE WALKED WORTHY

WE DIED IN FAITH

... WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO SHRINK BACK TO DESTRUCTION, BUT OF THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH ...

(HEBREWS 10:39 LSB)

1. By faith we do not shrink back but continue to believe God to the very end and forever, 10:39.

A. True faith believes God in everything and does not shrink back but continues believing God forever.

This is the conundrum ... the life of faith is not just a this-worldly phenomenon. It stretches beyond our earthly existence into the next. [Osborne, G. R., & Guthrie, G. H. (2021). *Hebrews: Verse by Verse* (p. 263). Lexham Press.]

- (Hebrews 10:39 LSB) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.
- (1 John 3:23 ESV) And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

B. True faith assures us of our hope in God's unseen purpose and his approval of our lives.

- (Hebrews 11:1–2 LSB) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

C. By faith we please God and draw near to him.

- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

D. By faith we die in faith while joyfully welcoming and embracing the promises even though having yet to receive them.

- (Hebrews 11:13 LSB) All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

11:13 welcome ... [aspazomai] ... to draw to one's self; to greet, wish well to; to receive joyfully; greeting one another not merely by a slight gesture and a few words, but generally by embracing and kissing.

2. The writer of Hebrews uses the phrase "by faith" **eighteen times** in Hebrews eleven stressing its relevance, importance and significance to us.

A. Faith ... [pistis] ... is belief, trust, strong confidence in and reliance upon; conviction of the truth; believe to a complete trust.

B. The people mentioned in Hebrews 11 had entered God's rest by faith in Jesus Christ.

- (Hebrews 4:2–3a ESV) For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest.

C. And they continued by faith, not shrinking back.

- (Hebrews 10:38–39 LSB) BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH, AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

D. By faith ... Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets and others ... believed, trusted, relied upon and had strong confidence in God.

3. By faith we trust in and rely upon God for impossible victories, 11:30.

A. The people believed that Yahweh would give the city into their hand and obeyed his instructions, 11:30.

- (Hebrews 11:30 LSB) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. [c. 1400 BC]
- (Joshua 6:1–2 LSB) Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out, and no one came in. 2 And Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors."

B. Yahweh promised victory and Israel believed and obeyed and the walls of Jericho fell.

4. By faith Rahab knew and believed Yahweh, 11:31.

A. From our very limited human perspective Rahab, being a prostitute and a pagan, was a very unlikely candidate to become a person of faith.

- (James 2:25 LSB) And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?
- (Matthew 21:32a LSB) ... John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him.

B. Possibly even more unlikely was Rahab becoming part of the family ancestry of the Lord Jesus Christ as observed in Matthew's genealogy.

- (Matthew 1:5 LSB) And Salmon was the father

of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed was the father of Jesse.

That her [Rahab's] faith was genuine is confirmed by Matthew when he lists her as one of the ancestors of Jesus. She went on to marry Salmon and became the mother of Boaz, and thus the great-grandmother of David. [Stedman, R. C. (1992). *Hebrews* (Heb 11:30-31). IVP Academic.]

C. Rahab obeyed the truth that was revealed to her, much as Abram did when he was called as a pagan from Ur of the Chaldeans.

- (Hebrews 11:31 LSB) By faith **Rahab the harlot** did not perish **along with those who were disobedient**, after welcoming the spies in peace.

By describing the other citizens of Jericho as “those who were disobedient” the pastor indicates that Rahab’s accepting the spies was an act of obedience to God’s word. [Cockerill, G. L. (2012). *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (pp. 584-585). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.]

D. Rahab helped the spies escape because she knew that God had given them the land.

Rahab received and acted upon the truth that was revealed to her regarding the nature and character of Yahweh and as a consequence she came to know him as God in heaven above and on earth below.

E. Rahab had such faith regarding the power and purpose of Yahweh that she “knew” that Yahweh had given them the land.

- (Joshua 2:8-14 LSB) Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof 9 and said to the men, “**I know that Yahweh has given you the land**, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. 10 For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. 11 Indeed we heard it, and our hearts melted, and a courageous spirit no longer rose up in any man because of you; **for Yahweh your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath**. 12 So now, please swear to me by Yahweh, since I have shown

lovingkindness to you, **that you also will show lovingkindness to my father’s household and give me a pledge of truth**, 13 and preserve my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters alive, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” 14 So the men said to her, “Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it will be when Yahweh gives us the land that we will show lovingkindness and truth to you.”

F. Rahab knew that Yahweh is God in heaven above and on earth below and so threw herself and the fate of her family on the lovingkindness of God.

- (Deuteronomy 4:39 LSB) **Know therefore today, and take it to your heart**, that Yahweh, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

5. By faith we fight temporal battles in view of eternal outcomes, 11:32-38.

A. The writer of Hebrews states that time would be insufficient to recount the daring feats and heroic acts of those who prevailed over this world by faith—by believing God.

B. All our battles of faith are to be fought, not in view of what is seen, but in view of the unseen—the eternal.

- (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 LSB) For **our momentary, light affliction is working out for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**, 18 **while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal**.

C. Some deeds of faith are perceptible (outward and visible) in the seen, temporal realm.

Historical context ... The period of the judges was approximately 1350-1050 BC.

- (Hebrews 11:32-35a LSB) And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I recount Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, as well as David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 **who through faith** conquered kingdoms, performed righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, **escaped the edge of the sword**, were made strong from weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection.

D. Other deeds of faith are perceptible and understood only in the context of eternity.

- (Hebrews 11:35b–38 LSB) **And others** were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 **and others** experienced mockings and floggings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, **they were put to death with the sword**. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, mistreated 38 **(of whom the world was not worthy)**, wandering in desolate places and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

E. What matters is not the visible, temporal effect or perception but the eternal result.

F. The world is not worthy of those who by faith walk worthy of God and the kingdom of God.

G. It is by God's providence that some "escaped the edge of the sword" (11:34) and others "were put to death with the sword" (11:37).

H. The person of faith walks worthy of his calling.

- (Ephesians 4:1 LSB) Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, **exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called**.

I. The person of faith walks worthy of the gospel.

- (Philippians 1:27 LSB) **Only live your lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about your circumstances, **that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind contending together for the faith of the gospel**.

J. The person of faith walks worthy of the Lord.

- (Colossians 1:9–10a LSB) For this reason also, since the day we heard, **we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, 10 **so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**.

K. The person of faith walks worthy of God and his kingdom and glory.

- (1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 LSB) Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and bearing witness to each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 **so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory**.

6. By faith we wait together with the faithful men and women of old for something better, 11:39-40.

- (Hebrews 11:39–40 ESV) And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 **since God had provided something better for us**, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.
- A. The saints of all ages—both old and new testaments—will one day will receive everything God has promised to us.**
- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him**.
- B. ... And even more if we were to think on the incomparable, abundant nature of the spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ.**
- (Ephesians 1:3 LSB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**.
- C. What is promised is more than worth the wait—the glory that will be revealed to us.**
- (Romans 8:18 LSB) For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us**.
 - (2 Corinthians 4:17 LSB) For our momentary, light affliction is working out **for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**.
 - (1 Peter 4:13 ESV) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, **that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed**.

RUNNING THE RACE SET BEFORE US



**THE TESTIMONY OF THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES
AND WHAT WE MUST LEARN FROM THEM TO KEEP RUNNING**

1. We need to understand that the main purpose of these witnesses is that we learn endurance from their testimony, 12:1a.

A. The foundation of their lives was based on what they hoped for and so their lives gave evidence that they lived in view of the eternal—the things not seen.

- (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

B. They did not shrink back.

- (Hebrews 10:39 ESV) But we are **not of those who shrink back** and are destroyed, **but of those who have faith** and preserve their souls.

C. By faith they were approved by God.

- (Hebrews 11:2 LSB) For by it the men of old gained approval.

D. By faith they understood that God created the universe by speaking it into existence.

- (Hebrews 11:3 LSB) By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

E. By faith they pleased God, drew near to him, believed he existed and was a rewarder of those who seek him.

- (Hebrews 11:6 LSB) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

F. They held God in such reverence as to obey him in view of impossible challenges.

Challenges such as building an ark while waiting for a world wide flood, leaving your home not knowing where you were going, having a baby when you are ninety years old, etc.

G. They believed God in victory or defeat, life or death.

- (Hebrews 11:34 LSB) Quenched the power of fire, **escaped the edge of the sword**, were made strong from weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.
- (Hebrews 11:37a LSB) They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, **they were put to death with the sword**.

2. We need to understand that our main focus in regard to the race set before us is that we run with endurance—we keep running, 12:1.

- (Hebrews 12:1 LSB) Therefore, **since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us**, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**.

A. Surround ourselves with the testimony of those who ran to the end.

The main emphasis is **not** that these people are cheering for us, although we can be assured that they are, but that we are to look at the testimony of their lives ... the good, the bad and the very ugly. **They ran, they sometimes stumbled greatly, but they kept running.**

God has specifically and intentionally listed people who stand out not for their testimony of right choices and personal victories but who stand out for the witness that through victory and defeat they kept believing God and kept running. No matter what, even when, especially when, their great flaws of character and sinful behavior were exposed, they knew to look past themselves and their failures to the grace of God.

B. Those who run to the end keep believing God over anyone else (including themselves) and the circumstances and challenges of their lives.

C. During our race we will be surrounded by influences that encourage us to keep running or influences that keep us from running.

D. To keep running we must lay aside every distraction and sin that may surround us and stop us from running.

E. We must make a commitment to identify and lay aside the distractions of this world and the sin that has the potential to surround us and choke out the words of God.

- i. **Do not be surrounded and so conformed to the things of this world.**

This is Romans 12: 2 stated differently. Present ourselves to God, **surround ourselves with the testimony of faith, and do not be surrounded by the things of this world** and so be conformed to this world.

- (Romans 12:1–2 LSB) Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a

sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

ii. Good seed planted in soil in which thorns will surround it will be unfruitful—the person will stop running.

- (Matthew 13:22 ESV) **As for what was sown among thorns**, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches **choke the word**, and it proves unfruitful.

F. We must keep running the race with deliberate, steadfast purpose.

Endurance ... steadfastness, constancy, endurance; the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose; patiently, and steadfastly; a patient enduring, sustaining, perseverance.

G. We must keep running the race that is set before us.

God is sovereign, infinitely wise and purposeful in setting before us our particular race—our lot in life.

i. To keep running we must be led by the Spirit.

We will discuss later in our Hebrews study the person who misses out on grace and succumbs to the root of bitterness.

- (Hebrews 12:15 ESV) **See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble**, and by it many become defiled.

The person who is led by the Spirit is at the opposite end of the spectrum, the polar opposite of the person who has been taken by the root of bitterness.

- (Galatians 5:22–23 LSB) **But the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

ii. To keep running we must be led by God on the way everlasting.

- (Psalm 139:23–24 LSB) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, **And lead me in the everlasting way**.

iii. To keep running we must be led by the Spirit of God through the word of God.

3. We are instructed to run our race looking to Jesus which means looking away from everything else so that we may keep running, 12:2.

- (Hebrews 12:2 LSB) **Fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A. We are to look to Jesus—fixing our eyes on him—and away from everything else.

Sincerely, wholeheartedly looking to Jesus means we look to him so fully and completely that we turn away from all other influences.

We look to the testimony of Jesus who for the joy set before him endured the cross. He despised the shame meaning he looked down with contempt on the shame as he looked to the glory of the fulfillment of his work on the cross. And Jesus won. He finished his work and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Isn't that interesting in view of the following text in Ephesians.

- (Ephesians 2:4–6 ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

B. So we look ahead to the joy set before us.

- (1 Peter 1:6–8 ESV) **In this you rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 **so that the tested genuineness of your faith**—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—**may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, **you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory**.

C. We turn our interests and expectations to the glory to come and away from the glory of this world.

- (2 Corinthians 4:17–18 ESV) For **this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal**

weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but **the things that are unseen are eternal.**

To look to – to turn one’s interests or expectations towards something and respond accordingly.

D. We set our hope fully on the grace to come.

- (1 Peter 1:13 ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

4. Another necessary step of obedience to help us to keep running is that we are to consider Jesus who has endured such intense hostility by sinners against himself, 12:3.

- (Hebrews 12:3 LSB) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary, fainting in heart.

A. We consider what Jesus went through.

B. He endured much greater hostility than we will ever experience and came through victoriously.

C. VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION: Who were the sinners that had such hostility against Jesus?

Think about it. The intense, murderous hostility that Jesus endured—horrible lies, accusations, death. Where did these things originate? Who did this?

What group of people were at the forefront of the hatred directed to our Lord?

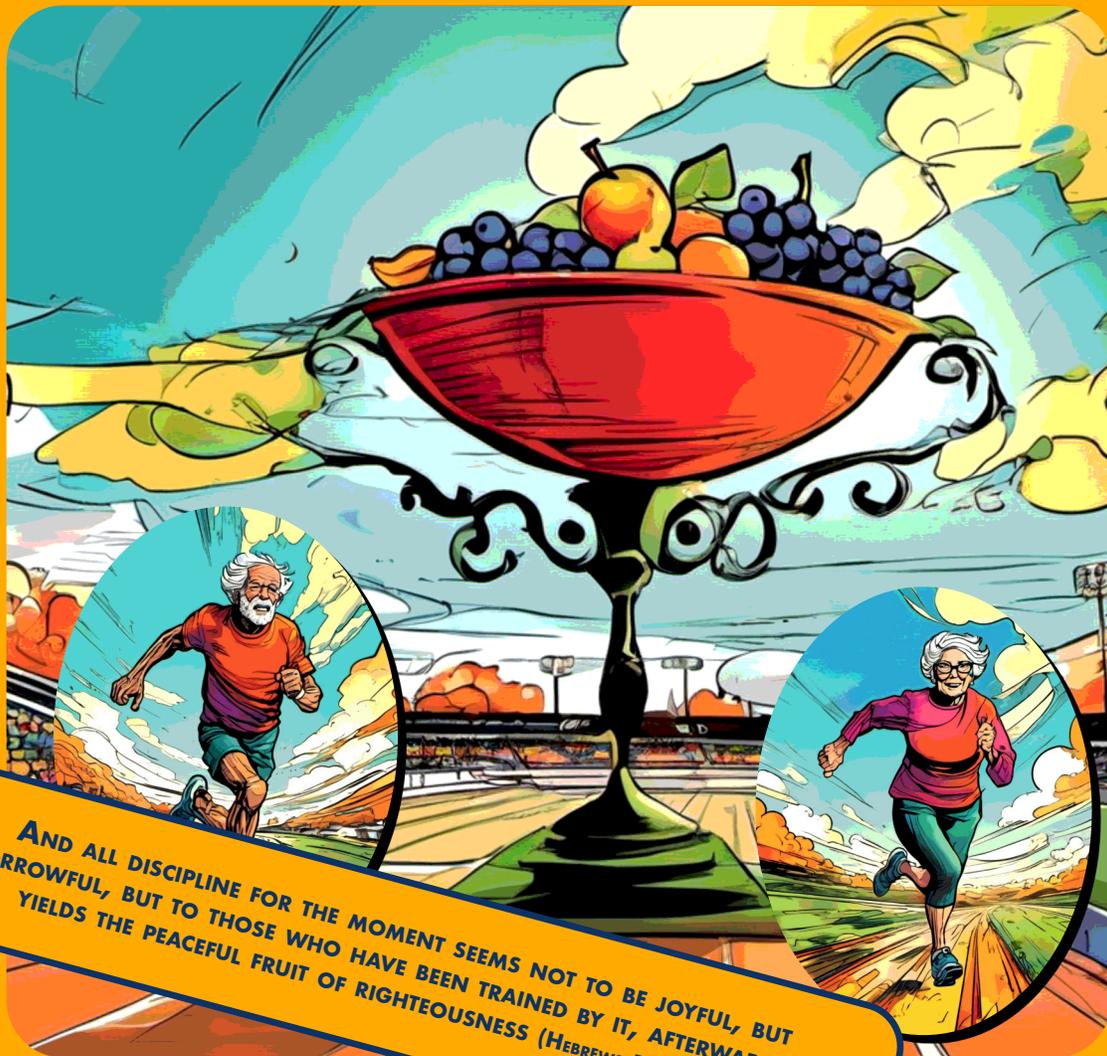
Who demanded his death and led the crowds to demand his crucifixion?

Now ask ourselves ... is that relevant today ... and, if so, how is it relevant?

D. We consider Jesus in this way so that we will not grow weary and fainting in heart and stop running.

**ACCEPT THE DIFFICULTY, REMEMBER THE EXHORTATION,
EMBRACE THE DISCIPLINE, JOYFULLY ANTICIPATE THE HARVEST**

How to Run with ENDURANCE



AND ALL DISCIPLINE FOR THE MOMENT SEEMS NOT TO BE JOYFUL, BUT SORROWFUL, BUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT, AFTERWARDS IT YIELDS THE PEACEFUL FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (HEBREWS 12:11 LSB).

1. **Accept** the difficulty—the race is hard, 12:3-4.

- (Hebrews 12:3–4 LSB) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary, fainting in heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.
- A. This is not saying that we will shed blood but that physical harm is possible maybe unto death.
- B. The lesson here is that we must accept that the race set before us is difficult and may become even more difficult.
- C. Enduring hostility and striving against sin are always on the horizon for those of us who look to Jesus and stay true to the gospel.
- (Hebrews 12:1b–2a LSB) Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus.
- D. Resisting conformity to this world and resisting false teaching in the Church is striving against sin which leads to persecution.
- (Galatians 6:12 NLT) Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save.
 - (2 Timothy 3:10–13 NIV) You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- E. We need to remember that we began the race by entering through the narrow starting gate.
- (Matthew 7:13–14 LSB) Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.
- F. We need to understand that entering through the narrow starting gate our raceway is constricted and our only choice is to follow Jesus no matter what.

- (Matthew 16:24–25 ESV) Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

2. **Remember** the exhortation, 12:5-6.

- (Hebrews 12:5-6 LSB) And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE FLOGS EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”
- A. Do not forget the exhortation—the supportive words of the Father to us his sons (and daughters).
- Forget ... to forget completely; to lose remembrance of something entirely.
- B. His love for us and his relationship to us as his sons began before the foundation of the world.
- (Ephesians 1:4–5 ESV) Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- C. We must not forget that our Father has clearly spoken regarding his relationship to us as his adopted sons who are also fellow heirs with Christ.
- (Romans 8:15–17 LSB) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, also heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

D. Do not regard lightly the discipline of the LORD.

Do not take what is heavy from the LORD’s perspective and make it light in regard what is happening in our lives. This teaching is weighty; it is of extreme importance in regard to our sanctification.

E. The discipline of the LORD is a very weighty matter.

Regarding discipline as weighty gives us clarity and perspective. We understand what the

LORD is doing during this time of trial. Regarding it lightly blurs our perspective and replaces clarity with confusion and doubt regarding God's will and his care for us as Shepherd of our souls.

F. Embrace the weighty concept of the Father's discipline as an expression of his infinite, eternal love toward his children.

- i. Discover the Father's amazing love that abounds through this discipline.
- ii. Learn to identify the truly powerful nature of the Father's love in his discipline of our lives.
- iii. Submit to this training in godliness and learn how his discipline is necessary to our sanctification. Discover and praise God for his love to us in this process.

John MacArthur speaking of the love of God ...

He loves us. He has set His love on us. It's an unbreakable love. If He started loving, He will love to the end. It has no deviation. It means completely, perfectly, fully, utterly, to the max, to the end, both in terms of capacity and eternity. He loves as much as He can love. As much as God can love, that's how much He loves.

HOW HE LOVES YOU AND ME.

G. Do not be so overwhelmed with life that we are tempted to forget what God has told us concerning the trials and tests of life.

- (Romans 5:3–5 ESV) Not only that, but **we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance**, 4 and **endurance produces character**, and **character produces hope**, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Suffering produces endurance ... produces character ... produces hope. People who are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ are hopeful because the Holy Spirit is pouring God's love into our hearts. **The process begins with rejoicing in suffering.**

- (1 Peter 4:12 LSB) Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you for your testing**, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

God's discipline should not surprise us, but it does because we, like those to whom the

pastor is writing this text, sometimes forget completely what he has told us.

- (James 1:2–3 NIV) **Consider it pure joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces **perseverance**.

We are to consider it pure joy as we face various assorted trials. Why? Because God is at work in our lives producing perseverance (endurance) which enables us to keep running and continue our training by the hand of God.

H. Do not faint when we are strongly reprovved by the LORD.

- i. Do not **misinterpret** the LORD's discipline and have it to be something that causes us to faint rather than enables us to endure.
- ii. Do not **reinterpret** the LORD's discipline and imagine it do be something that causes us to live in denial which will also cause us to faint and not endure.

3. Embrace the discipline, 12:7-10.

- (Hebrews 12:7–11 LSB) **It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons**; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 **But if you are without discipline**, of which all have become partakers, **then you are illegitimate children and not sons**. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, **but He disciplines us for our benefit, so that we may share His holiness**.

A. We need to understand the nature and purpose of the Father's discipline.

B. Discipline is training is sanctification.

C. We run with endurance to continue our training—our sanctification.

D. Discipline is God's means of accomplishing his stated purpose for us in conforming us to the image of his beloved Son.

- (Romans 8:28–29a LSB) And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. 29 **Because those whom He foreknew, He**

also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.**

- (1 Corinthians 15:47–49 ESV) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.**
- (1 John 3:2 ESV) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; **but we know that when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is.
- (Ephesians 1:4–5 ESV) **Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.** In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will.**

E. THE BENEFIT: SO THAT WE MAY SHARE HIS HOLINESS.

- (Hebrews 12:10b LSB) ... He disciplines us for our **benefit**, **so that we may share his holiness.**

R.C. Sproul ... Holiness is the characteristic of God's nature that is at the very core of His being.

The **benefit** of God's discipline to us is that we will share with God what is at the very core of his being.

God is other than us—different.

Sproul ... That Which Is Different ... I notice in our own language and vocabulary, the term holy seems to be used among us, particularly among Christians, as a synonym for moral purity or righteousness. ... However, the primary meaning of the word is "separate." ... That which is holy is that which is other—that which is different from something else.

When the Bible speaks about God's holiness, the primary thrust of those statements is to refer to God's transcendence, to His magnificence, to that sense in which God is higher and superior to anything there is in the creaturely realm.

MacArthur quoting ... In speaking of the holiness of God, it is good, perhaps, to begin with something of a definition. It was A. A. Hodge who said, "The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others. It is rather a general term representing the conception of God's consummate perfection and total glory. It is His infinite moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and power."

Sproul ... God's being, His self-existence, His being is utterly separate from ours, and He made that so clear. His is being and ours is becoming. He is utterly distinct from us. ... He is other than we are as to the essence of His existence, His nature. ... He is incomparable. He is infinite perfection.

4. Joyfully anticipate the harvest, 12:11.

- (Hebrews 12:11 LSB) And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, **but to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

A. Understand discipline for what God says it is and not for what it may seem to be at the moment.

B. Look past sorrow to joy.

C. Joyfully anticipate the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- (Romans 15:13 LSB) Now may the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- (1 Peter 4:13–14 NKJV) But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, **you may also be glad with exceeding joy.** 14 **If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** On their part He is blasphemed, **but on your part He is glorified.**
- (Jude 24–25 NKJV) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless **Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,** 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

WE WILL FINISH THE RACE

... BECAUSE NOT FINISHING THE RACE IS NOT AN OPTION

... NOT FINISHING THE RACE IS NOT AN OPTION



We will finish the race because we have been trained by the LORD himself and he will bring us to ultimate victory.

THE PEACEFUL FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS



Our LORD is with us every step of the way and he will provide all the strength and nourishment we need for the entire length of the journey.

HOLINESS WITHOUT WHICH NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD

GRACE

1. Not finishing the race is not an option for those who have entered the race, Hebrews 10:39.

- (Hebrews 10:39 *PARAPHRASE*) We are not of those who quit running and fall out of the race to our damnation, but we are of those who keep running and prove our faith to be genuine to the saving of our soul.

A. Not finishing the race reveals that your faith is fake.

B. Not finishing the race reveals that you never entered the race—i.e. God's rest.

- (Hebrews 4:1–3a LSB) **Therefore, let us fear, lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it.** ² For indeed we have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they also; **but the word that was heard did not profit those who were not united with faith among those who heard.**
- (Hebrews 4:3 ESV) **For we who have believed enter that rest,** as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, **‘They shall not enter my rest.’**”

C. Jesus directs us to the only true starting gate by which we may enter the race.

- (Matthew 7:13 LSB) **Enter through the narrow gate;** for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, **and there are many who enter through it.**

D. Those who choose the wrong gate may run beside us for a time but they will at some point fall out of the race revealing their counterfeit faith.

2. It is the will of the Father that those who enter the race will finish the race—we will be brought to glory by God the Father and God the Son.

- (Hebrews 2:10 NIV) **In bringing many sons and daughters to glory,** it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, **should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.**
- (John 6:39–40 LSB) **Now this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing,** but raise it up on the last day. **40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life,** and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

3. God trains those he loves and nourishes us on the peaceful fruit of righteousness so that we may finish the race, 12:10-11.

- (Hebrews 12:6 ESV) **For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,** and chastises every son whom he receives.

A. Because of his loving discipline we are able to keep running because we share life with him and are **nourished on the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

- (Hebrews 12:10b–11 LSB) ... **He disciplines us for our benefit,** so that we may share His holiness. **11 And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, but to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

B. Those who are **nourished on the peaceful fruit of righteousness** hear God speak peace to his people, his holy ones.

- (Psalm 85:8–9 LSB) Let me hear what the God, Yahweh, will speak; **For He will speak peace to His people,** to His holy ones; But let them not turn back to folly. **9 Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,** That glory may dwell in our land.

C. Those who are **nourished on the peaceful fruit of righteousness** come to love God's word and live in hope before the LORD.

- (Psalm 119:165–167 ESV) **Great peace have those who love your law;** nothing can make them stumble. **166 I hope for your salvation, O LORD, and I do your commandments.** **167 My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.**

D. Being **nourished by the peaceful fruit of righteousness** results in further sustenance in preparation for what lies ahead in the race.

- (Isaiah 32:17 ESV) And **the effect of righteousness** will be peace, and **the result of righteousness,** quietness and trust forever.

E. Those who refuse to pay attention to God's words **never come to taste the peaceful fruit of righteousness** and drift off the track into the darkness

- (Hebrews 2:1 ESV) **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,** lest we drift away from it.
- (Isaiah 48:17–18 LSB) Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, **‘I am Yahweh your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.** **18 If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’**

4. Since not finishing the race is not an option we have a responsibility to all those running with us to exhort and strengthen them to keep running, 12:12.

- (Hebrews 12:12 LSB) Therefore, STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT ARE WEAK AND THE KNEES THAT ARE FEEBLE.

A. We have a God-given, sacred stewardship to strengthen and exhort the weak, feeble and fallen.

- (Isaiah 35:3–4 ESV) **Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.** 4 **Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not!** Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”
- (1 Thessalonians 5:14–15 ESV) And we urge you, brothers, **admonish** the idle, **encourage** the fainthearted, **help** the weak, **be patient with them all.** 15 **See that no one repays anyone evil for evil,** but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.
- (Galatians 6:1 ESV) Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, **you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.** Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

5. Our stewardship involves making straight paths for the lame so they may be healed, 12:13.

- (Hebrews 12:13 LSB) **And make straight paths for your feet,** so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

A. We make straight paths for our group of runners by consistent, biblical exposition of the Scriptures which provides hope and encouragement.

- (Romans 15:1–4 ESV) **We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.** 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, **to build him up.** 3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” 4 For whatever was written in former days **was written for our instruction,** that through **endurance** and through the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have hope.

B. We make straight paths by keeping our hearts with all vigilance and putting away sinful speech.

- (Proverbs 4:23–27 ESV) **Keep your heart with all vigilance,** for from it flow the springs of life. 24 **Put away from you crooked speech,** and

put devious talk far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. 26 **Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.** 27 **Do not swerve to the right or to the left;** turn your foot away from evil.

C. We make straight paths by looking ahead and pondering the direction of the race set before us.

6. God disciplines/trains us and commissions us be part of the discipline/training of others—seeing to it, that as much as is possible, no one falls short of the grace of God, 12:14-15.

- (Hebrews 12:14–15 LSB) **Pursue peace** with all men, and the **sanctification** without which no one will see the Lord, 15 **seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God;** that no **ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSES TROUBLE,** and by it **many be defiled.**

A. First, we must acknowledge that it is only by grace alone are we able to keep running.

B. As we run by grace alone we develop a desire to help others taste the goodness of God in this way.

C. Our stewardship as fellow runners includes helping people understand and accept the blessing of the training of the LORD so that they might share in his holiness and be nourished by the peaceful fruit of righteousness as they run.

D. We have a responsibility to be aware—because of the nature of those running—that multiple tensions may develop within a church fellowship.

Tensions may develop because ... our lives are changing as we are under the LORD's discipline ... some haven't obeyed and are carrying extra weight and are entangled with sin ... there are people running alongside us but they are not of us ... some do not like the narrow aspect of the course ... some are upset because they do not get what they want and make sinful demands from wrong motives ... jealousy, spiritual immaturity and worldliness.

- (1 Corinthians 3:3 NIV) You are still worldly. **For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly?** Are you not acting like mere humans?

E. We must determine to relate to people and their struggles by building and promoting an environment built on the grace of God.

F. One way we do this is by actively pursuing peace with all those involved.

Romans 12 gives us excellent guidelines to living peaceably with the people around us.

- (Romans 12:14–19, 21 ESV) **Bless those who persecute you**; bless and do not curse them. 15 **Rejoice with those who rejoice**, weep with those who weep. 16 **Live in harmony** with one another. **Do not be haughty**, but associate with the lowly. **Never be wise in your own sight**. 17 **Repay no one evil for evil**, but **give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all**. 18 **If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all**. 19 Beloved, **never avenge yourselves**, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ... 21 **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good**.

If we are overwhelmed with contentions in the body, then we will not be as concerned as we should be for the eternal destiny of those around us and those who are contending are going to find it nearly impossible to hear God speak necessary words to them. So sometimes we need to bring God’s grace into their lives through church discipline.

7. There is a difference between falling from and falling short or falling away from the grace of God.

- (Hebrews 12:15–17 LSB) **Seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God**; that no ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSES TROUBLE, **and by it many be defiled**; 16 that also there be no sexually immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.
- A. The person who falls short of or away from the grace of God has never come to know the grace of God.
 - B. So we need to “see to it” (as much as depends on us) that they learn and experience what God teaches in his Bible concerning the doctrine of grace.
 - C. A person who holds to a wrong concept of grace may run alongside us for a while but will ultimately fall away because only by grace will we finish the race.
 - D. A person who cannot let go of his good works will never experience the grace of God.

- (Romans 11:6 LSB) **But if it is by grace, it is no longer of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace**.

E. Esau fell short of the grace of God—he never came to understand the value of what he had been offered.

8. A tragic consequence of falling short of the grace of God is falling further into rebellion and becoming a root of bitterness that defiles many.

- (Deuteronomy 29:18–19a ESV) **Beware** lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe **whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God** to go and serve the gods of those nations. **Beware** lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, 19 one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, **blesses himself in his heart**, saying, “I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.”
- A. Every human religion, false gospel, philosophy, etc. falls short of the grace of God.
 - B. This text in Deuteronomy establishes a link between a person turning his heart away to the gods of the land and a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit.
 - C. Our Hebrews text calls it a root of bitterness that springs up and causes trouble defiling many.
 - D. This spirit of rebellion springs up from the absence of grace in the person’s life.

9. As we run our race, we will face an ongoing decision as to our source of nourishment.

- A. We choose to stay on the path of life and continue to be nourished by the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- B. Or we choose to swerve off the path and be nourished on the root of bitterness which leads to further rebellion and defiles many.

10. **CONCLUSION**: Church discipline is the logical, biblical progression of the LORD’s discipline toward those whom he loves.

Grace is the only rescue for those who have taken the wrong turn into bitterness and rebellion. So grace the Church must bring ... grace in the form of church discipline ... discipline according to the word of God and as directed by the Holy Spirit of God ...

THE TALE OF TWO MOUNTAINS



WE HAVE COME TO MOUNT ZION
(UNLESS WE HAVEN'T)



THE TALE OF TWO MOUNTAINS

PART ONE: SINAI—LAW MOUNTAIN

ONLY SADNESS AND TRAGEDY AWAIT THOSE WHO FIND THEMSELVES AT LAW MOUNTAIN ...

1. The pastor informed his people—You have not come to Mount Sinai, 12:18-21.

- (Hebrews 12:18–21 LSB) **For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched** and to a **blazing fire**, and **to darkness and gloom and whirlwind**, 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. 20 For they could not bear what was being commanded, **"IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED."** 21 **And so terrible was what appeared, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."**

A. Mount Sinai has entered the discussion as part of an analogy to compare and contrast law and grace.

- (Exodus 19:11b–12 ESV) For on the third day the LORD will come down on **Mount Sinai** in the sight of all the people. 12 And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain **or touch the edge of it**. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.'
- (Exodus 19:18a ESV) **Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire.**

B. Mount Sinai represents the law—the old covenant.

C. If you have entered God's rest, then your mountain is Zion, not Sinai.

D. Using the analogy of arriving at a mountain the pastor informs his people that the mountain they had come to was not Sinai—the terrifying law mountain of the old covenant.

E. On Mount Sinai God displayed his holiness and majesty so powerfully that Moses pronounced himself full of fear and trembling.

2. But some in the church had not come to Mount Sinai because in reality they had never left Sinai.

A. Some of the people then and now in our churches

had not received the good news with faith and entered God's rest—they had not come to Zion but were still at Sinai.

- (Hebrews 4:1–3a LSB) Therefore, **let us fear**, lest, **while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it.** 2 For indeed **we have had good news proclaimed to us**, just as they also; but **the word that was heard did not profit those who were not united with faith among those who heard.** 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, **"AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."**

B. The pastor uses the contrast between Sinai and Zion to try to lead them out of the wilderness of their confusion regarding law and grace.

C. This confusion was a problem then and continues to be a problem now in the professing Church.

D. We need to bring clarity to those in our fellowship who do not truly know the difference between what the two mountains represent—the extreme, dramatic, deadly differences between law and grace.

E. Stating what should be obvious: The choice is law or grace, Moses or Jesus.

- (John 1:17 ESV) For **the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

F. People who desire to live according to the law do not understand the law because they do not know what the law actually says.

- (Galatians 4:21 NLT) Tell me, you who want to live under the law, **do you know what the law actually says?**

G. Speaking of law in a broader sense than OT covenant law most people prefer law over grace.

H. Law in this broader sense means any and every self-made system of rules or moral codes that appeal to a person's goodness and ability to do something to merit favor in God's eyes.

I. Absolutely any trace of a reliance on human goodness or the denial of human depravity reveals the person to be a believer in law and not grace.

J. The gospel of grace is foolishness to people who depend in any measure on good works.

K. Only a fearful expectation of judgment awaits those who have never left Mount Sinai.

- (Hebrews 10:26–31 ESV) **For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.** 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 **How much worse punishment,** do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” 31 **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

PART TWO: ZION—GRACE MOUNTAIN

BLESSING BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION BUT GIVEN IN LOVING, GENEROUS DETAIL IN SCRIPTURE AWAITS THOSE WHO COME TO GRACE MOUNTAIN ...

1. You have come to Mount Zion (*unless you haven't—see Part One*), 12:22-24.

A. Mount Zion represents the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem and the joyful gathering of the angels of God with those who are on the roll in heaven.

- (Hebrews 12:22–23 LSB) **But you have come to Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, **and to myriads of angels, 23 to the festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,** and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.
- (Luke 10:20 ESV) Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, **but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**

B. Mount Zion represents the new covenant in which Jesus Christ is the mediator.

- (Hebrews 12:24 LSB) And to Jesus, **the mediator of a new covenant,** and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.
- (Hebrews 8:6 LSB) But now He has obtained **a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant,**

which has been enacted on better promises.

- The better covenant is the covenant represented by grace mountain—Zion.
- Jesus is our merciful and faithful high priest.
 - (Hebrews 2:17 LSB) Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, **so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God,** to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.
 - (Hebrews 3:1 LSB) Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, **consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus.**
- Jesus is the builder of the house.
 - (Hebrews 3:3 LSB) **For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses,** in so much as **the builder of the house** has more honor than the house.

C. Coming to Mount Zion is coming to the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem.

D. Coming to Mount Zion is coming to a joyful gathering with innumerable angels and the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven.

E. Coming to Mount Zion is coming to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

2. Those who come to Zion remain—they cannot be shaken since they are those who did not refuse God when he warned them of judgment, 12:25-27.

- (Hebrews 12:25–27 LSB) **See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.** 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, **“YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.”** 27 Now this expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, **so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.**
- See to it that we do not refuse God when he warns us of coming judgment.
 - Refusing *him* (God) is not simply not listening to God when he warns us but defiantly refusing to listen to his warnings of judgment.

C. Refusing God hardens the heart creating further willful stubbornness and rejection of God's words.

- (Psalm 95:7–8a ESV) For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. **Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts.**
- (Hebrews 3:7–8a11 ESV) Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, **“Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**
- Also quoted in Hebrews 3:15, 4:7.

D. There is no escape for those who refuse God and turn away from him.

E. We are *“of those who have faith”* and will remain steadfast when God shakes heaven and earth.

- Hebrews 10:39 (LSB) But **we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**
- (Psalm 62:5–7 ESV) For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. **6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**
7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

3. Those who are receiving—from *“our God who is a consuming fire”*—the kingdom which cannot be shaken are grace-filled, thankful worshipers who joyfully offer themselves to God for acceptable service with reverence and awe, 12:28-29.

- (Hebrews 12:28–29 LSB) **Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.**

A. Those who have come to Zion are *now* receiving the kingdom of God.

B. When we come to know God and the eternal life he offers, we not only understand better but embrace the blessing that *“our God is a consuming fire.”*

C. We *now* see God and seeing God as he is we experience life differently than those at Sinai or anyone else in the world for that matter.

- (Matthew 5:8 LSB) Blessed are the pure in heart, **for they shall see God.**

- (John 17:3 LSB) **And this is eternal life, that they may know You,** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

D. We rejoice in knowing our God is a consuming fire.

E. We *now* understand what that translates to regarding eternity and glory—that his ultimate purifying, fiery, judgment of sin will create an eternal environment in which sin and its effects will be gone forever.

F. We *now* rightfully respond to the consuming fire of his holiness and majesty with gratitude and worshipful service.

G. We are in process *now* as God's children who are receiving the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

- (1 John 3:1–2a ESV) **See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.** The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2 Beloved, we are God's children now.**

H. We respond to the Consuming Fire with overflowing gratitude from which we offer acceptable worship and service to God with reverence and awe.

I. We proclaim our “amen” to the judging, saving work of our God as a consuming fire.

- (Deuteronomy 4:23–24 ESV) Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. **24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire,** a jealous God.
- (Deuteronomy 9:3 ESV) Know therefore today that **he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God.** He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you.
- (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 LSB) And to give rest to you who are afflicted and to us as well at **the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 executing vengeance on those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**

OFFERING ACCEPTABLE SERVICE TO GOD

WHY/HOW WE SERVE GOD IN REVERENCE AND AWE



I APPEAL TO YOU THEREFORE, BROTHERS, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY AND ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

(ROMANS 12:1 ESV)

PART ONE: WHY?

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FROM HEARTS OF
GRATITUDE WE OFFER TO GOD ACCEPTABLE SERVICE
WITH REVERENCE AND AWE ...

1. Because God loves us ... he tempers and purifies us to walk in the light so we then serve and worship him in reverence and awe.

- (Hebrews 12:28–29 LSB) Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.

A. God is love and he made his love known to us that we might live through him.

- (1 John 4:8–9 ESV) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

B. God is light so to serve and worship him in reverence and awe we must walk in the light.

- (1 John 1:5–7 ESV) This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

C. Our God is a consuming fire and he uses his word to expose to us the evil thoughts and dark intentions of our hearts so that he may cleanse and purify us so that we may walk in the light in fellowship with him.

- (Hebrews 4:12–13 LSB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give.

By grace we have been saved and by grace we offer to God acceptable service. Our holy God cleanses and purifies his vessels producing in us a thankful spirit from which flows a desire and a determination to offer to God acceptable service and worship. He uses the sharp sword of his word to pierce our innermost being to uncover and lay bare the sin and darkness of the thoughts and intentions of our heart. The Holy Spirit convicts us of this sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from this sin. Amen and amen.

2. Grace is the driving force behind our gratitude—grace beginning to end by which we offer acceptable service and worship to God.

A. God causes grace to abound to us in every good work—grace begets abounding grace.

- (2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

B. The reality is that when we work hard it is the grace of God that is working with us.

- (1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

C. When we obey God's will, it is God's good pleasure to work in us further obedience to his will.

- (Philippians 2:12–13 ESV) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

3. When we do well and offer acceptable service and worship, God lifts us up in service and worship.

- (1 Peter 5:6–9a ESV) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith.

A. Humbling ourselves before God is a first defense against falling for the schemes of the devil.

- (Genesis 4:6–7 ESV) The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? **And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door.** Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”

B. When we are like Cain and do not do well and our worship is unacceptable, and we have left ourselves vulnerable for sin to rule over our us.

Genesis 4: 7 ... acceptance – the act of accepting with approval; the idea is that in acceptable service we are lifted up, elevated, exalted in God.

- (Genesis 4:7a LSB) If you do well, **will not your countenance be lifted up** [i.e. *accepted and approved*]

C. When we offer worship to God that is acceptable, God then lifts us up in our relationship with him.

4. Observe the complementary role we have with God regarding our ability to offer to God acceptable service and worship in the following verses.

A. We offer to God acceptable service and God works acceptable service in our lives.

12:28 and 13:21 ... acceptable ... translated “acceptable” in 12:28 and “pleasing” in 13:21 is the same word and the same concept/meaning. The word is εὐαρεστος [euarestos] and means well-pleasing – in a manner giving pleasure and satisfaction; in a manner well pleasing to one, acceptable.

B. In 12:28 we do God’s will—offering to God acceptable service.

- (Hebrews 12:28b LSB) ... let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an **acceptable** service ...

C. In 13:21 it is God doing his will in our lives working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.

- (Hebrews 13:20a, 21 ESV) **Now may the God of peace ... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight,** through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

PART TWO: How?

WE CONTINUE IN GRACE AND SHOW GRATITUDE IN OFFERING SERVICE AND WORSHIP TO GOD BY OBEYING GOD’S WILL IN OUR DAILY LIVES.

BELOW ARE OUR MARCHING ORDERS ...

1. Let love of the brothers continue, 13:1.

- (Hebrews 13:1 LSB) **Let love of the brothers continue.**
- (Romans 12:10 ESV) **Love one another with brotherly affection.** Outdo one another in showing honor.
- (1 Thessalonians 4:9–10 ESV) **Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you,** for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. **But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more.**
- (1 Peter 1:22 ESV) **Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.**
- (1 Peter 3:8 ESV) Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, **brotherly love, a tender heart,** and **a humble mind.**

2. Do not neglect to show hospitality—love and kindness—to strangers, 13:2.

- (Hebrews 13:2 LSB) **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,** for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

The point is that there may be more to the people we meet than meets the eye. It is possible that when you sit in church, the person next to you will really be an angel, but he or she is likely something even more wonderful. There beside you in the pews is probably a saint of God in light. Across the room are those destined to serve as priests and kings in the very presence of the living God, who are now being prepared for their glorious raiment. To meet an angel might be wonderful, but in the church are those whom angels are “sent out to serve” and “who are to inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14). There is a work going on in their lives that angels wonder at and rejoice to see.

C. S. Lewis in his essay “The Weight of Glory”

remarked on what an extraordinary thing it is to live among those in whom eternal destinies are being worked out:

The dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.... There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.... It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.

[Phillips, R. D. (2006). *Hebrews* (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; pp. 589–590). P&R Publishing.]

A. Hospitality means to show love and kindness to strangers; to welcome guests or strangers.

- (Matthew 25:35 ESV) For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, **I was a stranger and you welcomed me.**
- (Romans 12:13 ESV) **Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.**
- (1 Peter 4:9 ESV) **Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.**

3. Remember the persecuted and mistreated, 13:3.

- (Hebrews 13:3 LSB) **Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you yourselves also are in the body.**

4. Hold marriage in honor among all, 13:4.

- (Hebrews 13:4 LSB) **Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled, for the sexually immoral and adulterers God will judge.**

5. Be content with what you have, 13:5-6.

- (Hebrews 13:5–6 LSB) **Make sure that your way of life is free from the love of money, being content with what you have;** for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

6. Remember those who spoke the word of God to us and stay true to the gospel they preached, 13:7-14.

- (Hebrews 13:7–14 LSB) **Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you;** and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; **for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace,** not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. 10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no authority to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 **Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.** 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the one to come.

7. Through Christ continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, 13:15-16.

- (Hebrews 13:15–16 LSB) **Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,** that is, the fruit of lips that confess His name. 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

8. Obey your leaders and submit to them, 13:17.

- (Hebrews 13:17 LSB) **Obey your leaders and submit to them—for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account—so that they will do this with joy and not with groaning,** for this would be unprofitable for you.

9. Pray for your leaders that they may have a clear conscience and stay the course of acting honorably in all things, 13:18-19.

- (Hebrews 13:18–19 LSB) **Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a good conscience,** desiring to conduct ourselves well in all things. 19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

A HOW-TO GUIDE ...



OFFERING ACCEPTABLE SERVICE TO GOD, PART 2

A biblical study of the spiritual disciplines necessary for cultivating and maintaining reverence and awe in acceptable worship and service to God.

1. Love the brothers (and sisters), 13:1.

- (Hebrews 13:1 LSB) **Let love of the brothers continue.**

2. Love strangers, 13:2.

- (Hebrews 13:2 LSB) **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers**, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3. Love the persecuted and mistreated, 13:3.

- (Hebrews 13:3 LSB) **Remember the prisoners**, as though in prison with them, **and those who are mistreated**, since you yourselves also are in **the body**.

4. Love your husband or wife, 13:4.

- (Hebrews 13:4 LSB) **Marriage is to be held in honor among all**, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled, **for the sexually immoral and adulterers God will judge.**

5. Love God, not money, 13:5-6.

- (Hebrews 13:5-6 LSB) **Make sure that your way of life is free from the love of money, being content with what you have**; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

A. Make sure that our way of life—how we live—is free from the love of money.

B. The person whose life is not free from the love of money will not be satisfied with what God has provided.

C. He will be a tortured soul—vulnerable to all kinds of evil and wandering away from the faith.

- (1 Timothy 6:10 ESV) **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils**. It is through this craving that **some have wandered away from the faith** and **pierced themselves** with many pangs.

Pierce ... to impale; to subject to an extremely sharp or intense state or condition; **metaphorically to torture one's soul with sorrows.**

D. The person who keeps his life free from the love of money will be content—satisfied and empowered with what God has provided.

E. The person whose life is not free from the love of money does not **acceptably** serve God.

- (Matthew 6:24 ESV) **No one can serve two masters**, for **either** he will hate the one and love the other, **or** he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.** (Cf. Luke 16:13.)

F. The person who is not free from the love of money lives in disobedience to the most important command we are given for a right relationship with God. .

- (Mark 12:28-30 ESV) And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "**Which commandment is the most important of all?**" 29 Jesus answered, "**The most important is**, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 **And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart** and with **all your soul** and with **all your mind** and with **all your strength.**' "

G. Nothing this person offers in service or worship to God is acceptable.

H. He will live in fear apart from the assurance of the Lord's presence at his side as his helper.

- (Psalm 118:5-7 ESV) Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free. 6 **The Lord is on my side; I will not fear**. What can man do to me? 7 **The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.**
- (Psalm 46:1-3 ESV) **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.** 2 **Therefore we will not fear** though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

6. Remember our spiritual predecessors and the gospel of grace which they preached, 13:7-14.

- (Hebrews 13:7-14 LSB) **Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you**; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever**. 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; **for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace**, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. 10 **We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no authority to eat**. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy

places by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 **So, let us go out to Him outside the camp,** bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the one to come.

A. Remember past leaders who spoke and stayed true to the word of the truth—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (Colossians 1:4–6 ESV) **Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus** and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. **Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,** 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, **since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.**

B. Remember them and consider how they finished their lives and respond by imitating their faith.

The word for remember means to be mindful of, to call to mind; remember and to respond accordingly.

C. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever and his gospel has not changed.

D. Find our strength and assurance in grace—what Christ has done and not in any outward religious observance.

E. We do not share an altar with those who do not trust in grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone.

- (Hebrews 10:11–12 ESV) **And every priest stands daily at his service,** offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 **But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.**
- (Hebrews 9:24–26 LSB) **For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands,** mere copies of the true ones, **but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;** 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy places year by year with blood that is not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; **but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

i. **We have nothing relevant to eternity in common with them in regard to God and salvation.**

ii. **Like Jesus we are outside the camp and are to separate ourselves from them.**

F. Christ is our high priest and our sacrifice.

- (Hebrews 7:26–27 LSB) **For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest,** holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 **who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**

G. Jesus suffered outside the gate so that he could separate himself from and set aside the former inferior, weak, useless system of law and works.

- (Hebrews 7:18–19 ESV) **For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness** 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); **but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.**

H. Jesus suffered outside the gate and died outside the camp—literally outside of Jerusalem and figuratively outside of the works of the law.

- (John 19:16–18 ESV) So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, 17 **and he went out,** bearing his own cross, **to the place called The Place of a Skull,** which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

7. Continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, 13:15-16.

- (Hebrews 13:15–16 LSB) **Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess His name.** 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
- A. We offer up a sacrifice of praise to God by the fruit of our lips which is confessing with our mouth what is true in our heart—that Jesus is Lord.**
 - (Romans 10:8–10 ESV) But what does it say? **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”** (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 **because, if you confess with**

your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

B. To confess his name is to not deny his name **and** to not confess his name is to deny his name.

- (Revelation 3:8 LSB) I know your deeds. Behold, I have given before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, **and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.**
- (Matthew 10:32–33 ESV) **So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,** 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (Cf. Luke 12:8–9).

8. Obey and submit to our leaders, 13:17.

- (Hebrews 13:17 LSB) **Obey your leaders and submit to them**—for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account—**so that they will do this with joy and not with groaning,** for this would be unprofitable for you.

A. We should first take note that we are **commanded by God** to obey and submit to our leaders in the church.

B. We are to obey and submit because they are accountable to keep watch over our souls.

C. The Lord Jesus has a unique shepherding relationship with the undershepherds who are responsible for the care of the sheep of his pasture.

- (Psalm 100:3 ESV) **Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**
- (1 Peter 5:2 ESV) **Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,** not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

D. Obeying/submitting brings joy into the relationship.

E. Not obeying and submitting brings groaning and is unprofitable for the groaner.

F. The person who refuses to obey and submit to spiritual leaders is incapable of offering acceptable service to God.

G. The grave danger is that the knowledge of Christ that remains has become ineffective and unfruitful to the result of spiritual blindness and forgetfulness.

- (2 Peter 1:7b–9 ESV) And brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, **they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind,** having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

H. The person who refuses to obey and submit is not equipped to serve God acceptably.

- (2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV) All Scripture is breathed out by God **and profitable for teaching,** for **reproof,** for **correction,** and for **training in righteousness,** 17 **that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

9. Pray for our leaders, 13:18-19.

- (Hebrews 13:18–19 LSB) **Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a good conscience,** desiring to conduct ourselves well in all things. 19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

A. Ask God to give our leaders a clear conscience in leading and a passion to act honorably in all things.

B. This seems to be a prayer asking God to direct men in leadership to make right decisions that honor God and align with the truth by which they are able to maintain a good conscience.

C. Armed with a good conscience we are strong and courageous in the Lord.

D. With a clear conscience the leaders continue to hold fast to the truth in the heat of battle.

- (Acts 24:16 ESV) **So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.**
- (1 Timothy 1:5–6 ESV) **The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** 6 Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion.

THE BENEDICTION

EQUIPPED TO DO THE WILL OF GOD

IT'S ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR DR. WATSON!



DIAGRAMMING HELPS US SEE THE VERY OBVIOUS MAIN POINT OF THE TEXT

THE GOD OF PEACE → **EQUIP YOU** → **TO DO HIS WILL**
(THE ACTOR) (THE ACT) (THE PURPOSE)

The God of peace [who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus] -> **equip you** [in every good thing] -> **to do his will** [by doing in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.]

1. The Benediction: That the God of peace will equip us in every good thing to do his will, 13:20-21a.

- (Hebrews 13:20–21 LSB) Now **the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant**, our Lord Jesus, 21 **equip you in every good thing to do His will**.

A. “Benediction” means “good word”—this good word of exhortation is a fitting conclusion to the powerful teaching of this letter to the Hebrews.

B. This is a blessing pronounced or a prayer given for the equipping of all those who have made peace with God through Jesus Christ to do the will of God.

- (Romans 5:1 LSB) Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**.

C. The Blessor (the God of peace) will be with all those who have peace with him through Christ.

- (Romans 15:33 LSB) **Now may the God of peace be with you all**. Amen.
- (Philippians 4:6–9 LSB) **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God**, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is dignified, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, consider these things. 9 **The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

*** **“Practice these things”** is doing God’s will.

D. The God of peace will equip us to do his will through his sanctifying work in our lives.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 ESV) **Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely**, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it**.
- (John 17:17 ESV) **Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth**.

Sanctify ... to make as dedicated to God; either in becoming more distinct, devoted, or morally pure. To separate from profane things and dedicate to God; consecrate things to God; dedicate people to God; to purify internally by renewing of the soul.

E. His equipping is comprehensive—every good thing.

- (Hebrews 13:20a–21a LSB) Now the God of peace ... **equip you in every good thing to do His will, by doing in us what is pleasing in His sight**, through Jesus Christ ...
- (Philippians 4:19 LSB) **And my God will fulfill all your needs** according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Equip ... to prepare; to make ready or suitable in advance for a particular purpose or for some use, event.

- (2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV) All Scripture is breathed out by God **and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work**.

Equip ... to be fitted out; to be or become furnished or equipped with every necessary component for a task.

2. The benediction draws our attention to the provision of the great Shepherd of the sheep.

A. The God of peace brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant to be our Shepherd.

B. An overview/description of our Great Shepherd from various texts in Hebrews ... 1:2–3, 2:7-8, 2:17-18, 4:14-15, 5:9, 7:22, 25, 8:1-2, 9:15, 12:2.

The Great Shepherd is Jesus ... the heir of all things who upholds all things by the word of His power, has accomplished cleansing for sins, and has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, has been crowned with glory and honor, everything is in subjection to him and nothing is outside his control.

Jesus ... became our merciful and faithful high priest to make propitiation for our sins and is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus ... is the apostle and high priest of our confession, our great high priest who passed through the heavens, is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, is the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, is the guarantor of a better covenant and is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to

God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus ... is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, is a minister in the holy places, is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

The Great Shepherd is Jesus ... who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

C. The great Shepherd will shepherd his sheep.

- (Psalm 95:7a ESV) For he is our God, and **we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.**
- (Psalm 23:1 ESV) **The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

The Lord as our shepherd ... **supplies** our every need, **makes** us to rest, **leads** us to calming places, **restores** our souls, **leads** us in the paths of righteousness, **comforts** us and **dispels** fear from our lives by his presence, **provides** for us in the midst of our enemies, **fulfills** our lives to overflowing, **causes** goodness and mercy to follow us throughout our lives and **promises** us a place in his house forever.

D. The sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd and obey him—they follow him and he gives them eternal life.

- (John 10:27–28 ESV) **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.** 28 **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.**

3. Our main premise is that the God of peace will equip his own to do his will.

REVIEW ... GOD → EQUIP → DO HIS WILL.

- (Hebrews 13:20a–21 LSB) Now **the God of peace ... equip you in every good thing to do His will.**

A. If our main premise ... God → equip → do his will ... is sound/valid, then it follows that those who are equipped to do his will ... will be doing his will.

- (Matthew 7:21 ESV) **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**

- (Mark 3:34–35 ESV) And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 **For whoever does the will of God,** he is my brother and sister and mother."

- (1 John 2:15–17 ESV) **Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 **For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.** 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, **but whoever does the will of God abides forever.**

*****Conformity to human passions and the pride of life runs contrary to the will of God.**

B. So it follows then that the person who is not doing God's will has not been equipped and has not been rescued from living according to his own will—he is, in fact, incapable of doing the will of God.

- (Ephesians 2:1–3 LSB) **And you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom we all also formerly conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.**
- (Romans 1:18 LSB) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.**
- (Ephesians 4:17–18 LSB) Therefore this I say, and testify in the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, **in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their mind, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because** of the hardness of their heart.

C. God in his mercy, love and grace rescues defiant humans who cannot do his will and transforms them to be submissive humans who are now able to know and do the will of God.

- (Ephesians 2:4–5 LSB) 4 But God, being **rich in mercy** because of His **great love with which He loved us,** 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace you have been saved.**

- (Romans 12:2 ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

D. Those who submit to the will of God live according to the word of God, not their own human desires.

- (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 ESV) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.
- (1 Thessalonians 5:15–18 ESV) See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit.
- (1 Peter 4:1–2 ESV) Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

4. The methodology of the blessing—The God of peace will accomplish his will in our lives by doing in us what is pleasing in his sight, 13:21b.

- (Hebrews 13:21b LSB) ... by doing in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- (Philippians 2:13 ESV) For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

5. We are urged to “bear with” this exhortation (letter) as the word of God, 13:22.

- (Hebrews 13:22 LSB) But I urge you, brothers, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

A. This letter would have been read to the people probably taking about an hour.

B. The pastor urges them to “bear with” this powerful word of exhortation—the teaching they have heard throughout the letter.

C. Considering the strong, convicting tone of the letter it is very possible that some would be inclined to not “bear with” the exhortation but to reject it.

Bear with ... means to put up with, to endure something unpleasant or difficult; to permit; to consent to, give permission; to hold one’s self erect and firm.

- (Hebrews 2:1 LSB) For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away.
- (2 Timothy 4:3 NIV) For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. *** “own desires”—not God’s will ...
- (2 Corinthians 11:4 NIV) For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

6. Closing remarks, 13:23-25.

- (Hebrews 13:23–25 LSB) Know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. 24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. 25 Grace be with you all.
- (Hebrews 4:16 LSB) Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- (Hebrews 12:15 LSB) Seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.
- (Hebrews 13:9 LSB) Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.