

Bible Study Series on.....

*The Study of
The Book of*

HEBREWS

(Chapters 1-6)

(#1)

12 Lessons

**Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2005

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*“The Study of the Book of Hebrews”
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Lesson One

“Introduction to the Study of Hebrews”

Among the books of the New Testament, the Letter to the Hebrews is probably the most disputed as to its authorship and to whom written. It would necessarily follow therefore that for one to state who the author is with finality would not be possible. Among those who are suggested as possibilities are: **Paul, Aquila, Apollos, Mark, Barnabas, Silas, or Clement of Rome.** Since the writer did not name himself in the Letter, we must depend upon inferences from the Letter itself and possibly any statements by early writers as to its possible authorship. From the evidence that has been read by this writer, it would seem quite possible that the Apostle Paul was its author. Following are the reasons suggested:

1. The writer seems to have written from Rome (13:24), which could very easily correspond to Paul’s release from his first imprisonment at Rome.
2. Timothy had been either released from prison or sent off on a journey from the writer, which the Greek word in 13:23 would allow either way. Timothy was sent from Rome by Paul to Philippi just before his release (Philippians 2:19-24).
3. The writer planned to visit them as soon as Timothy returned (13:23). Remember that Paul had been the means through whom the money was raised for the poor saints at Jerusalem and because of his great interest in them as well as the Jews of Jerusalem, it would be very natural for him to desire to write them, and soon to visit them again.
4. The ones to whom the Letter was sent had sympathized in the writer’s bonds (10:34), which could very easily have been when Paul was taken prisoner at Jerusalem from the mob, beaten, and placed in bonds for two years at Caesarea.
5. I doubt that Timothy was as close to anyone else as he was to the Apostle, and the thought that the writer and Timothy were coming together would strongly indicate the author to be Paul.
6. In spite of the variations throughout the Letter from Paul’s “usual style;” still, much of the style, phraseology, and logical structure strongly resembles that of the Apostle’s writings. An explanation for the variations may be accounted for by two things:
 - a) The ones to whom he was writing were distinctly Jewish Christians; and
 - b) The fact that he was comparing the Old with the New system.

TO WHOM WRITTER

From a study of the Letter, it would certainly seem that the author was writing to Jewish Christians in particular. It is also indicated that it was a particular locality to which he was writing. From the Letter we can ascertain certain facts:

1. They were acquainted with the Old Testament and the practices of sacrificing.
2. The Letter was seemingly to those that had a strong Jewish background.
3. All allusions to controversies between Jewish and Gentile Christians are not mentioned at all.
4. The readers had been Christians for some period of time (5:12).
5. They knew the writer (13:18-19).
6. They knew Timothy (13:23).
7. They had steadfastly endured persecution and loss of property (10:32-34).

8. They were in great danger of going back into Judaism.

From the above facts, the evidence would seem to point to the Jewish Christians in particular at Jerusalem where persecution and loss of property would be evident. In addition to the above thoughts, the testimony of the early “church fathers” is to this fact. And finally, even the title itself agrees with this conclusion for it is to the Hebrews which could only purely be said of the Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem.

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING

If our analysis is correct thus far, then the occasion that called forth this Letter would naturally follow. On several occasions the Apostle would write a Letter a short time before he would go to a place. Paul had been to Jerusalem four years before and had been imprisoned at Caesarea for two years of that time. He came to know the situation in the church at Jerusalem very well. Persecution and loss of possessions had been a big blow to many of the early Christians, and still ever so often, a new uprising of persecution upon them would be instigated. James, the brother of Jesus,, may have just been martyred in Jerusalem (AD 62). Judaism was still strong and militant; the Temple was still standing; and the sacrifices were still being made. The Letter indicates that there was a great danger of apostasy among these Jewish Christians, and therefore the great need for such a Letter as this to encourage them and warn them not to give up when the end of the Temple worship, the city, etc., was so close at hand (AD 70). The time when the Letter would have been written therefore would be upon Paul’s release from his first imprisonment at Rome in the year of AD 63.

THE PURPOSE OF WRITING

It seems the primary purpose of the Letter was to prevent Jewish Christians from apostatizing and going back into Judaism. The author’s method to accomplish this was by establishing the supremacy of Christ and Christianity over the Old System of the Jews, by comparing diligently the Old with the New. He especially showed that the change from the Levitical to the Christian System was prefigured and predicted in the Old Testament; in particular the change to a new priesthood, a new covenant, a new sacrifice, and a new sanctuary. Then, throughout he warns them directly about falling away, stating that there is no other sacrifice for sin if they turn from Christ. He tries to encourage them to renew their efforts and to make a complete break with Judaism.

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

I. CHRIST AND HIS NEW COVENANT SHOWN TO BE SUPERIOR (1:1-11:40)

- A. Over the Prophets (1:1-3)
- B. Over the Angels (1:4-14)
- C. Warning (2:1-4)
- D. Made lower than Angels for a while (2:5-18)
- E. Over Moses (3:1-6)
- F. 2nd Warning (3:7-4:16)
- G. Comfort found in Christ as our High Priest (5:1-14)

- H. 3rd Warning (6:1-20)
- I. Over the Aaronic Priesthood (7:1-8:6)
- J. Over the first Covenant (8:7-13)
- K. Over the Tabernacle, Services, and Sacrifices of the Law (9:1-10:18)
- L. 4th Warning based upon the superiority
- M. The Great Heroes of Faith looked for something better (11:1-40)
- II. EXHORTATION BASED UPON THE LETTER (Ch. 12).
- III. VARIOUS EXHORTATIONS AND ADMONITIONS (Ch. 13).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Among the Letters of the New Testament perhaps there is no greater from the standpoint of doctrinal and literary excellence. It is a summarization of the transition from the Old System to the New. It could be pictured as the final and greatest Letter to convince the Jews that the Old has been done away having served its purpose and has been replaced by a New and much better System.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. We know that Paul wrote this Letter because it says so in the Letter.
- 2. The writer knew the people to whom he was writing and planned to visit them soon.
- 3. The Hebrew Letter shows a little different style from the usual style of the Apostle Paul.
- 4. The Christians to whom this Letter was written had been in the church for some time.
- 5. The early “church fathers” all agree that this Letter was written to the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem.
- 6. Paul had been away from Jerusalem for about four years at the time of writing this Letter.
- 7. James, the Lord’s brother, was martyred a short time before this Letter.
- 8. The Temple was still standing but the sacrifices had stopped when this Letter was written.
- 9. The danger of Apostasy was constantly warned against in this Letter.
- 10. This Letter deals with the transition from the Old to the New System for the Jews.

Lesson Two

“Jesus, the Great & Final Revealer of God”

(Hebrews 1:1-3)

In the Jewish mind “time” was looked at in two ways: (1) There was past time that would include all past events, all revealed things, etc., and (2) The last times or last days—THE GOLDEN AGE—THE MESSIANIC AGE—THE TIME OF JEWISH EXALTATION OVER THE NATIONS. The Messianic prophecies had been taken literal by them. It was to be a literal, physical kingdom on earth. The Messiah would reign and the Jews would be released from their foreign domination that had been for many years.

But, when the Messiah came they did not recognize him, nor accept Him. Instead, they crucified Him in their great disappointment. To them, this was a time of just another one of the many great disappointments they had had to suffer. But to those who did receive Him, this was truly THE GOLDEN AGE—THE MESSIANIC AGE. The great kingdom of Heaven has now come among men. The great and final age for man has arrived. But also, it was characterized as a truly great revelation of God (Hebrews 1:1-3).

DISCUSSION

I. GOD HAS SPOKEN TO MAN!

A. God’s love constrained Him to speak to man (1 Cor. 2:11).

- 1) He did not allow mankind to flounder deeper into darkness.
- 2) So, God spoke to man, and imparted knowledge, light, insight, truth, and guidance.

B. How important is this fact to us?

- 1) God has spoken and man needs to listen intently (Isaiah 66:2).
- 2) Such should destroy our sense of self-sufficiency (2 Cor. 3:5).
- 3) It should kill our pride in our own knowledge (Rom. 11:33).
- 4) It should do away with our self-importance (Ps. 73:22).

II. GOD HAS SPOKEN IN TIMES PAST TO THE FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS.

A. He spoke in sundry times and in divers manners.

- 1) He did not reveal all His Word at one time.
- 2) It was a continual revealing of Himself over hundreds of years.
- 3) His methods were varied—dreams, direct to a person or persons, etc.

B. He spoke to the fathers by the Prophets.

- 1) He not only spoke to the Jewish Nation through Moses (a great prophet).
- 2) But He also spoke through Adam & Eve, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, etc.
- 3) The books of Prophecy date down to around 400 BC.

III. GOD HAS NOW SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON.

A. God has spoken in these last days by His Son.

- 1) THE GOLDEN AGE has been ushered in by God’s revelation through His Son.

2) The last days—the last age of mankind has now come into being.

B. Why His Son?

- 1) The Prophets were great men of faith, but here is One greater than the greatest prophet.
- 2) The Prophets continually gave great insights about God, but here is One who can give the first hand, complete revelation of God to man.
- 3) As long as God spoke through men, another might arise after these.
- 4) But there is none greater than the Son.
 - a) All previous revelations have been leading up to this time.
 - b) All led to this final and complete message from God.
 - c) No new revelation will be given—for none is needed—this one is complete (2 Peter 1:3).

IV. THE GREATNESS OF THIS REVELATION DESCRIBED.

A. It is made by One who has been “appointed heir of all things.” (Eph. 1:19-23).

- 1) The Father has given to the Son to be over all.
- 2) Him whom men despised and rejected, God gave rulership over everyone and everything.

B. It is made by One through whom all things came into being (Col. 1:16-17).

- 1) He was before all things, for He was their creator, originator.
- 2) The eternal nature of the Son is being emphasized.

C. It is made by One who is the brightness of God’s glory (John 1:14).

- 1) Jesus is the shining of God’s glory among men.
- 2) He displays God’s glory to man.

D. It is made by One who is the express image of God’s person (John 14:9).

- 1) He is the very essence & substance & being of God.
- 2) Jesus is the exact image & expression of God.
- 3) He is the perfect representation of God to man.

E. It is made by One who keeps this universe operating (2 Peter 3:5-7).

- 1) Such is accomplished by the power of His Word.
- 2) He is not only creator, but sustainer as well.
- 3) He upholds, guides, leads all things to their appointed ends & purposes.

F. It is made by One who has made redemption possible for man (2 Cor. 5:21).

- 1) In his death and through His blood, He made purging of our sins possible.
- 2) He took on the form of His creatures in order to sacrifice Himself for them.
- 3) This is His identification with us being stressed!

G. It is made by One who is now seated at the right hand of God on High (Phil. 2:9).

- 1) The Majesty—the only true, actual, and majestic One on high.
- 2) He now sits and rules.
- 3) Because of His voluntary humiliation, He is now exalted to the heights.

CONCLUSION

1. God has spoken!

- a) Man’s ignorance is now without excuse.
- b) His Word must be our ultimate & absolute Authority.
- c) Irreverence & neglect to hear God is to man’s eternal loss & shame.

2. There is none greater than the Son.
 - a) To speak from God, for God.
 - b) To speak to man from God.
 - c) To reveal the mind of God through the Son of God, Himself.
3. How well are we listening to this great spokesman of God?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The Golden Age that the Jews looked forward to was a literal earthly kingdom that was made up of all nations ruled over by the Messiah.**
- 2. Only the Spirit of God can reveal the deep things of God.**
- 3. God spoke to the Patriarchs directly, but later gave the Law of Moses to the Jewish Nation.**
- 4. The true Golden Age began upon Jesus' ascension and coronation at the right hand of God.**
- 5. Jesus is a greater One for God to speak through than the Prophets.**
- 6. Jesus is the final revelation of God—there will be no new one given.**
- 7. Jesus had to be humble in order to be a spokesman for God.**
- 8. God has exalted His Son so that He can later reign over an earthly kingdom from Jerusalem.**
- 9. Jesus is said to be the express image of God's person.**
- 10. God spoke through Moses to the Jewish Nation only.**

Lesson Three

“The Superiority of Christ Over Angels”

(Hebrews 1:4-14)

Stress is given in Hebrews of Christ’s superiority over all things that the Jewish people held as sacred. We have already seen the emphasis upon Christ’s superiority over the Prophets of the Old Testament. The writer now shows His superiority over Angels. It is obvious that Angels were held in high esteem among the Jewish people. To show Christ’s superiority over them makes Him highly exalted.

The Old Testament Scriptures were given by Angels (Heb. 2:2; Gal. 3:19). This gave great importance to Angelic beings. Thus, to show Christ’s superiority over them, shows His superiority over the Old Testament. Who are Angels?

1. They are God’s holy, heavenly messengers (Matt. 25:31).
2. They are great in power, might, and personal dignity (Ps. 103:20; 2 Pet. 2:11; 2 Thess. 1:7; Isa. 37:36; Acts 12:7-11).
3. Their faces, when manifested as humans, were striking to behold (Acts 6:15; Judges 13:6).
4. Their knowledge is vast, but limited (2 Sam. 14:17; Matt. 24:36; Rev. 4:6, 8).
5. Their numbers are over-whelming (Rev. 5:11).
6. They have access to the Divine Presence constantly (Matt. 18:10; Isa. 6:1-3).
7. Their work is varied and constant (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:14).
8. In their ranks is the highest order of created beings to be found (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16).

The ordinary meaning of the word “Angeloi” is “Messenger.” Because of such high beings being referred to, we transliterate the word and make it an English sounding word. Their name is expressive of their work. We know them by no other (messengers, holy messengers, heavenly messengers).

DISCUSSION**I. CHRIST’S SUPERIORITY IS SEEN IN THE NAME HE HAS BEEN GIVEN (1:4-5)****A. This better name is by inheritance, not original nature.**

- 1) It is something He has been given.
- 2) An honor bestowed upon Him as a result of something (Phil. 2:9-11)
- 3) Why? Because of His willingness to take on human form & die for mankind.

B. A Question with an obvious answer.

- 1) To which of the Angels did He ever say: **“You are My Son, Today I have begotten you.”** (Ps. 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13).
- 2) This is an argument from the silence of the Scriptures.
 - a) This statement is only made to the Messiah, not to Angels.
 - b) Angels are called “Sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).
 - c) Redeemed men are called “sons of God.” (Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).
 - d) But neither Angels nor men are called such in the peculiar sense that Jesus is called the **“Only begotten of the Father.”**
- 3) Many great and important things are said of Angels.

- a) But to none of them was this special designation given.
- b) As great as they are, none have been given this exalted title of the only begotten of the Father!

II. HIS SUPERIORITY IS SEEN IN THAT ANGELS ARE COMMANDED TO WORSHIP HIM (1:6)

A. When Jesus was born into the world, Angels worshipped Him.

- 1) The writer quotes from Ps. 97:7 (Septuagint Version)—“***Worship Him, all you Angels.***”
- 2) If imminent beings such as Angels worship Jesus, how much more should we.
- 3) They worshipped Him because:
 - a) God commanded it;
 - b) He is their creator;
 - c) He is superior and worthy.
- 4) We should worship Him for even greater reasons:
 - a) He has also redeemed us from eternal ruin.
 - b) He was willing to die in our stead.
- 5) Warning:
 - a) For men to worship Angels, or “saints,” or any human is idolatry!
 - b) It is giving Divine Attributes of Deity to created beings.
 - c) Such is absolutely wrong! (Col. 2:18-19).

B. Both Angels and men are referred to as “gods.” (Elohim)

- 1) The use generally refers to those who are representatives of God.
- 2) Judges are referred to as such (Exo. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28).
- 3) Jesus reminded the Jews: “***Is it not written in your law, I said, you are gods?***”
- 4) Men judged in the place of God (Ps. 82:6).
- 5) Thus, Angelic beings, who are representatives of God, are called “gods.”
 - a) Such beings are called upon to worship Jesus at His birth.
 - b) They, who could be called “Elohim” in a special way, are to worship Jesus who is the true “Elohim”—but more so, “Jehovah!”
- 6) Six times in this Psalm 82, the Divine Name that is being exalted is Jehovah.
 - a) And, Jehovah is the only Lawful One to be worshipped (Matt. 4:10).
 - b) Man is not to be worshipped.
 - c) Even high & holy Angelic beings are not to be worshipped (Rev. 19:10; Col. 2:18).
 - d) Only God is to be worshipped.
- 7) Thus, Jesus, who is Jehovah, is to be worshipped by Angels.

III. HIS SUPERIORITY IS SEEN IN HIS OFFICIAL POSITION (1:7-14)

A. The Position of Angels:

- 1) The writer quotes from Ps. 104:4 to show that they are servants of God who do His bidding.
- 2) They are evidently used in the control of this world.
- 3) But they are also servants to those who are to be heirs of salvation.
- 4) Even though they are high & holy beings, they are created beings.
- 5) Even though they do holy service, they are servants of both God & man.

B. The position of Christ is emphasized in contrast to them being servants.

- 1) The writer quotes Ps. 45:6-7 and applies it to Jesus.
 - a) His reasoning is obvious—Jesus has to be the One being referred to as “God.”
 - b) His exaltation is: **“Thy throne oh God is for ever and ever.”**
- 2) The writer quotes again from Ps. 102:25-27 and applies it to Jesus.
 - a) He uses the highest name for deity (Jehovah).
 - b) He is referred to as the creator of all things.
 - c) He points out that they will change, grow old, be put away, but Jesus will not.
 - d) He is eternal.
- 3) He again quotes from Ps. 111:1 and applies it to Jesus.
 - a) Jesus made use of this same quotation in Matt. 22:41-46.
 - b) What will Jesus, the Lord, do?
 - He will sit on my right hand (the Father says).
 - Until I make His enemies His footstool (under your feet).
 - c) To no Angel was ever such a statement made by God.

C. His superiority over Angels is evident.**CONCLUSION**

1. The Supreme Dignity of Jesus has been emphasized:
 - a) His pre-existence before all things.
 - b) His exalted position at God’s right hand.
 - c) Untold Angels worship Him.
 - d) His exalted name: **“Only begotten Son, God, Jehovah.”**
2. The Dignity of the Christian is seen in:
 - a) God taking on human form and identifying with His creatures.
 - b) His willingness to die in our stead for our redemption.
 - c) Angels, who are higher than men, are sent to minister to men.
 - d) God’s willingness to have fellowship with us.
3. God has spoken through His Son...are we listening?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**True or False**

1. Angels were used by God in the giving of the Law of Moses.
2. The meaning of the Greek word “Angeloi” is “to be a servant.”
3. Angels have taken on human form and faces at times.
4. Jesus has a more exalted name than the Angels—that is, a Son.
5. Angels & men are referred to on rare occasions as “gods.”
6. Jesus is referred to as being “Jehovah.”

- 7. If Angels, who are imminent beings, worship Jesus; then, men should as well.
- 8. Angels are allowed into the presence of Deity.
- 9. Jesus is literally called “God” or “Lord.”
- 10. The quotations that are used mostly come from the Psalms.

Lesson Four

“The Necessity of Diligence to be Saved”

(Hebrews 2:1-4)

Once that a person has been saved by the blood of Christ through God's mercy and love, can he be lost again? Can such a person become so negligent of what he has been blessed with that he can lose it? Do Christians need to be warned strongly about the possibility of losing their salvation in Christ? Your answer should be a resounding, obvious “YES!” Hebrews 2:1-4 is just one of the several warnings that are given to these Jewish Christians who were in danger of turning away from Christ and going back under the Old Covenant arrangement. These four verses talk about two condemning sins: Heedlessness and Forgetfulness. They both have their root in unbelief which has its root in man's selfishness (going his own way and not God's way). (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

DISCUSSION**I. THE WARNING****A. “Therefore”**

- 1) Looking back to chapter one as the basis on which we are about to say something very important.
 - a) God has spoken to us through His Son who is superior to both Prophets and Angels.
 - b) Because these Angels are sent to minister to us.
- 2) Therefore this Son needs to be listened to.

B. “Give the more earnest heed”

- 1) We have to give heed to many things in this life in order to survive physically.
- 2) But even more imperative—We need to give earnest heed to the spiritual message from God through His Son (Rev. 3:6).

C. “To the things which we have heard”

- 1) Not to the traditions & philosophies of men as many do.
- 2) Not to the ideas & desires of family & friends.
- 3) But to the message of God—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 4) The Gospel that is worthy of our most serious attention & obedience.
- 5) Any thing short of earnestness will not do the job!

II. WHY SHOULD WE BE SO EARNEST IN HEEDING THIS MESSAGE?**A. “Lest at any time we should let them slip.”**

- 1) “To slip aside” or “to drift past the safe harbor.”
- 2) The Gospel can slip out of our grasp because we were not diligent to hold on.
- 3) In what ways can we let them slip from us?
 - a) We can err from the faith through love of money (1 Tim. 6:10).
 - b) We can depart from the faith by turning to false teachings (1 Tim. 4:1).
 - c) We can deny the faith by not taking care of our own (1 Tim. 5:8).
 - d) We can become reprobate to the faith by resisting the truth (2 Tim. 3:8).

B. “For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast”

- 1) Under the Old Covenant:

- a) Punishment was meted out for sin & disobedience.
- b) It was not done arbitrary, but justly by God, Himself, at times.
- 2) Examples:
 - a) Achan—He and his whole family were stoned to death at God's command.
 - b) Uzzah—He was struck dead on the spot because he touched the Ark.
 - c) 3,000—They were slain over the worshipping of the Golden Calf.
 - d) Rebellious people with Korah—The ground swallowed them up.
 - e) Israel not permitted to go into the promise land because of unbelief.
 - f) Captivity of the Northern 10 Tribes and even Judah because of Idolatry.
 - g) The Flood—All but 8 souls destroyed from face of the earth.
 - h) Sodom & Gomorrah—Fire from heaven destroyed them because of their wickedness.
- 3) It is inferred that if God did this under a lesser Covenant.....
 - a) How much more so under this new & better Covenant?
 - b) Upon what basis do we hope to escape punishment?
 - c) By what means of logic do we hope to still be saved?
 - d) If men cannot afford to neglect the revelation given by Angels, how much less can we afford to neglect His Son's revelation?
 - e) The point is obvious—we cannot afford to neglect such!

III. WHAT MAKES THIS SALVATION SO GREAT?

A. Because it was first spoken to us by the Lord!

- 1) He is a superior messenger.
- 2) God, Himself, has come down in the form of man to speak to us.
- 3) There is not and will not be a greater than Jesus to speak to man.

B. Such was confirmed unto us by them who heard Him.

- 1) This is not a hearsay—3rd hand—Gospel message!
- 2) It is straight from the “horses mouth!” (If you please) (1 Jn. 1:1; Acts 5:32).
- 3) It was confirmed by signs, wonders, divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) **Signs**—attesting the truthfulness of what was preached.
 - b) **Wonders**—something out of the ordinary course of things that arrested attention.
 - c) **Divers miracles**—varying manifestations of divine power at work.
 - d) **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**—gifts given to individual Christians listed in 1 Cor. 12.

C. There was a wide variety of miracles in the 1st century.

- 1) Tongues or languages of men.
- 2) Healing of a lame man.
- 3) Miraculous deliverance from prison.
- 4) Miraculous shaking of a place where they prayed.
- 5) Miraculous gifts were given through the laying on of the Apostles' hands.
- 6) Philip was miraculously caught away to another location.
- 7) The dead were raised back to life.
- 8) Demons were cast out of people.

- 9) Paul & Silas' bonds were loosed by an earthquake which God brought on.
- 10) Special miracles done through Paul, even to use a handkerchief or apron that touched his body to heal people.
- 11) Deliverance was given in storms and shipwrecks.
- 12) Paul was not harmed by a viper bite.
- 13) etc.

D. Characteristics of their miracles of healing:

- 1) They were instantaneous, complete, and perfect.
- 2) They were public for all to witness.
- 3) They were acknowledged by even Jesus' enemies.
- 4) There was no relapse.
- 5) They were not used to build up a following for some man, but Christ.
- 6) They were not used to establish or build a different church than the one Christ built.
- 7) There were no preliminary investigations to weed out difficult cases.
- 8) They did not necessarily have to be present to perform the miracle.
- 9) Faith was not always a pre-requisite.

E. The Purpose of Miracles:

- 1) "God bearing them witness."
- 2) A means of confirming & establishing their new message as being from God.
- 3) Once confirmed, they were not needed any further.

CONCLUSION

1. This great Gospel message is able to:
 - a) Save us from our lost condition before God.
 - b) To make us free from sin and its hold.
 - c) To make us free from the guilt of sin.
 - d) To make us free from the state of sin (we are in Christ).
 - e) To make us free from the consequences of sin—eternal death.
2. God invites, entreats, reasons with us, warns us and attempts to draw us by this Gospel message.
 - a) He will not force or compel us against our will.
 - b) The strongest appeal is made to arouse us to diligence & earnestness.
 - c) If these fail, punishment awaits us.
3. What has been your reaction to this offer of so great a salvation?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. The root of sin is selfishness.
2. The writer of Hebrews warns us that we need to be "earnest" in our hearing and obeying the message of Christ.
3. Instant death came to some who were disobedient in the Old Testament.

- ____ 4. There was also instant death under the New Testament from disobedience to Christ.
- ____ 5. We know that Jesus lived and did what the writers of the New Testament say because they heard it from others.
- ____ 6. Miracles performed by Jesus, the Apostles, and the early Christians were open to be seen and evaluated by anyone who had doubts.
- ____ 7. Every one who was healed had to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
- ____ 8. Miracles were a means of confirming the new message as being from learned scribes.
- ____ 9. Once the message was fully revealed and confirmed, the purpose of miracles ceased.
- ____ 10. The Gospel has the power to free us from the guilt of sin.

Lesson Five

“The Necessity of Jesus Becoming a Man”

(Hebrews 2:5-18)

Why was Jesus such a stumbling block to the Jewish people? (1 Cor. 1:21-24). What made it so hard for them to accept Him and His death on the cross? We believe that a large part of the answer has to be in their pre-conceived ideas of what Christ and His kingdom would be like. They had a hard time accepting the fact of the Deity of the Messiah—such was blasphemy! Yet, this was what the Apostles and early Christians advocated and supported it with Old Testament Prophecies. But the Jewish argument was that He couldn't be God because there is only one God! They crucified Him because He was a blasphemer. It was hard for them to conceive of God being born in the flesh as a helpless infant. If He were the Son of God, why did he have to die like all men? The Hebrew writer tries to help us to understand in these verses about this concept (2:5-18).

DISCUSSION**I. GOD'S DESIGN WAS FOR MAN'S EXALTATION (2:5-8)****A. This was shown by God's plan for man.**

- 1) God never intended for Angels to be over the “world (age) to come.”
- 2) Some believe this has reference to man’s creation and being placed as rulers over this inhabitant earth—not Angels.

B. God's plan expressed by the Psalmist (8:3-6).

- 1) Man seems to be so insignificant in this universe!
- 2) Yet, God is mindful of him far more than we possibly can realize.
 - a) Man had a lofty beginning.
 - b) He was made in the “image of God.”
 - c) He was made a little lower than the Angels.
 - d) He has been crowned with glory & honor. (He wears a crown of reason, conscience, and moral freedom).
 - e) He was placed over all the works of God.
 - He was given a scepter of authority over all creatures.
 - He was to rule over all as God’s Viceroy.
 - All things were put under his feet.

C. But man hasn't done too well!

- 1) His condition became debased by sin & rebellion against God.
- 2) The crown on his head has fallen into the dust.
- 3) His spiritual relationship with God was broken by sin.
- 4) He has become more of a SLAVE than a KING of the earth.
- 5) The writer points out that man was made to rule, but he is frustrated:
 - a) By circumstances;
 - b) Defeated by his temptations & rebellions;
 - c) Surrounded by his weaknesses;
 - d) He should be free, but he is bound;
 - e) He should be a king, but he is a slave;
 - f) Man is not what he was meant to be.

- 6) But the original purpose of God will not be frustrated!
- Man will still be given his kingly heritage.
 - But it will have to be accomplished through another man that is perfect.

II. THE CORONATION OF MAN CAN BE REALIZED IN JESUS CHRIST (2:9-18)

A. This is the reason why the Son of God came to earth as a man.

- 1) Look at Jesus—see how He identifies with man.
 - a) He is God's IDEAL MAN.
 - b) As we look upon Him, we understand what God intended for man to be.
 - c) Jesus lifted our crown from the dust & put it on his own head to show us the royalty God intended for man.
- 2) He, too, was made a little lower than the Angels.
 - a) He came to earth, was born of a woman, to be a man as other men.
 - b) While on earth, He was the 2nd Adam (Rom. 5:12-19).
 - c) He exemplified what the 1st Adam should have been.
- 3) He became flesh so He could taste of death for every man.
 - a) Death came to the 1st Adam because of his own sin.
 - b) Jesus, the 2nd Adam, the IDEAL MAN, came to earth in order to die for others' sins, not His own.
 - c) As a man, he received glory & honor.
 - d) But also as a man, He was able to taste of death for every man.
 - It was a voluntary death, not coerced (Jn. 10:17-18).
 - He came to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).
 - e) He submitted to death:
 - So humanity could be re-crowned with glory & honor.
 - So that man's slavery & bondage to sin could be broken.
 - So that God could forgive man's sin through the death of Jesus.
 - f) All this was provided by God's grace (unmerited on man's part!).

B. The coronation of man had to come through suffering.

- 1) Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.
- 2) He suffered in all areas of life: IN BODY, IN MIND, IN HEART, IN SPIRIT.
- 3) But more important, He suffered death itself.
- 4) All of this suffering was necessary in order for Him to be man's redeemer.
 - a) Through His obedience unto death, He became qualified as Savior.
 - b) He opened the door for us through His willingness to empty Himself in death.
 - c) Through His death, He will bring many Sons unto glory.

C. Great stress is laid upon His identification with man.

- 1) He was not only flesh & blood like us.....
 - a) But, He is also our sanctifier, showing a spiritual connection;
 - b) His identification with us is important to understand.
- 2) If He was not ashamed to die for us to cleanse us.....
 - a) Then, surely He is not ashamed to be identified with us as His people.
 - b) He freely calls us brethren—identifying with us.
 - c) We are those whom God has given unto Jesus.

D. But the Coronation of man had to come through the Destruction of Satan.

- 1) Through Satan:
 - a) Sin was introduced into the world.
 - b) Through Adam & Eve's yielding to sin, death came upon all men.
 - c) Death is man's great enemy.
 - 2) Jesus, in becoming a man like all other men:
 - a) Made it possible to destroy Satan's power over us.
 - b) Satan has been silenced before the throne of God as our accuser.
 - c) His mouth has been stopped for justice has been done.
 - d) And we have been delivered from the fear & power of death.
 - e) We have now the promise of a resurrection from death unto life eternal.
 - 3) This was made possible by Jesus:
 - a) Not taking on the nature of Angels,
 - b) But, the nature of man in order to deliver & re-exalt man again.
- E. Man's Coronation was made possible through a merciful High Priest.**
- 1) Why was Jesus made like man in all aspects?
 - 2) Why was He tempted in all points like man?
 - 3) Why did He have to endure the entire range of poverty, toil, pain, sorrow, insult, disappointment, persecution, and temptation?
 - 4) It was for the purpose of becoming man's redeemer by identifying with him.
 - 5) But even more, to become a merciful High Priest to succor us.
 - a) So that we might have full confidence in His ability to:
 - Identify with us;
 - To understand us.
 - b) He has shared all we have to endure.
 - c) He is identified as one of us.

CONCLUSION

1. Song: "*Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall,
Join in the everlasting g song,
And crown Him Lord of all.*"
2. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain:
 - a) Who is worthy of all glory, praise, adoration, dominion, and power.
 - b) Both now and throughout eternity.
3. We need to cherish the idea of man's dignity.
 - a) But realize that we only attain that dignity through Christ.
 - b) We must turn to Him for the escape from the hold & slavery of sin.
 - c) And then, strive to imitate Him as a pattern for all men to live by.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**True or False**

- ____ 1. One of the primary reasons for the Jews rejecting Christ was the lack of clearness in the prophecies about Christ.
- ____ 2. God's design for man was to be king over the earth.

- 3. Man lost his kingship by submitting to Satan and allowing him to reign over the earth.**
- 4. Instead of man being free, he has become a slave.**
- 5. Man's coronation has to come through the 2nd Adam since the 1st Adam lost it.**
- 6. Jesus submitted to death so that man could be crowned with glory and honor.**
- 7. Man's coronation had to come through the way of suffering.**
- 8. Jesus has identified with man in all areas except one.**
- 9. Man's coronation had to come through destruction of Satan's power over man.**
- 10. Man's greatest enemy is death!**

Lesson Six

“One Greater Than Moses Has Come”

(Hebrews 3:1-6)

Jesus' coming among the Jewish people called for a very hard choice: Moses or Christ! Moses had been with them for 1500 years. To the Jewish mind he stood at the “top of the heap,” so to speak! He was their Law-Giver! He spoke to God “face to face” as with a friend. They revered him almost to the point of idolatry. So, why should they accept Jesus over Moses?

The Hebrew writer is dealing with people who have evidently obeyed the Gospel and started living the Christian life, but almost immediately faced persecution from fellow Jews. It was very hard for them to deal with this and also to turn from Moses as God's Law-Giver! But it was important for them to realize that Jesus is greater than Moses and must be listened to and accepted as God's Son. While Moses was great, Jesus superseded him. The writer does not put Moses down; yet, Jesus is exalted above him.

The Jews had a choice: (1) To reject Moses and to accept Christ; or (2) To hold on to Moses and reject Christ. The Hebrew writer is giving sufficient information to help them in the making of this decision.

DISCUSSION**I. THEY NEEDED TO REALIZE THEY HAD A HEAVENLY CALLING (3:1)****A. *They had been called by God to follow Christ.***

- 1) This calling was done by the preaching of the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14).
- 2) Yes, Moses spoke with God and spoke for God in the giving of the Law.
- 3) Yes, the Jewish nation had been called by God to follow the Law of Moses.
- 4) But now, they have another heavenly calling—to follow Christ! (Phil. 3:20-21; Eph. 1:3).

B. *This calling must not be taken lightly.*

- 1) “Consider”
 - a) Fix your attention on Jesus!
 - b) Consider Him well—understand what is being said about Him.
 - c) The greatest safeguard against apostasy is a steadfast look at Jesus.
 - d) This requires a fixed and prolonged attention.
 - e) We have Jesus on our hands, what shall we do with Him?
 - f) We need to deal honestly with Him.
- 2) A sure road of apostasy is to turn from considering Jesus.

C. *Consider who He is!*

- 1) He is an Apostle.
 - a) “One sent on the behalf of another.”
 - b) Like an ambassador—personal envoy of God.
 - c) Clothed with power from God who has sent Him.
 - d) His voice is the voice of God who sent Him with His message.
- 2) Moses was sent of God to accomplish God's purposes.

- a) He forsook the riches of Egypt to obey God.
- b) He identified himself with the enslaved people of Israel.
- c) He was sent to lead the people out of bondage to a promised land.
- 3) But, Jesus was also sent of God to accomplish God's purposes.
 - a) He forsook the glories of heaven to obey God.
 - b) He identified Himself with enslaved mankind in sin.
 - c) He was sent to deliver sinful mankind from the bondage to a promised land.
- 4) Jesus is also a High Priest.
 - a) A High Priest is one who is able to intercede before God for the people.
 - b) To serve as a mediator between God and man.
 - c) Moses served somewhat in this capacity at first until Aaron was appointed.
 - d) But Jesus is a High Priest for mankind now in every sense of the word.

II. BOTH MOSES AND JESUS ARE FAITHFUL TO DO GOD'S WILL (3:2)

A. Moses was faithful to carry out the work God appointed him to do.

- 1) Numbers 12:7—"My servant Moses....is faithful in all mine house."
- 2) He led the Israelites unto the promised land.

B. But Jesus was also faithful to carry out the work God appointed Him to do.

- 1) Matthew 17:5—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him."
- 2) Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets.
- 3) He accomplished God's work of redemption.

C. Jesus' faithfulness should help us to be faithful to our calling.

- 1) "Fidelity to duty is the crown and flower of character."
- 2) Look at Jesus, see His faithfulness, and see our need to be faithful.

III. WE ALSO NEED TO SEE JESUS' SUPERIORITY OVER MOSES (3:3-6)

A. While there are similarities, there is also superiority.

- 1) Moses' greatness should be respected and honored as a faithful servant of God.
- 2) But Jesus deserves even greater honor and respect for His faithfulness to God.

B. His superiority is seen in His being the Builder of the House.

- 1) The builder of a house has greater honor than the house he builds.
- 2) God has built all things through Christ (Heb. 1:2-3).
 - a) All of God's plans were brought unto fruition by the creative act of Jesus.
 - b) Jesus is the builder of the House.
- 3) Moses was only a part of the house that Jesus built.
- 4) Moses had to be saved by God's grace like all other sinful men, but Jesus is the Savior who never sinned.
- 5) Moses was a "living stone" built into the spiritual House by Christ, the master builder.

C. Jesus' superiority is seen in His being the Son over the House.

- 1) Moses was only a servant in that house.
 - a) An honored servant indeed!

- b) And a faithful servant—but nonetheless, a servant!
- 2) Christ entered the House as its master to preside as head over His House.
 - a) Moses merely foreshadowed the Christ that was to come.
 - b) Moses was the harbinger—Christ, the very Prince!

IV. TO REMAIN IN THIS HOUSE REQUIRES STEADFASTNESS (3:6)

A. Redeemed people make up the house of God.

- 1) 1 Tim. 3:15
- 2) All of God's planning was to bring into existence the church, the redeemed people of God.

B. But steadfastness is necessary to receive the hope of those in the House.

- 1) Hold fast the confidence with which we began.
- 2) We must, with assurance, hold on to that first trust and faith in Jesus.
- 3) We must be firm unto the end—unwavering in our service to God.

CONCLUSION

1. Are we in this House that the Lord built?
2. Have we shown our confidence in the Sonship of Jesus by submitting our lives in faithful service to Him?
3. Matthew 12:41-42
4. Behold, a greater than Moses is here!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. The Jews were faced with a choice between Moses or Christ.
2. God's call today is to believe in and follow Jesus in order to be accepted by God.
3. This call is accomplished by God coming into our lives personally to let us know we are called.
4. The Hebrew writer is calling on his readers to "consider" again this Jesus.
5. Jesus was an Apostle and High Priest.
6. A High Priest is one appointed by God to intercede or be a mediator between God and man.
7. The faithfulness of Moses is held up as something to be respected.
8. Jesus was also faithful, but still was superior to Moses in another way.
9. Jesus' superiority over Moses is that Moses was a servant in the House and Jesus is the Builder of the House.
10. Jesus is also the Son over the House, while Moses was only a servant in the House.

Lesson Seven

“An Example of Unbelief and its Lesson”

(Hebrews 3:7-19)

The Old Covenant was given through Moses to the Israelite Nation and it only (Psalm 147:19-20). They were expected to live up to that Covenant. However, the Gentile world, who did not have the Law (of Moses, understood) were to be judged by whether they lived up to the Law (written in their hearts) (Romans 2:14-15). When Jesus came he gave us a New Covenant that all peoples and nations are expected to come under if they are to be right with God (Mark 16:15-16). Today, we have been given a new and better Covenant based on better promises (Heb. 8:6).

But the Old Testament does have a value for us today. The writer of Hebrews shows this conclusively by using it to prove the superiority of Jesus. He also used the Old Testament examples, as do other New Testament writers, to serve as a warning to us not to be guilty of the same kind of sins the Jewish people were guilty of and were not acceptable to God (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4; Heb. 3:7-19). This exhortation in Hebrews is based on what he has just been saying in verse 6—Christ is a Son over His house, we are His House, if....we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope steadfast or firm unto the end! To encourage such, he gives this exhortation.

DISCUSSION

I. AN EXAMPLE OF NOT HOLDING FAST (3:7-11)

A. Psalm 95:7-11

- 1) The writer is using this exhortation in the Psalms to warn us to learn from them.
- 2) We are called upon to make a momentous decision.
- 3) And to make it today, not tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, but now.
- 4) “If you will hear His voice.”
- 5) God has spoken—are we listening?

B. The warning—*harden not your hearts as they did!*

- 1) What impact does the Word of God have upon our hearts?
- 2) Do we harden it or do we receive the message and respond?
- 3) The Jewish people hardened their hearts in the wilderness (Exo. 17:1-7).
- 4) This is just one of the many instances of their provoking the anger of God.
- 5) This was indicated by the expression: “When your fathers tempted me, provoked me, and saw my works forty years.”
- 6) They provoked God by their unbelief: “Is the Lord among us, is He really there, does He really care?”
- 7) After God had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, defended them time and again, provided for their needs, they were still uncertain of God (Numbers 14:11, 22, 27, 31, 35).
- 8) They doubted God’s goodness and their outlook was an insult to God.

C. God called upon them to go up and take the land (Numbers 14:8-12).

- 1) They did not believe they could do it.
- 2) Moses prayed that God would not destroy them (Numbers 14:20-23).
- 3) What God commanded, to them, was contrary to their human reasoning.
- 4) It demanded great courage in the face of such great odds.
- 5) God calls upon us today to go up to a higher, richer spiritual level.
- 6) Does He receive the same reception from us....is the cost too high?
- 7) Do we fear the persecution & tribulation we will have to face?
- 8) They provoked God with their unbelief...do we also?

D. God was grieved with that generation.

- 1) They broke God's heart.
- 2) He knew the outcome of such rebellion & unbelief.
- 3) The trouble was in their hearts—it was a wandering heart, not staid on God.
- 4) They knew what God wanted, but wouldn't do it.
- 5) They just would not learn the way God worked among them.
- 6) Since they would not learn, they perished in the wilderness.
- 7) They did not get to enjoy their rest!

II. CAN WE LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKE? (3:12-19)**A. Take heed and learn!**

- 1) Be aware that we can find ourselves in the same predicament.
- 2) We can be guilty of the same unbelief.
- 3) We can also lose our promised rest.

B. Unbelief must be guarded against.

- 1) God deserves our trust, not our doubts.
- 2) God had given them plenty of evidence to trust Him, as He has us.
- 3) For them, it was of no avail—what about us?
- 4) We can choose to believe in God and also to disbelieve.
- 5) We are protected (kept by God) as long as we believe (1 Pet. 1:5).
- 6) Israel's problem was not an isolated act of unbelief, but a manner of life.

C. The need to exhort one another.

- 1) We continually need to encourage one another to fully trust in God.
- 2) The dangers of unbelief are real—every day!
- 3) Our hearts can gradually become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
- 4) Illustration:

- a) God gives us a command to be obeyed.
- b) We either obey it or rationalize away our responsibility.
- c) We literally deceive ourselves into disobedience.
 - “Doesn’t apply to me!”
 - “I’m saved, I know I’m saved: I don’t care what that verse says.”
 - “God is so loving, He will overlook our not doing His will.”
 - “The letter kills: it is the spirit that matters, so I need not pay too strict attention to obedience to the letter of the Law.”
 - “Other good people are not doing it—it must be okay.”Etc.

- 5) Such attitudes will:

- a) Distort our spiritual vision;

- b) Cause us to take false views;
- c) Lose our view of the truth;
- d) Cause us to rebel against God, tempt God, or prove Him.

D. What will it take to be acceptable to God?

- 1) Faithfulness to the end!
- 2) We must not only begin, but finish the race to win the prize.
- 3) The reward is only to those who hold out to the end.
- 4) Our confidence, trust, and belief in God need to increase, not decrease.
- 5) We need to believe that He will do what He promises.
- 6) To stake our souls and lives on the fact that God cannot lie.

E. But God's promises have a limit.

- 1) We never know when our life will end.
- 2) All we have is now—today!
- 3) God's offer of acceptance is now, not tomorrow!
- 4) So, we need to believe and obey God now, while there is time.
- 5) Don't harden your heart as they did.

F. What is unbelief?

- 1) When we hear, but rebel.
- 2) When we sin—break God's Law.
- 3) When we refuse to obey.
- 4) God is angry with such people and will not let them enter into His rest.

CONCLUSION

1. Will this example profit us?
2. Will we be encouraged to be trusting, faithful, and obedient to God?
3. Or, will we give in to doubt and mistrust?
4. Today is the day to serve God—that is all the time we have!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Warnings are given to encourage, not discourage.
- 2. We are not under the Old Covenant today, but it still can be very useful to us.
- 3. It is our choice to harden our hearts and not believe God's promises.
- 4. Israel's unbelief was only an isolated incident, but God punished them anyway.
- 5. The Bible said that God was grieved with the unbelief of the Israelites.
- 6. That whole generation of people died in the wilderness.
- 7. We cannot depart from God because we have been saved.
- 8. God keeps us unto Himself through our faith.
- 9. To harden our hearts takes time—it is not done in one incident.
- 10. We can miss heaven because of our unbelief.

Lesson Eight

“There Remains a Rest for the People of God”

(Hebrews 4:1-13)

The Israelites that came out of Egypt were not allowed to go into the promise land of Canaan (20 years and older). Several statements are made that show the reasons for their great disappointment:

1. Because of unbelief.
2. Because they allowed their hearts to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
3. Because they always erred in their hearts.
4. Because they continually provoked and tested or proved God.
5. Because they would not put their trust fully and completely in God and His promises.

They missed the rest that they were looking forward to and had striven for. And the Hebrew writer uses this example to strongly warn us of the same dangers of losing our rest.

DISCUSSION

I. GOD’S PROMISE OF REST TO HIS PEOPLE.

A. The concept of Rest:

- 1) There is a deep yearning in man for rest.
 - a) In our younger years, we got tired and needed physical rest.
 - b) As we get older, the need for rest is even more obvious.
- 2) But, man yearns for something more than just physical rest.
 - a) There is a restlessness within man for a higher rest from God.
 - b) It is a rest from:
 - The labors of this life;
 - Distresses;
 - Disappointments;
 - Anxieties,etc.
 - c) We are never allowed to fully enjoy rest from all of these in this life.

B. God’s Revelation progresses from the physical to the spiritual.

- 1) The Old Law is a shadow of the New Covenant under Christ.
 - a) Many of the physical things under the Old System find their spiritual counterpart under the New System.
 - b) The same seems to be true of the promise of Rest.
- 2) Physical facts:
 - a) God rested from His labors after six days.
 - b) God promised Rest to Israel in the Land of Promise.
 - c) It was a rest from their bondage in Egypt.
 - d) But it could be a rest from their wilderness wanderings.
 - e) It was a rest in the sense of peace & attainment.
- 3) Yes, they who came out of Egypt missed their rest because of unbelief.
 - a) They all died in the wilderness except for Joshua & Caleb.
 - b) The next generation did get to go in.
- 4) But God still held out another concept of rest for His people.
 - a) David gave an indication of it in Psalm 95.

- b) Joshua did not give Israel this rest that David was speaking about.
- c) He was speaking about another rest for the people of God.

C. What is this rest?

- 1) Matt. 11:28-30
- 2) God's rest is found through Jesus.
- 3) It is a rest for our souls.
 - a) Rest from the guilt & burden of sin.
 - b) Rest from the pressures of temporal anxieties.
 - c) Rest from the disturbances & distresses of self-will.
 - d) Rest from unsatisfied affections.
 - e) Rest from the sorrows of bereavement & dread of death.
- 4) But, it is ultimately more:
 - a) It is an eternal rest with God in heaven.
 - b) It is a rest from the struggle of sin.
 - c) It is a rest from the sufferings in life.
 - d) It is a rest from the toilsome, anxious, and discouraging labors of life.
 - e) It will be a perfect, complete rest—the Sabbath rest of God!

II. NECESSITIES IN ORDER TO ATTAIN UNTO OUR REST

A. "Let us therefore fear" (1)

- 1) Not fear which makes one run from a task.
- 2) Not fear that reduces us to a paralyzed state of inaction.
- 3) But a reverential fear that prompts us to do our duty.
- 4) A fear that causes us to be diligent in our efforts to reach our Rest.
- 5) A fear that causes us to use all our resources towards that one great goal of life.

B. Let our hearing result in faith (2)

- 1) Hearing the message must be mixed with trust in God's ability to carry out His promises.
- 2) Those who enter into Rest will be believers!

C. Let us be diligent (11)

- 1) There are many ways to hear the message of God:
 - a) Indifferent hearing;
 - b) Disinterested hearing;
 - c) Critical hearing;
 - d) Skeptical hearing;
 - e) Cynical & mocking hearing.
- 2) But the kind of hearing that will avail is the one that:
 - a) Listens eagerly and with readiness (Acts 17:11).
 - b) And believes and acts upon what is heard.
- 3) The Word of God is not merely:
 - a) A beautiful piece of Literature.....
 - b) Or, sweet sayings which mean nothing....
- 4) But, it contains promises that a man is willing to stake his life upon and give himself unto.
- 5) Therefore, let us labor, work, be diligent, so we can enter into our rest.

D. God's Word must be respected for what it is.

- 1) It cannot be ignored without punishment.
- 2) Reasons for respecting it:
 - a) His Word is living (4:12)
 - Not dead, it is alive, it has vitality.
 - It comes from the source of life and gives life to men who obey it.
 - 1 Peter 1:23—His Word lives and abides forever.
 - b) His Word is powerful (Rom. 1:16)
 - It is still able to do the work it was intended to do.
 - It is able to enlighten men's minds & hearts to truth.
 - It is able to expose & destroy false philosophies & imaginations.
 - It is able to convert the sinner from the error of his way.
 - It is able to sanctify the believer unto God.
 - His Word is the most dominant power among men!
 - c) His Word can penetrate deeply.
 - It is sharp and can penetrate through everything.
 - Nothing can stand before it without being penetrated.
 - It is able to make the fine distinctions of man's being.
 - It can search the whole of man's nature.
 - d) His Word can discriminate clearly.
 - It can go into the deepest recesses of man's being.
 - It can show him the true intent of his heart.
 - It can reveal a man unto himself.
 - It is able to prick the very heart of man.
 - e) His Word can fully expose all.
 - There is nothing that is not fully manifested before God.
 - All things are naked and laid open unto His eyes.
 - This can be a great comfort to us....or a terror.
- 3) It can only be these things to those who will be willing to hear, believe, and obey it.

CONCLUSION

1. Will we profit by unbelieving Israel's example?
2. Are we cherishing a reverential fear of God and His Word?
3. Are we cultivating a strong faith and trust in God's promises?
4. Are we giving diligence to enter into our rest that the Lord holds out before us?
5. The end of disbelief and disobedience is eternal damnation (Matt. 25:41, 46).
6. The end of faith & obedience is eternal rest.
7. Which road are we walking?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. The word “Rest” is used in a physical as well as a spiritual sense in these verses.
2. God’s revelation progresses from the physical to the spiritual.
3. Israel’s rest was to enter into and settle in the land of Canaan.
4. Only two people enter into God’s rest from that generation.
5. David foretold of another rest for the people of God.
6. The rest that Jesus offers is manifold.
7. Fear, faith, and labor are all requirements before we can enter our rest.
8. God’s Word is the most dominant power among men.
9. His Word can fully expose our thoughts and hearts.
10. God’s Word can only benefit those who believe and obey it.

Lesson Nine

“Christ, the Perfect High Priest”

(Hebrews 4:14-5:10)

In the midst of a long section encouraging us to faithfulness, the writer of Hebrews introduces the concept of Jesus as being our High Priest. Why? It would seem to be most obvious when you consider man's weakness and frailty towards disbelief and sin. Because of such, there is a grave danger of quitting and giving up. We are exposed to a mighty enemy that does his best to deprive us of our salvation. We are constantly being prevailed upon to part with it! But one thing must be remembered—our salvation cannot be taken from us without our consent! So, we need to look to Jesus, our great High priest, in such perilous times. He is the ideal, perfect High Priest in every respect. We need to avail ourselves of His willing service.

DISCUSSION**I. CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD—AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO STEADFASTNESS (4:14-16)****A. Hold fast and look to Jesus!**

- 1) One is not faithful by accident, but because he plans to be and works at it.
- 2) We have a part to play in making that decision.
- 3) No one, or no thing, can force us to quit and give up.
- 4) Jesus, our High Priest, also offers His help by interceding for us.

B. Jesus is a great High Priest because:

- 1) He has felt our feelings!
- 2) He has identified with man as a man in every sense of the word.
- 3) He completely underwent all human experiences.
- 4) He has been there—He has felt what we feel.
- 5) He has experienced temptations just like us.
 - a) He was tempted in all points like us.
 - b) He endured all that Satan could bring against Him.
 - c) He has been through the struggles of dealing with temptations.
 - d) Yet, without giving into sinful passions.
- 6) His strength to stand against sin helps us to get up and keep trying to stand.

C. We have a willing and understanding High Priest.

- 1) He is willing and able to help in time of need.
 - a) When our hearts need renewed strength after failure—turn to Him!
 - b) When we are despondent, ashamed—turn to Him!
 - c) Come boldly, feeling free to speak with assurance, and with a desire to completely unburden our hearts.
- 2) His Throne is a Throne of Grace and Mercy for men.
 - a) It is a Throne of Justice & Holiness.
 - b) But it is also one of Grace & Mercy to sinful, penitent man.
 - c) It is a Throne always willing to listen & help the sincere seeker.

II. THE WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS OF A HIGH PRIEST (5:1-4)**A. A High Priest is to be taken from among men.**

- 1) This is his identification with those he is to serve.
- 2) Aaron was taken from among the Israelite people to serve them before God.

B. He is ordained for men in things pertaining to God.

- 1) He officiates in behalf of men to God.
- 2) He helps men to get right with God and stay right with God.

C. He offers gifts and sacrifices for them.

- 1) Every offering for sin was an earnest plea for mercy from God.
- 2) The High Priest gives assurance to the sinner that his gift has been offered.

D. He is expected to be compassionate towards the people.

- 1) There are differences in attitudes among people who sin.
 - a) Some are arrogant, presumptuous, and rebellious.
 - b) Others are humble, acknowledging their weaknesses and lack of knowledge, and their negligence.
- 2) The attitude that seeks to be right with God is the one the High Priest can truly approach God with—with the hope of forgiveness.
- 3) He can treat the ignorant & erring with gentleness because:
 - a) He too is human,
 - b) He too has sinned,
 - c) He too must offer for his own sins, as well as, for the people.
- 4) He can bear with his people:
 - a) Without irritability or self-righteousness.
 - b) Because he too is bound up in the same struggle with sin.

E. His qualifications:

- 1) No one takes such a position upon himself.
 - a) Those who have tried were punished by God (Koran, Dathan, Saul, etc.)
 - b) To attempt to do so is to usurp God's Authority.
 - c) They are of no avail before God—He does not recognize them.
- 2) Aaron was acceptable because he was appointed of God.

III. JESUS QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRIESTHOOD (5:5-10)***A. He was called of God.***

- 1) He didn't take this honor unto Himself.
- 2) He was made a priest by God.
- 3) The same One who called Him His Son also made Him a Priest (Ps. 2:7; 110:4).
- 4) He was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
 - a) Jesus' Priesthood is patterned after His Priesthood.
 - b) It is an unending Priesthood.
 - c) His Priesthood does not pass to another—He ever lives to serve.

B. His life among men qualifies Him to serve.

- 1) He was in the flesh—shown by:
 - a) His prayers that He offered up to the Father.
 - b) His supplications with strong crying & tears.
- 2) Possible reference to the night of His betrayal.
 - a) It was a time of deep sorrow and humiliation.
 - b) He faced death in every sense of the word.

- c) The human side cried out unto God for deliverance.
- d) He prayed earnestly—the same prayer 3 times.
- e) He was heard—given sufficient assurance He could see it through.
- f) He resigned Himself to the Will of God.

C. Through His obedience.

- 1) Even though He was the Son of God, He learned obedience.
 - a) It was learned in the face of great suffering & anguish.
 - b) He did all that God expected of Him.
 - c) His testing showed His worthiness to become man's High Priest.
- 2) His obedience also:
 - a) Upheld God and showed Him to be Just.
 - b) He provided a blood atonement for man's sins.
 - c) He provided a way to God—a way to be saved.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Our eternal salvation is conditioned upon our faithful obedience, as well.
- 2. Because of man's sin, there is a need for sacrifice to atone for sin.
- 3. He who offered Himself for that atonement is well-qualified to be our High Priest.
 - a) He can officiate perfectly for us—no need for another.
 - b) All others are frauds, usurpers, and unable to save.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. A High Priest is needed as a go-between God and man.
- 2. Jesus is a perfect High Priest in every sense of the word.
- 3. Jesus' humanness made it possible for Him to be our High Priest.
- 4. Jesus was tempted in all points like us, but did not give in to them.
- 5. Jesus cannot identify with man as a sinner.
- 6. One of the purposes of a High Priest is to offer gifts and sacrifices for men to God.
- 7. Those who dared to take on this position upon their own authority were reprimanded by God.
- 8. A High priest has to be appointed with the approval of the one He serves for.
- 9. A High Priest has to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, as well as his own.
- 10. Jesus' Priesthood is liken unto Melchizedek's Priesthood.

Lesson Ten

“The Necessity of Spiritual Growth”

(Hebrews 5:11-6:3)

Admonitions and instructions to grow are abundant in Scripture. The means for that growth is provided. The reasons and purposes for growth are given. The dangers of a lack of growth are spelled out. In other words, God wants His people to grow spiritually! Growing as a Christian is not an option, it is a necessity! It makes a difference here and hereafter whether one grows or not. Lack of growth is not only regrettable, but it is also sinful. To grow to a mature status as a Christian should therefore be every one’s desire (Matthew 5:48; Eph. 4:13).

DISCUSSION

I. THE WRITER REBUKES THEIR REFUSAL TO GROW (5:11-14)

A. He chides them.

- 1) I have great things to tell you about Jesus Christ, but:
 - a) You are not really showing interest in learning;
 - b) You are not willing to put forth the effort to grow;
 - c) You are dull (slow) of hearing.
- 2) People often dodge studying something because it is harder.
 - a) They are babes and want to stay babes because it is easier.
 - b) They want to stay with the simple.
 - c) The harder requires effort—they are mentally lazy.
- 3) Christianity has its simple things to be learned.
 - a) But, it also has its deeper things that require more effort to learn.
 - b) It is an effort to bring people to maturity—to their full potential in Christ.
 - c) They need a full and adequate understanding of Christianity.
- 4) Paul pointed this out to the Colossians (Col. 1:9).
 - a) God is an infinite being to be understood.
 - b) In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3)
 - c) Unsearchable riches are offered to us through the knowledge of Christ.
- 5) It is difficult or impossible to teach such great knowledge to people who have no interest in learning.
 - a) They have a spiritual feebleness.
 - b) They have an intellectual prejudice against learning & growing.
 - c) They have a sinful inattention to great & important matters.

B. He talks about the results of their failure to grow.

- 1) Such are incapable of teaching others about Christ.
 - a) One cannot teach what one does not know.
 - b) They had not progressed far enough to be able to effectively teach others.
 - c) They still needed to be taught the first principles all over again.
 - d) They could only take milk, not meat.
 - e) People on milk are incapable of using the Word of God to teach others.
 - f) In due time all Christians should be able to teach others about Christ.

- g) The first duty of new Christians—be taught & trained so he can in turn teach others.
- 2) Such have a problem making proper decisions about good & evil in his life.
 - a) The simplicity of the Gospel brings us into Christ.
 - b) The advanced principles help us learn how to live godly, righteously, and a mature life.
 - c) If we stay on simplicity, we will never learn how to live properly.
 - d) It is like a man who lays the foundation, but never builds the house.

C. Principles of Growth learned from these verses.

- 1) One must have a desire to grow.
 - a) Look at the life of Christ—see our challenge!
 - b) Need to also see the blessings of living such a life!
 - c) But, we also need to see the consequences of a failure to grow.
- 2) We must realize that there is plenty of room for growth.
 - a) None of us have arrived as yet.
 - b) Paul made that clear about his life (Phil. 3:12).
 - c) We can always learn, if we are willing to put forth the effort.
- 3) We must deal with the cause of a lack of growth.
 - a) It is not just something outward, but something inward.
 - b) We need to find the cause within the heart and correct the problem.
- 4) Go to the source of spiritual growth—the Word of God.
 - a) Not just the milk of the Word, but the meat as well.
 - b) Milk is easily assimilated.
 - c) It takes more effort to eat and digest solid food.
 - d) We need to spiritually stop being lazy and go on to advance learning.
- 5) Use what we learn.
 - a) Put into practice—develop our spiritual life.
 - b) Growth is not only attaining greater understanding, but putting such understanding into practice.
 - c) It is a building of the house on the true foundation of truth.

II. THE NECESSITY OF PROGRESS EMPHASIZED (6:1-3)

A. The proper foundation must be laid before we can have proper growth.

- 1) Repentance from dead works
 - a) The Christian life has to begin with repentance.
 - b) It is a change of mind about serving sin.
 - c) It is a new attitude towards God, Christ, Life, Self, Others, etc.
 - d) It is turning from works that bring death to works that bring life.
- 2) Faith towards God
 - a) No longer to trust in self or in men.
 - b) Putting our trust in God:
 - In His directions (His Word);
 - In His Son—in His salvation
- 3) Doctrine of baptisms
 - a) Making proper distinctions in various baptisms
 - John's baptism is no longer valid

- Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a special outpouring by God upon both Jew and Gentile and is no longer valid
 - Baptism commanded by Jesus in order to be saved is what we must be obedient to.
- b) Make sure we have a right understanding of what God requires in baptism.
- 4) Laying on of hands
- a) A custom in the early church.
 - b) Carried with it the idea of approval or appointment or sending out.
 - c) But also—the Apostles could lay hands on people and impart miraculous gifts.
 - d) Have a correct understanding of these practices.
- 5) Resurrection of the dead
- a) The very reason for becoming a follower of Christ is in a hope of a resurrection someday.
 - b) One had to be assured not only of Jesus' Deity, but of His resurrection.
 - c) Without this hope, Christianity has nothing really to offer.
- 6) Judgment
- a) All men are accountable to God.
 - b) All will stand before God some day in judgment to hear our sentence or reward.

B. This foundation had been properly laid.

- 1) They should have known these things without being told all over again.
- 2) There is no point of teaching on these things on and on.

C. The challenge is to go on beyond the foundation and build the house.

- 1) The writer says: "*Let us go on to perfection (maturity).*"
- 2) Col. 1:28—"Teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus."
- 3) The contrast:
 - a) There are the learners—the beginners.
 - b) Then, there are the learned—those who have advanced beyond the elementary things and are maturing.
- 4) This does not imply complete knowledge or perfection.
 - a) It is emphasizing a certain maturity in the faith.
 - b) It is maturity in knowledge and in life.
 - c) It is not standing still, but moving forward.
- 5) Emphasis: Continually building—always building!

CONCLUSION

1. He concludes with this concept... "*And this will we do, if God permit.*"
 a) We will grow, progress, and mature in Christ.
 b) If God allows us to live longer.
2. Our challenge today is the same.
 a) To keep on growing more & more like Christ.
 b) To keep reaching for perfection, maturity, completeness in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. To grow to a mature status as a Christian should be every one's desire.
2. Not to grow is not only regrettable, but sinful.
3. People dodge studying because it is harder and they want the easy way.
4. It is not possible to teach someone who doesn't want to learn.
5. All Christians should grow to the point where they can teach others.
6. The mature show their maturity by how they make their decisions.
7. One basic requirement of growth is the desire to grow.
8. Those who stay on baby food spiritually, will never be effective in helping others to learn.
9. A proper foundation must be laid before we can have proper growth.
10. Only very few ever go on to become mature in Christ.

Lesson Eleven

“Apostasy versus Hope”

(Hebrews 6:4-20)

What would you think of me if I told you that there was a huge ditch outside my house and when you leave be careful and don’t fall into it? If there was an actual ditch, would you think I was foolish to warn you; or, would you question my reliability? One thing we can be sure of that God does not warn us about a danger that isn’t real! When He warns we had better take notice and take heed. We must be very careful that we do not become hardened so we will not listen.

The Christian life is more than the first principles. It not only has a beginning, but it has a middle and an ending also. It has the more mature things to be learned and obeyed. We must learn how to keep growing and patiently endure to the end, because there is always a real danger of falling away from God.

DISCUSSION

I. DANGER OF APOSTASY SPELLED OUT (6:4-5)

A. He describes what is involved in being a Christian.

- 1) He is one who has been enlightened (Ps. 19:8; Eph. 1:18)
- 2) They have been taught God’s truth—the Gospel.
- 3) The light from God through Christ was given to them.
- 4) They no longer had to walk in darkness or misunderstanding.

B. He has tasted the heavenly gift.

- 1) God’s gift from heaven was the giving of His Son to bring salvation (Jn. 6:51).
- 2) He has been given the benefits of this gift.
- 3) He has experienced what salvation is like.

C. He has been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) Acts 5:32
- 2) The early Christians were partakers of the Holy Spirit in two ways:
 - a) God gave the indwelling of the Spirit to all that obeyed the Gospel.
 - b) But He also gave some miraculous powers through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles.

D. He has tasted the good Word of God.

- 1) That which is satisfying to the soul.
- 2) That which has the power to change a man’s life towards righteousness.

E. He has tasted the powers of the world to come.

- 1) He could see a foretaste of heaven in this life in the church.
- 2) He could envision better what heaven would be like.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE APOSTATE (6:6)

A. They fall away from Christ.

- 1) The possibility of apostasy is a reality.
- 2) You cannot fall away from something you were never a part of.
- 3) They were saved, but then fell away.

B. They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

- 1) They now concur with the Jesus who rejected and crucified Christ.
- 2) By their apostasy, they crucify Jesus all over again.

C. They put Him to an open shame.

- 1) They bring shame upon themselves, but also on Christ.
- 2) They make men to laugh at Christ on the cross.

D. They are impossible to be brought to repentance.

- 1) Not impossible for God to forgive a person who repents.
- 2) The impossibility is to get such a person to repent again.
 - a) At one time, they had repented.
 - b) They became a Christian.
 - c) But now, they have gone back into the world to the extent, that they cannot be awakened to righteousness.
- 3) How can you know when a person has reached that point?
 - a) We cannot know the hearts of men like God, obviously.
 - b) But when a person cannot be brought to repentance on and on unto death, he obviously has reached that point.

E. They become like an unfruitful field.

- 1) Not fit for planting, but only to be burned.
- 2) On such people, the power of Grace has been exhausted.

III. NEEDED WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN TO THEM (4:7-20)***A. The writer was persuaded better things of them.***

- 1) In spite of their lack of growth, there was still hope for them.
- 2) Apostasy was not inevitable for them.
- 3) They could grow & mature with their salvation.
- 4) He is convinced that they will take heed to the warnings.
- 5) We need for brethren to express this faith in us today.

B. He assures them of God's faithfulness.

- 1) God is very much aware of their efforts to serve Him.
- 2) He knows of their continued efforts to minister to His people.
- 3) They had shown their desire to glorify the name of God by their actions.
- 4) God knows, whether anyone else knows or not.

C. But, there is a need for diligence, not slothfulness in serving God.

- 1) They needed to show their assurance of hope by being diligent.
- 2) Don't allow slothfulness to destroy your soul.
- 3) Look at the example of those who have gone on before you.
 - a) Imitate their faith and patience.
 - b) And inherit with them the promises.
- 4) If others can be faithful, we can too!

D. He shows the sureness of God's promises through Abraham.

- 1) God promised Abraham that he would have a son and would multiply.
 - a) Abraham didn't see that promise fulfilled immediately.
 - b) It took great faith & patience on his part.
- 2) In God's own good time, Abraham saw the promises beginning to be fulfilled.
- 3) And God even swore with an oath that He would carry out His promise to him.

- a) There was none greater by which He could swear.
- b) So, He swore by Himself.
- 4) Thus, Abraham had two unchangeable things to base his faith upon:
 - a) The fact that God cannot lie;
 - b) God's oath by Himself.
- 5) God's promises are backed up by the same two unchangeable things today.

E. Thus, our hope is well anchored in the promises of God.

- 1) An anchor holds a ship at its desired mooring during a storm.
- 2) Our hope should hold us fast to Christ.
- 3) It is a sure and steadfast, dependable hope.
- 4) Our High Priest has preceded us as a forerunner—we will follow.
- 5) He is our assurance.

CONCLUSION

- 1. We need to lay hold on this hope in Christ Jesus.
 - a) We must never relax our grip upon it under any circumstances.
 - b) We must fully trust in the promises of God that cannot fail.
- 2. We are exposed to all kinds of storms, tribulations, temptations in life: **Persecution, Doubt, Remorse, Adversity, and even Death itself.**
- 3. But, we can possess complete security in the midst of all these—in Christ!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Faith in God's warnings is just as important as faith in His promises.
- 2. A Christian is one who has tasted the heavenly gift.
- 3. To be made partaker of the Holy Spirit is to possess a miraculous gift.
- 4. An apostate is like an unfruitful field that needs to be burned.
- 5. The writer of Hebrews was persuaded better things of God's people.
- 6. A person can crucify Jesus all over again by blasphemy.
- 7. Slothfulness as a Christian gives the wrong image of Christianity.
- 8. The sureness of God's promises is illustrated by Jacob.
- 9. Our hope is well anchored in the promises of God.
- 10. An apostate can never be forgiven.

Lesson Twelve

“The Character of Sin”

In order for us to have twelve lessons up through chapter six of Hebrews, we needed to interject a special lesson on “The Character of Sin.” We will also add a couple of lessons to the 2econd section of the study of Hebrews.

Some years ago a French philosopher made this observation: ***“Man first became conscious of sin some 6,000 years ago. The cycle is just about completed—he is practically unconscious of it again.”*** Our age is fast trying to erase the idea of sin! Not the right way, but the wrong way. They are doing more sinning, but calling it something else. They are trying to erase “sin-consciousness” from their hearts. But, as long as men respect the Bible, Sin will still be Sin to them.

In this lesson we hope to emphasize the true nature of sin and the reason why redemption was so expensive on God’s part to redeem us from sin.

DISCUSSION**I. SIN COMES OF EVIL PARENTAGE****A. Sin is not of God, but of the evil one!**

- 1) John 8:44—***“You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”***
- 2) 1 John 3:8—***“He that commits (continues in) sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”***

B. Thus, sin originated with the Devil.

- 1) To continue to walk in sin shows who our real father is.
- 2) To deny it is useless.
- 3) The devil loves evil, and God hates every evil way.
- 4) To be of God, we too must hate every evil way.

II. SIN IS A DECEIVER**A. Sin must work deceptively.**

- 1) To come as sin would defeat its purpose.
- 2) Once that he gets us enslaved, then, “Who cares?”
- 3) But at first, he must come in a garb of pretended good.
- 4) It is trying to do us a favor.
- 5) Look at the Devil’s offer to Christ: ***“I will give you all the kingdoms of this world.”***
- 6) Heb. 3:13—***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”***

B. It must pose or be similar to righteousness.

- 1) Matt. 7:15—***“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing.”***

- 2) Matt. 23:27—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like unto whitened sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."
- 3) 2 Cor. 11:14—"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

C. It's joys are temporary!

- 1) Sin promises great things, but cannot fully deliver.
- 2) It promises us the moon, but gives us the grave.
- 3) Moses choice: "*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*"
- 4) But someone observes: "**Look what sin can give you!**"
 - a) Yes, be sure to look real close to what sin brings you!
 - b) Rom. 6:23—"The wages of sin is death!"

III. SIN IS A ROBBER

A. Robs us of our confidence in God.

- 1) The Devil made God out to be a liar to Eve.
- 2) Got them to doubt God.
- 3) Heb. 3:12—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

B. Robs us of our time!

- 1) Sin leads to waste:
 - a) Wasted bodies, energies, health, possessions, and time.
 - b) It enslaves men for years, so there is little time left to serve God.
 - c) So many missed opportunities to look back upon!
- 2) Eph. 5:15-16—"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

C. Robs us of helpful companions.

- 1) You can always have evil companions to help you sin.
 - a) 1 Cor. 15:33—"Evil companions corrupt good morals."
 - b) Such are always ready to lead us into sin.
- 2) While the righteous want to help us to flee from sin.
- 3) Jas. 4:7—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- 4) The Prodigal Son had plenty of help to get into the depths of sin.
 - a) But where were they, when he needed them most?
 - b) To whom did he turn for help?

D. Robs us of our promise of Eternal Life in Heaven.

- 1) This is our birthright.
- 2) We were created by God to be with God.
- 3) To lose heaven is to lose our birthright.

- 4) Rev. 21:8—“*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

IV. SIN IS A TYRANT

A. He comes as a temporary guest.

- 1) “It won’t hurt.”
- 2) “It is so small.”
- 3) “It requires so little.”
- 4) “Nobody will ever notice”.....etc.

B. But soon—Sin demands the best room in the house.

- 1) One thing leads to another.
- 2) One drink, often leads to drunkenness.
- 3) Going to chaperoned dances, often leads to night clubs, drinking, etc.
- 4) Young people parking in cars, often leads to illicit love affairs.
- 5) Cheating on tests at school, often leads to lying, stealing,etc.

C. Sin never stops short of tyrannical rule.....if possible, to completely enslave us.

- 1) John 8:34—“*Whosoever commits (continues in) sin is the servant of sin.*
- 2) Rom. 6:16—“*Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.*”
- 3) Peter describes certain ones in this condition...”*cannot escape from sin.*” (2 Peter 2:14).
- 4) 2 Peter 2:19—“*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.*”

V. SIN IS A DESTROYER

A. Destroys relationships with God...and man also.

- 1) Isa. 59:1-2
- 2) Only sin can destroy this relationship.
- 3) Not poverty, suffering, reproach, famine, etc. (Rom. 8:28-39).

B. Destroys peace of mind.

- 1) No longer have clear conscience.
- 2) Peter wept bitterly after his sin of denying Jesus.
- 3) Judas hanged himself in his remorse.
- 4) Cannot be at peace with God, while we continue in the way of sin.

C. Destroys man’s will to serve God.

- 1) Sin can overcome a man.
- 2) 2 Peter 2:20-22
- 3) Men can go to the point that they cannot be brought to repentance (Heb. 6:4-6).

D. Destroys the body.

- 1) 1 Cor. 6:18—“*Flee fornication...he that commits fornication sins against his own body.*
- 2) Gal. 6:7-8

E. Destroys the soul in Hell (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:46).

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus said he came to release man from the bondage and hold of sin.
 - a) He wants to set us free (John 8:32).
 - b) He wants us to become servants of righteousness for our own good (Rom. 6:18).
 - c) He offers to give us release from the burden of sin (Matt. 11:28).
 - d) But, it is only through Christ that this burden can be lifted & bondage ended!
2. *"There is a fountain filled with blood, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."*
3. Have you recognized the TRUE CHARACTER OF SIN and turn to Jesus for deliverance?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. Sin is a destroyer of both our body and our soul.
2. Sin never stops short of tyrannical reign.
3. Sin wants to be only a temporary guest in our lives and then leave when convenient.
4. Sin is able to rob us of our confidence in God's promises.
5. The joys of sin last for a long time and keeps us entrapped for a long time, as well.
6. To lose heaven is to lose our birthright.
7. Sin originated with the Devil and then he pulled others in with him.
8. As long as man respects God and his Word, sin will still be sin!
9. Sin has to be deceptive in order to get us involved at first.
10. One of Sin's great weapons is to mimic righteousness.

