

Bible Study Series on.....

*The Study of
The Book of*

HEBREWS

(Chapters 7-13)

(#2)

12 Lessons

Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL

2005

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**Prepared by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL
84 Northview Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

pecantrell@juno.com

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(Chapters 7-13)
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Lesson One

“A Priest After the Order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:1-10)

Hebrews 6:20 brings us back to the writer’s subject of Priesthood! He has already shown how well-qualified Jesus is to be our High Priest (4:14-5:11). But he has indicated that Jesus is not of the order of the Aaronic Priesthood, but Melchizedek (5:6-11, 6:20). He interrupted his thoughts to give some rebukes, warnings, and encouragements. He is now ready to expand upon Jesus being of the Melchizedek Priesthood and will continue this emphasis up to chapter ten. His basic purpose is to show the superiority of Christ’s Priesthood over the Aaronic Priesthood. He has already shown that Christ did not appoint Himself, the Father did. He has shown Jesus’ qualifications for being a merciful and understanding High Priest. But he has not elaborated upon the quotation from Psalm 110:4 where it speaks of the Messiah being a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is now ready to discuss this in detail by drawing conclusions from what is said and what is not said in the Old Testament.

DISCUSSION

I. INFORMATION ABOUT MELCHEZEDEK (7:1-3)

A. The information is derived from Genesis 14:18-20

- 1) Melchizedek was a King.
 - a) His name means “King of Righteousness.”
 - b) He was King of Salem (Peace).
 - c) He was evidently a Canaanite King...possibly of the city that later became Jerusalem.
 - d) He was only about 20 miles from where Abraham lived (Hebron, Mamre).
- 2) All indications are that these two men knew each other.
 - a) They both worshipped the True God of Heaven.
 - b) They lived in the same area.
 - c) Respectfulness is shown by both towards each other.
 - d) Melchizedek also provides bread & wine for Abraham & his army upon their return from the slaughter of the kings.
- 3) Melchizedek was also a Priest.
 - a) It is stated as such.
 - b) Abraham pays tithes to him as a Priest.
 - c) Melchizedek blesses Abraham.

B. What we don’t know about Melchizedek:

- 1) We know nothing of his descendency.
 - a) This is one of the things emphasized in the Old Testament to give one’s lineage.
 - b) Abraham’s lineage is given, but not Melchizedek’s.
- 2) We know nothing about his birth, nor his death.
 - a) He is portrayed as one always existing.
 - b) His is a continual Priesthood, not needing lineage or successors.
- 3) Our knowledge of his Priesthood is a type of Jesus’ Priesthood.

- a) He is without being or ending.
- b) He abides forever.
- 4) The writer is very much aware of the value of the Silence of Scriptures to understand God's plans.
 - a) Like Jesus—He is King of Righteousness and King of Peace.
 - b) Like Jesus—He is a royal Priest with both Mitre & Diadem.
 - c) Like Jesus—He has no predecessor or successor.

II. SUPERIORITY OF MELCHEZEDEK'S PRIESTHOOD OVER THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (7:4-10)

A. His greatness is seen by Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek.

- 1) No Old Testament name is more important than Abraham—he is the father of the Jewish Nation.
- 2) Yet, Abraham acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek by paying tithes to him.

B. His greatness is also seen by the Levitical Priesthood paying tithes to Melchizedek.

- 1) They did not do it directly, but indirectly through Abraham.
- 2) The Levites received tithes of their brethren as the Law instructed.
- 3) But, they are of the lineage of Abraham who paid tithes to a greater.
- 4) Thus, the Levitical Priesthood is inferior to Melchizedek's Priesthood.

C. His greatness is seen by His blessing Abraham.

- 1) He met Abraham and his army upon their return from battle.
- 2) He served them bread and wine.
- 3) And blessed Abraham.
- 4) His point—the greater blesses the lesser.

D. His greatness is seen in the KIND of Priesthood.

- 1) The Aaronic Priesthood was made up of dying Priest.
 - a) They had genealogy and ancestry.
 - b) If you could not prove your lineage, you can't be a Priest in Israel.
 - c) Example in Ezra 2:61-63.
 - d) Levitical Priest had predecessors and successors (Ages 30-50).
- 2) But the Melchizedek Priesthood is portrayed entirely different.
 - a) No indication of having to be of a certain lineage to be a Priest like him.
 - b) He was a Priest by God's appointment, but not by lineage.
 - c) Thus, he is portrayed as having no predecessors or successors.
 - d) He is a "living" Priest!
 - e) The Holy Spirit has purposefully portrayed him as this for God's purpose in Christ.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Christ is in reality greater than Melchizedek, Abraham, or the Levitical Priesthood.
- 2. If Abraham recognized the dignity of Melchizedek and paid tithes to him—how much more so should be recognize the Dignity of Jesus.
- 3. As Melchizedek stands alone as a special Priest of God—so Jesus also stands alone as the great High Priest for mankind before God—no successors needed.
- 4. Aaron's Priesthood was limited to serving the Jewish people—Jesus' Priesthood is for all

mankind.

5. As with Melchizedek, Jesus is also King of Righteousness and Peace.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Quite a bit of space is taken up in Hebrews with the concept of the Priesthood.
- 2. God foretold that the Messiah would be a Priest since He was of the Levitical tribe.
- 3. Melchizedek was both a King and a Priest in Jerusalem.
- 4. Melchizedek and Abraham lived far apart from each other.
- 5. You pay tithes to a greater person, not a lesser.
- 6. Melchizedek was in actuality an Angel in human form—since it is said that he had no beginning or ending.
- 7. Levitical Priest actually paid tithes to Melchizedek.
- 8. Jesus' Priesthood is patterned after that of Melchizedek, not Aaron's.
- 9. Aaron's Priesthood was limited to serving only the Jewish Nation.
- 10. Abraham acknowledged that Melchizedek was the greater when he paid tithes to him.

Lesson Two

“The Annulling of the Old System by Christ” (Hebrews 7:11-28)

Our automobiles last for only a few years and then, trouble! What is the problem? Can't they make a car that will last longer without trouble? I have been told “YES” by people in the industry. Then, what is the problem? **Planned Obsolescence!**

Why did God give an Old Covenant and then replace it with a New Covenant? Why didn't He just give the New Covenant to begin with? **Planned Obsolescence!** God definitely planned for the Old Covenant to serve only for a period of time; then, it was to be replaced with something better. And just like automobiles, it served its purpose for the time until a new one replaced it.

The Hebrew writer is showing the superiority of Christ's Priesthood over the Aaronic Priesthood and uses several things to show this. One of the main points is the annulling of the Old Covenant.

DISCUSSION

I. GOD PLANNED FOR BOTH THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD & THE OLD COVENANT TO BE DONE AWAY (7:11-19)

A. The prophecy in Psalm 110:4 proves it.

- 1) The prophecy states that another priest was to arise after the order of Melchizedek.
- 2) Why would such a prophecy be made, if the first Priesthood was satisfactory?
- 3) It must have been planned by God to last only a limited time.

B. The purpose of the Old System was to bring us to the New System.

- 1) In reality, the Old helps us to better appreciate the New.
- 2) Gal. 3:24-25

C. The Jew thought that God's complete plan of redemption was in the Old System.

- 1) But God indicated otherwise by this prophecy of another Priest.
- 2) It thus implies the imperfection in the Old System.

D. If the Priesthood was changed, there was also a need to change the Law.

- 1) The Law was given to regulate the Priesthood.
- 2) It gave all the ordinances connected with the services of the Priest.
- 3) If the Priesthood changed, then all these ordinances are invalid.
- 4) Also, an obvious fact needs to be noticed:
 - a) The Law made Priest from the tribe of Levi.
 - b) This new Priesthood is from the tribe of Judah.
 - c) Thus, the Law is no longer valid in making Priest or regulating their services.

E. Examples of the Law's regulations upon the Aaronic Priesthood.

- 1) Priest can only come through Aaron and Levi, his son.
- 2) Physical blemishes could disqualify him in serving (142 possibilities).
- 3) Ordination was purely a physical body cleansing.

- a) Bathed in water—ceremonially clean.
- b) Clothed in 4 items: (1) Linen knee breeches; (2) Long linen garment woven in one piece; (3) Girdle around the chest; and (4) Bonnet or turban on head.
- c) He was to be anointed with oil.
- d) He was touched with blood from an animal: (1) On the tip of his right ear; (2) On his right thumb; and (3) On his right big toe.
- 4) Once ordained:
 - a) He performed many types of washing with water.
 - b) He performed many anointings with oil.
 - c) He cut his hair a certain way.
- 5) Character & ability seems to have had nothing to do with his acceptance.
- 6) Everything had to be right physical.

F. This change of Law was obvious upon the basis of how Priests were made.

- 1) The Old System made them from carnal and physical descent emphasis.
- 2) The New Priesthood is made on the basis of an endless life to serve.
 - a) Jesus' resurrection back to life is being emphasized, obviously.
 - b) He will ever continue as a Priest for us (Rev. 1:17-18).
- 3) The Old System was put away or annulled because:
 - a) Of its weakness and unprofitableness.
 - b) It made nothing perfect.
- 4) But the New System not only gives mankind a better hope, but:
 - a) It has the ability to perfect sinful man before God, which the Old System could not do.
 - b) It has made possible, in every sense of the word, for man to draw near to God.

II. THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS' PRIESTHOOD IS SHOWN (7:20-28)

A. It is seen in how Jesus was made a Priest.

- 1) His Priesthood was confirmed by an Oath, the Levitical was not (Ps. 110:4).
- 2) Oaths are not made lightly by persons of integrity.
 - a) Usually connected with things considered very important.
 - b) God only gives an Oath to show the certainty & immutability of the thing sworn.
 - c) He will carry it out—no matter what man does!
- 3) Christ is the fulfillment of that Oath or promise of God.
- 4) He is also our assurance of a better Testament or Covenant from God.

B. It is seen in the unchangeableness of Jesus' Priesthood.

- 1) The Aaronic Priest changed every so often.
 - a) No Priest could serve more than 20 years.
 - b) Then, a new one would come into the office.
 - c) Some plaguing questions could be asked:
 - "How well will he serve?"
 - "Will he truly be concerned about the People?"
 - "Will he perform his services correctly for us?"
- 2) But with Jesus, none of these plaguing questions will have to be asked.

- a) He ever lives to make intercession for us.
- b) His character never changes! (Same yesterday, today, and for ever).
- c) He is the IDEAL Priest for mankind.

C. It is seen in His character.

- 1) He is most becoming as a Priest for man.
- 2) Look at His character:
 - a) Holy—Totally, within and without)—Not just ceremonially holy.
 - b) Harmless—Guileless, noble, free from baseness—no desire to harm anyone.
 - c) undefiled—Lived among sinners, but not partaker of their sins. Not just ceremonially clean, but actually sinless.
 - d) Separate from sinners—No longer among sinful mankind.
- 3) Look at His position:
 - a) Made higher than the heavens.
 - b) He is at the right hand of God...interceding for His people.
- 4) Look at His sacrifice.
 - a) He offered up Himself for us.
 - b) His was a perfect, sinless offering.
- 5) The Aaronic Priesthood was so inferior to this man's Priesthood.
 - a) They had infirmities of all kinds.
 - b) Their holiness was only ceremonial, not actual.
 - c) Jesus is perpetually equipped as no other man has ever been.
 - d) And to think, He is a Priest forever for us.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Look and see what God has done!
 - a) He has gone to great lengths to pre-figure Christ in Melchizedek.
 - b) He instituted a temporary Priesthood & Covenant until the perfect Priest & Covenant should come.
 - c) He had His Son to die and offer Himself as our sin-substitute.
 - d) He raised Him from the dead and sat Him on His right hand—there to ever make intercession for us.
- 2. It is a grave & serious mistake for man to reject such a great High priest.
 - a) It is to turn our backs on the only ONE who can mediate or intercede for us.
 - b) It is to reject the only ONE who can avail before God in our behalf.
 - c) Without this High Priest to take away our sins, we are hopelessly lost!
- 3. Have you availed yourself of this great High Priest?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Man, as well as God, planned for some things not to last.**
- 2. God planned for both the Aaronic Priesthood and the Old Covenant to be done away.**
- 3. The fact that God foretold of another Priest to be appointed shows that the Old Jewish System was temporary.**
- 4. If the Aaronic Priesthood is changed, that doesn't necessarily mean a change in Law.**
- 5. All kinds of regulations were given in the Law to regulate the Aaronic Priests.**
- 6. In the Aaronic Priesthood, lineage was more important than character.**
- 7. Jesus' Priesthood was confirmed by an Oath from God.**
- 8. The Aaronic Priests were limited in their years of service, but not Jesus.**
- 9. The Aaronic Priests were so far inferior to Jesus' Priesthood.**
- 10. Jesus' Priesthood is superior because of his present position.**

Lesson Three

“Benefits of Christ’s Priesthood” (Hebrews 8:1-13)

Most of us are reluctant or even afraid of change and often balk at the thought of such. When you compare the simple worship of Christians to the elaborate, ritualistic, physical worship of the Jews—you see quite a CONTRAST! To change from the elaborate to the simple makes one feel uneasy to say the least. It may have even caused them to question the validity of the simple. They were use to PRIESTS they could see—where are the PRIESTS?

It is quite possible that the Jewish Christians were struggling with such problems. For some reason, they were about ready to turn their back on Christ and go back under the Old System of Judaism. They needed to be fully convinced of the rightness of the simple worship under the New System.

The Hebrew writer is giving them good reasons for staying with Christ in regards to Priesthood:

1. He is the greatest of all High Priests.
2. He is ever living to make intercession for us.
3. He is in a high and lofty position at God’s right hand.
4. His Priesthood is a very effective one with God.

Now, in chapter eight, the writer continues his emphasis upon Christ’s Priesthood showing its benefits.

DISCUSSION

I. CHRISTIANS HAVE A PRIESTHOOD ALSO (8:1-5)

A. Jesus is our High Priest!

- 1) He serves in Heaven, not on earth.
- 2) He is in an exalted position—at the right hand of God—majesty on high.
- 3) He ministers in the True Tabernacle!
 - a) To the Jew the Temple was sacred—it was the place where God’s presence was manifested in their midst.
 - b) But the writer says that the earthly Tabernacle was not the real thing.
 - c) The True Tabernacle is the heavenly one.
 - d) This is the one that the Lord erected, not man.
 - e) The ONE that God designed to accomplish the needed purpose—the full redemption of man.

B. The Purpose of a Priest.

- 1) He provides access to God—to enter into His presence.
 - a) A Priest acts for the people to remove barriers between God & man.
 - b) He builds a bridge across which man can go into God’s presence.
- 2) Priest offer gifts and sacrifices.
 - a) Jesus had to have an offering also.
 - b) So, He offered Himself in our place.
 - c) He offered the perfect sacrifice that atones for man’s sins.

- d) If men only needed sacrifices offered on earth, they already had such.
- e) But Jesus is at the right hand of God as our High Priest.

C. The importance of Moses making all things according to God's directions.

- 1) Because the Old was to foreshadow the New—the heavenly.
- 2) It was to be made exact because it can help us appreciate the real!
- 3) To distort the Old would be to distort the heavenly.
- 4) Thus, the Old System provides an earthly example of what the New System would be like.

II. THE NEW PRIEST GAVE US A NEW & BETTER COVENANT (8:6-12)

A. Change of Priesthood requires a change of Law!

- 1) Man does not dare make changes in God's Law (Deut. 4:2, etc.)
- 2) But God can make changes and has done so.
 - a) He has done it through Jesus.
 - b) All mankind has been given a new and better covenant from God.
 - c) It is better because it is based on better promises.

B. What is a Covenant?

- 1) The usual word in the Greek for Covenant (Agreement) is SUN-the-KE.
 - a) A Covenant usually has two parties that work out an agreement between them.
 - b) It is usually not a one-sided thing—but it can be.
- 2) When God makes a Covenant with man:
 - a) He draws up the agreement,
 - b) And calls upon man to either accept or reject it.
- 3) The other Greek word that is used is DIA-THE-KE.
 - a) This carries with it the idea of a Will or Testament.
 - b) One person makes out his will and leaves his possessions to whomever.
 - c) The recipients can either accept or reject the things offered based on whatever requirements that he places on the recipients.
- 4) It is important to realize:
 - a) Man cannot bargain with God about the terms of His Covenant or Will.
 - b) He cannot argue with God and avail.
 - c) He can either accept or reject coming under an agreement with God.

C. Reasons for giving a New Covenant.

- 1) The first was faulty (7:18-19).
- 2) It could not fully satisfy the needs of man.
 - a) It served a needed part in God's plan, but it was not the ultimate.
 - b) Another Covenant was needed that could better serve mankind.
- 3) Because of man's sinfulness.
 - a) The Law could have served well if man could have lived it perfectly.
 - b) But once broken, it left him without a true means of justification.
 - c) And once broken, God was not under obligation to honor the promises made in it.
- 4) Because God has promised through the Prophet Jeremiah a New Covenant.
 - a) Jer. 31:31-34
 - b) Under this New Covenant:

- He would make allowances for man's sinfulness.
 - He would have a High Priest that could make the perfect atonement for sin.
 - He would give on that offered more than temporal blessings, but heavenly blessings (Eph. 1:3).
 - One that could be called the "**perfect law of liberty.**" (James 1:25).
- c) This New Covenant was NEW in time and quality!
- With both Israel and Judah (no longer divided).
 - Make it available to the mind and heart of man.
 - Make it so man's heart is won to God—not just born into a relationship.
 - Offer a close and personal relationship.
 - Sins and iniquities completely removed (Heb. 10:3). Forgiveness is full, free, and final!

III. WHAT WAS TO BE DONE WITH THE OLD COVENANT (8:13)

A. He had already pointed out:

- 1) It is disannulled (7:18).
- 2) There is a need for a change of Law (7:12).
- 3) The First was faulty (8:7).
- 4) It needed to be replaced by a New & Better Covenant based on better promises.

B. He describes its condition:

- 1) It is decaying, waxing old, ready to vanish away.
- 2) It is wearing out with age.
- 3) It is weak and out of date.
- 4) It has become obsolete and lost its force.
- 5) It is ready to be dispensed with altogether.

CONCLUSION

1. God has given us a New Covenant through Christ.

- a) We cannot argue or bargain with Him about the conditions it requires.
- b) We can either accept the Covenant or reject it.
- c) If we accept it by meeting the conditions required—we have all the benefits of it.
- d) If we reject it—we suffer the consequences of such—eternal death!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Resisting change is typical of mankind.**
- 2. Christianity was a big change for both Jews and Gentiles.**
- 3. The True Tabernacle was what the Jews originally had erected in the wilderness.**
- 4. The primary purpose of a Priest is to give access to God.**
- 5. The Old System was specifically designed by God to foreshadow the New System.**
- 6. Man dares not to change what God has given, but God has that right to change it.**
- 7. A Covenant is in reality a Testament or Will.**
- 8. With our High Priest on our side, we can bargain with God about the conditions of this New Covenant.**
- 9. The first Covenant was given by God, but it was faulty—yet served its purpose.**
- 10. The Old Covenant passed away after the start of the church in Acts 2.**

Lesson Four

“Jesus’ Priesthood Opens the Way to Heaven for Man”

(Hebrews 9:1-14)

Jesus has been appointed by God to be mankind’s great High Priest. He has given all men a New and Better Covenant by which we can be acceptable to Him. But He has also given us a New and Greater Tabernacle to worship in—not an earthly one, but a heavenly one. This was made possible by the great sin offering of Jesus for us. The Hebrew writer shows the glory of the first Tabernacle and its services. Then, he shows that the people were limited in their access to God. And then concludes by stating that Christ’s sacrifice has opened the way full to God.

DISCUSSION

I. THE GLORY OF THE 1ST TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES (9:1-5)

A. The 1st Covenant had ordinances of Divine service.

- 1) It was designed by God, just like He wanted it (Exo. 25:8-9).
- 2) When finished, God manifested His presence in it.
- 3) Yet, it was an earthly, material sanctuary.

B. This Tabernacle was divided into two parts or compartments.

- 1) The 1st was the Holy Place.
 - a) In it was the Lamp stand with 7 bowls of oil used for light.
 - b) There was also a table with 12 loaves of bread placed there each Sabbath.
- 2) The 2nd was the Most Holy Place (Holiest of all).
 - a) A heavy curtain divided the two compartments.
 - b) In it was the altar of Incense that was a continual offering of a sweet smell unto God.
 - c) Also, there was the Ark of the Covenant that was overlaid with God. In it was a golden pot of Manna, Aaron’s Rod that budded, and the two tables of the Covenant. And above all of this were two cherubims overshadowing the mercy seat.

II. THIS ARRANGEMENT SHOWED LIMITED ACCESS TO GOD (9:6-10)

A. Only the Levitical Priest could enter the Holy Place.

- 1) The people were not allowed to go in.
- 2) They were allowed in the outer court if they were ceremonially clean.
- 3) Even the Priest had to be properly ordained and cleansed to enter.

B. Their services in the Holy place.

- 1) Each day they would light the lamp stand in the evening.
- 2) They would trim them every morning.
- 3) They renewed the 12 loaves of bread every Sabbath.
- 4) They would burn incense twice daily when the lamps were trimmed or lit.
- 5) The altar of incense may have been kept in the Holy Place, except one time.

- 6) They would offer a morning & Evening sacrifice outside by taking the blood of the animal and sprinkling it before the veil for the sins of the people.

C. Services in the Most Holy place.

- 1) Only the High Priest could enter into it, no one else, once a year on the Day of Atonement.
- 2) This was done with the blood for himself and for the people.
- 3) Description of the Day of Atonement:
 - a) This was a most sacred day of the year (described in Lev. 16).
 - b) It was the catch-all day of Sacrifice (Lev. 16:33-34).
 - c) It was a day of humiliation & rest & soul searching & fasting (Lev. 16:29)!
 - d) This was the High Priest's Day—the Day he primarily existed for.
- 4) Activities of the Day of Atonement:
 - a) The High Priest would cleanse himself ceremonially.
 - b) He would put on gorgeous clothes of his office (The linen, the royal blue covering, the ephod, the Urim & Thummim, and the Turbin.
 - c) He would then sacrifice the daily animal.
 - d) Then, he would removed his gorgeous clothes, wash, and put on pure white linen.
 - e) A bullock is brought before the altar—also two goats.
 - They cast lots on the goals—one for God, the other as a scapegoat.
 - He would take live goals from the Burnt Altar, go into the Holy Place and offer incense. (The reason—so that the cloud of smoke from the incense would cover the mercy-seat from view).
 - He then took the blood of the bullock and sprinkled it 7 times before the Mercy-seat.
 - He then took the blood of the 1st goat, went back into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of it 7 times before the Mercy-seat.
 - He then mixed the blood of the Bullock & Goat and sprinkled also the altar of incense & brazen altar cleansing them.
 - The other goat became the scapegoat. He would laid his hands on it and confess the sins of himself and the people and lead the goat into the wilderness and let him go.
 - He would then come back and prepare the bullock and goat for sacrifice by cleansing himself, put on his gorgeous clothes, and offer the bullock and goat as a burnt offering.
 - The remainder of the bodies of both were taken outside the camp and burnt completely.
 - f) He would then cleanse himself, put on the white linen, and go into the Holy of Holies to remove the censer of Incense.
 - g) Again he would cleanse himself, put on the gorgeous clothes, and burn the evening incense & trimmed lamps.
 - h) The work was done.
 - e) He would then hold a feast at his home because he had been in the presence of God and had come forth alive.

D. Why did God design things this way?

- 1) To signify to man that the way into the presence of God was very limited.
 - a) Only a special class or few could enter into the Holy Place, but only one could go into the Most Holy Place.
 - b) Only he could enter into the presence of God for the people.
- 2) God wanted them to understand that such services emphasized the outward ceremonial cleansings of the body.
 - a) It did not really reach the sphere of man's inner consciousness.
 - b) It did not really bring a spiritual accord with God.
 - c) All of this was only a pale copy of the real to come.
 - d) It was a noble ritual—a thing of dignity & beauty.
 - e) But it was only an unavailing shadow in and of itself.
 - f) Only Jesus could really open the way for all men unto God.

III. THE SACRIFICE THAT OPENED THE WAY TO GOD (9:11-14)

A. Jesus has become a High Priest to the True Tabernacle.

- 1) He went into the True Tabernacle to make an offering for sin.
- 2) Not that of bulls and goats, nor ashes of an heifer.
- 3) He took His own precious blood into the Holy of Holies.
 - a) To make atonement—not yearly, but.....
 - b) Once for all—a perfect sacrifice.
- 4) The way to God has now been made possible.

B. Jesus' sacrifice was for the cleansing of the conscience.

- 1) The animal sacrifices purified the flesh—the body.
- 2) How much more will Christ's sacrifice purify & purge our conscience from dead works (from sinful activities that doom our soul).
- 3) But His sacrifice was not just a body sacrifice—but an offering through the eternal Spirit.

C. Christ's sacrifice meets every demand of Divine Law.

CONCLUSION

1. The child of God no longer needs an earthly Priest to get access to God.
 - a) He is a Priest himself and goes directly to God.
 - b) To advocate the need of Priests today, as under the Law, is to make invalid what Christ has done for us.
2. What a privilege we have today.
 - a) To come into the Holy Place, the church of the living God.
 - b) And there to enter into the presence of God through Jesus, our great High Priest.
3. Have you availed yourself of this great privilege?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The Priests had ordinances of Divine Service in the Holy Place to perform.**
- 2. There were possibly three items in the Holy Place with the exception of one day a year.**
- 3. The Ark of the Covenant contained three items inside it, but it was overshadowed with many angelic beings.**
- 4. The Priests served daily in the Tabernacle.**
- 5. The High Priest only served once a year in the Tabernacle.**
- 6. The Day of Atonement was a most sacred day of the year for the Jewish people.**
- 7. The High Priest had to go through various washings and sprinkling of blood to make atonement for himself and the people.**
- 8. The scapegoat was a way of signifying that the Jewish peoples' sins had been taken away.**
- 9. The purpose of these elaborate activities was to let the people know that they did not have direct access to the presence of God....only the Priests.**
- 10. Jesus, our High Priest, has opened up Heaven for us to enter into.**

Lesson Five

“The Necessity & Validity of Blood Sacrifices” (Hebrews 9:15-28)

If man is to enter into heaven (the Holy of Holies), he must have some means of cleansing from sin that will make such possible. There is no sacrifice that man can offer for his own sins that will avail before God. The blood of animals was only a temporary thing that God instituted to help show man the need for cleansing to come into His Holy Presence! But the blood of animals cannot avail in and of themselves. So a perfect sacrifice needed to be offered for man’s redemption so that he could enter into heaven. Hebrews 9:15-28 shows the necessity of a death and blood atonement through Jesus the perfect sacrifice, but also emphasized the need of a New Covenant that was emphasized by the blood of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

I. CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT THAT WAS RATIFIED BY HIS BLOOD (9:15-17)

A. Two Terms used:

- 1) Covenant—An agreement between two parties—a contract.
- 2) Testament—A Will—what one party leaves to another.
- 3) Both concepts seem to be involved in the writer’s discussion here.

B. Death or the shedding of blood was connected with both.

- 1) When a Covenant was made between two parties, an animal was sacrificed. (Exo. 24:4-8).
- 2) The same principle or concept was necessary for the New Covenant.
 - a) A death & shedding of blood was required to put it into force.
 - b) Of course, it was the death of Jesus that made the New Covenant possible.
 - c) The New Covenant went into force upon His death.

C. But Jesus’ death was for more than just the New Covenant concept.

- 1) His death was for the benefit of those who lived under the first Covenant.
- 2) Under the Old System:
 - a) No matter how well they lived;
 - b) No matter how many animals were sacrificed;
 - c) Such was not sufficient to take away sin.
- 3) All animal sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the real sacrifice to come.
- 4) Their forgiveness was made possible by the death of Jesus, not the blood of animals.
- 5) So, those who were faithful under the first Covenant can receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

II. THE FIRST COVENANT WAS RATIFIED BY FLOOD (9:18-22)

A. The first Covenant was ratified by the blood of animals (Exo. 24:4-8)

- 1) Moses read the Covenant to the people.
- 2) Then he took the blood of the slain animal:
 - a) Sprinkled it upon the Covenant;

- b) Sprinkled it upon the people;
- c) And Sprinkled it upon the Tabernacle & vessels.
- 3) Thus, the first Covenant was initiated—put into force!

B. The Message of the shedding of blood.

- 1) Day after day, month after month, year after year.....
 - a) Man is a sinner;
 - b) In sinning, he forfeited his life;
 - c) To redeem his life requires the life (blood) of another;
 - d) The blood of animals were a substitute until the true sacrifice was made.
- 2) The conclusion was inevitable... ***"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."***
 - a) No blood—no forgiveness!
 - b) Look at your life—you are a sinner!
 - c) No blood—no forgiveness!
 - d) To reject the blood of Jesus leaves on hopeless!

III. THE OLD WAS INTENDED BY GOD TO FORESHADOW THE NEW (9:23-26)

A. God ordained that the patterns of things in heaven should be purified with animal sacrifices.

- 1) It was not man's idea to offer animals, but God's.
- 2) It was planned by God to help man see the value of the real, the true.
- 3) God used earthly things to help us see the heavenly things!
- 4) So, when Jesus came as the true sacrifice; we could understand our need of His blood.
- 5) The heavenly things—the real things—required a better sacrifice than animals.

B. Christ did not enter into the earthly Tabernacle, but the heavenly.

- 1) If he had entered into the earthly:
 - a) It would have been valueless—he could not serve as a priest of God.
 - b) He was not in the priestly line.
 - c) He would only have attempted to perpetuate the Aaronic priesthood, which could not avail.
- 2) Thus, Christ had to enter into heaven itself, the true Tabernacle.
 - a) To the very presence of God, Himself.
 - b) Not in the way the Aaronic priest do, once every year, but once for all!
 - c) His sacrifice was the consummation of God's plan of Redemption for man.
 - d) His sacrifice would put away sins once for all.

IV. THE REASON WHY MAN NEEDS THIS SACRIFICE (9:27-28)

A. Man is going to die & face judgment someday.

- 1) There is an existence after this life is over.
- 2) Physical death does not end it all for man.
- 3) There is a day of giving an account of how we have lived.
- 4) Without the blood of Christ in our lives—no hope in judgment!

B. We do have hope because of Christ's sacrifice.

- 1) He has become man's sin substitute.
- 2) He has died in our stead—taken upon Himself our iniquities.
- 3) And some day, He is coming again.
- 4) His coming will be one of joy & eternal salvation for those who look for his return.

CONCLUSION

1. We need to be very grateful for the great love of Christ for us.
2. We need to celebrate the Lord's Supper with understanding & joy.
3. We need to consecrate our lives to the service of our Redeemer.
4. If not a Christ, we need to avail ourselves of the blood of Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. It was man's idea to offer animal sacrifices, not God's, and that is the reason why they cannot fully serve the purpose of forgiveness.
- ___ 2. The death of an innocent animal was intended to help man see that it served as a substitute for him so he wouldn't have to die.
- ___ 3. The Old Covenant had to be initiated by the shedding of blood.
- ___ 4. All animal sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the real sacrifice to come.
- ___ 5. People could not be forgiven until Christ came and died on the Cross.
- ___ 6. Christ was not allowed into the earthly tabernacle to offer His blood for our forgiveness.
- ___ 7. The Aaronic priesthood was to serve only until Christ became the New High priest.
- ___ 8. Jesus did not have to offer Himself more than once in order to provide redemption for mankind.
- ___ 9. We need the blood of Christ because we will face judgment some day.
- ___ 10. The Lord's Supper serves as a reminder of our need of the blood of Christ.

Lesson Six

“Complete Forgiveness only Through Christ” (Hebrews 10:1-18)

The writer of the Hebrew Letter has shown the Deity of Christ, His dignity & importance as High Priest, His service for mankind in the heavenly realm, and the validating of a New & Better Covenant by His death. He now begins to sum up and conclude his thoughts on these important issues. He compares the ineffectiveness of the sacrifices under the first Covenant with the perfect sacrifice of Christ. He then shows the end result of that sacrifice.

DISCUSSION**I. THE BLOOD OF ANIMALS COULD NOT ATONE FOR SIN (10:1-4)*****A. Their purpose—“A shadow of good things to come.”***

- 1) Shadows—that which points to the real.
- 2) Imperfect that points to the perfect.
- 3) God gave them for a good reason.

B. The blood of animals were never intended to make the worshipper perfect or complete.

- 1) They were not designed, in and of themselves, to make the worshipper acceptable to God.
- 2) How could the death of an animal make atonement for sinful man?
 - a) The blood of an animal does not have the moral worth of a man.
 - b) There is no intrinsic power in the blood of animals to forgive sin.
 - c) Animal sacrifices could not adequately reflect God’s hatred for sin.
 - d) They could not vindicate His justice, or recompense His broken Law.
- 3) Such blood cannot pacify man’s conscience or purify his soul.

C. Their continual repetition proves their ineffectiveness!

- 1) If effective, the worshipper should have no more awareness of sins.
- 2) Even the most diligent & sincere worshipper was not made perfect by them.
 - a) Repetition showed they could not purge sin.
 - Sacrifices were offered continually.
 - Daily sacrifices were offered; **Burnt Offering, Sin Offering, Peace Offering.**
 - b) The annual atonement came on top of all of this.
 - If sins were forgiven by daily sacrifices, why annual atonement?
 - If annual atonement worked, why the daily offerings?
 - And if annual atonement worked, why the scape goat?
 - c) The conclusion was obvious to a thinking person—**“the blood of animals cannot remove sins of mankind.”**
 - d) No amount of sacrifices, money, or actions can redeem man’s soul from death.
- 3) An effective thing does not have to be repeated.
 - a) Once done, the effect is produced, and no need for repetition.
 - b) Repetition proved their ineffectiveness.

D. Most of all, God’s remembrance of their sins proved their ineffectiveness.

- 1) Repetition only emphasized their remembrance.
- 2) The multiplicity of sacrifices were:
 - a) Always reaching forth for something more complete.
 - b) Something more effective—more fully satisfying.
 - c) Something that would relieve a guilty conscience.
- 3) It never came under animal sacrifices.
- 4) The blood of bulls & goats could never take away sin.

II. PROPHECY OF A NEW & BETTER, AND PERFECT SACRIFICE (10:5-9)

A. Illustration:

- 1) A man buys a bottle of medicine to cure his sickness.
- 2) He takes it and gets well.
- c) If he is well, he doesn't need to keep taking the medicine.
- d) Every time he looks at the bottle, it reminds him of his cure.
- e) But, if the medicine doesn't help, it reminds him I am still sick and the medicine is worthless.

B. Animal sacrifices were powerless to:

- 1) Purify a man from sin.
- 2) Give him access directly to God.

C. All they could do was:

- 1) To go on reminding man he is an uncured sinner.
- 2) That the barrier of sin between him & God is still there.

D. Thus, God provided an effective sacrifice for sin.

- 1) It was prophesied of by David in Ps. 40:6-9.
- 2) It is an obvious Messianic prophecy.
- 3) It pointedly states:
 - a) God does not desire sacrifices, they are of no value.
 - b) He wants obedience.
- 4) But man cannot provide that perfect obedience.
- 5) So, God sent His Son down in the form of man, with a body as a man:
 - a) To offer unto God perfect obedience in man's stead.
 - b) Then, to become the perfect atonement for man's sin.
- 6) NOTE:
 - a) Don't misunderstand about animal sacrifices.
 - b) God commanded them & accepted them from man when offered correctly.
 - c) Their value was found in that they came from a submissive heart to God.
 - d) In & of themselves, they were valueless to remove sin.

E. When the perfect sacrifice came:

- 1) There was no longer a need for the first sacrifices—they had served their purpose.
- 2) When the real sacrifice came, the shadow was put away.

III. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS A ONE-TIME EVENT (10:10-14)

A. Under the first Covenant:

- 1) The priest stood daily, continually busy in their services.
- 2) Their work was never done, on & on, year after year!

B. But Christ was offered once for all.

- 1) Never to be repeated—it was effective.
- 2) It was a masterpiece—once done, non-repeatable.
- 3) This sacrifice was:
 - a) Accomplished by the Will of God.
 - b) It was a bodily sacrifice.
 - c) It was the final offering.
- 4) This is shown by:
 - a) Jesus being seated at the right hand of God.
 - b) Jesus taking on His proper rulership & authority.
 - c) Jesus remaining there until all enemies are put under His footstool.
- 5) Reasons why it does not need to be repeated:
 - a) It fully exposes the heart of God to man.
 - b) We see the complete revelation of God in Christ.
 - c) Jesus' life was a perfect life—thus, a perfect sacrifice for sin.
 - d) Perfection cannot be improved upon.
 - e) His sacrifice can completely sanctify us before God.

IV. HIS SACRIFICE TAKES AWAY GUILT & THE REMEMBRANCE OF SIN (10:15-18)

A. The Old System could not do this.

- 1) Inferred by Jeremiah's prophecy in 31:31-34.
- 2) God said He was going to give a New Covenant.
- 3) Under this Covenant there would be no more remembrance of sin.

B. Under the New Covenant:

- 1) Complete forgiveness is offered.
- 2) No remembrance made.
- 3) No more offering for sin needed.

CONCLUSION

1. The writer's obvious conclusion is:
 - a) Animal sacrifices were ordained of God under the first Covenant.
 - b) But, in & of themselves, they could not take away sin.
 - c) Therefore, they were shadows of the real to come.
 - d) Christ is the real sacrifice—offered once for sin.
 - e) Animal sacrifices were done away with.
2. The Christian is encouraged to offer a different kind of sacrifice to God:
 - a) A broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17).
 - b) A living Sacrifice that is holy (Rom. 12:1).
 - c) Spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5).
3. A life consecrated in His service with sincerely & humility.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The shadow points to the real—the shadow is not the real!**
- 2. God never intended for animal sacrifice to continue forever.**
- 3. The blood of an animal does not have the moral worth of a man and that is the reason why it cannot atone for man's sin.**
- 4. Animal sacrifices could not adequately reflect God's hatred for sin.**
- 5. Their continual repetition was an indication of their ineffectiveness.**
- 6. Jesus had to have a body like man's so that He could serve as a sacrifice for man.**
- 7. Animal sacrifices were necessary to be acceptable to God under the first Covenant.**
- 8. Christ's one-time-offering of Himself proves His effectiveness as a sacrifice for man.**
- 9. If Christ had not come and died for us, animal sacrifices would have been worthless under the first Covenant.**
- 10. God wants a "living sacrifice" offered to Him now—but not as a sin offering!**

Lesson Seven

“Terrible Consequences of Rejecting the Sacrifice of Christ” (Hebrews 10:19-39)

The writer of Hebrews has given his great concepts about Christ showing His superiority over all things in the Old System. He has shown that with a new and perfect sacrifice for sin, and a perfect High Priest to officiate for us before the throne of God, that there is also a need for a New Covenant that includes these concepts. Not only did the blood of Christ atone for man’s sin, but it was the means of sanctifying the New Covenant as well. It is now time to give exhortations, warnings, and encouragements in view of these great truths.

DISCUSSION**I. EXHORTATIONS IN VIEW OF THESE GREAT TRUTHS (10:19-25)*****A. He reminds them of three great truths in regards to Jesus:***

- 1) He has made possible our approach to God.
 - a) We can have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.
 - b) This is not arrogance, but one of great assurance.
 - c) Our’s is a great privilege—to come into the presence of a Holy God.
- 2) Jesus has consecrated a new & living way unto God.
 - a) It is not an old way, but a new way.
 - b) Not a dead one, but a living one.
 - c) Accomplished by His blood when he died on the cross.
- 3) He is our High Priest.
 - a) He approaches God for us.
 - b) Our access is made possible by His blood.

B. He offers three exhortations in view of these great privileges.

- 1) Let us draw near to God.
 - a) In worship, adoration, praise, and reverence.
 - b) Do so with a true heart turned to God.
 - Not an indifferent one, unthankful one, or a negligent one.
 - But a sincere one.
 - c) In full assurance of faith.
 - Timidity shows a feeble appreciation of the worth of our High Priest.
 - Full assurance shows we fully appreciate the blood of Jesus.
 - Full assurance comes from:
 1. The knowledge that our hearts have been cleansed.
 2. Our bodies have been washed with pure water.
 3. We have been made presentable to God.
- 2) Let us hold fast our profession of faith.
 - a) To do so without wavering.
 - b) Hold on day after day after day....continually.
 - c) Do so without doubting.

- d) Reason—God does not lie, He is dependable in His promises.
- 3) Let us consider one another.
- a) Christianity is unselfish.
 - b) It is being concerned about others.
 - c) We can show our concern by:
 - Provoking others to love and good works.
 - Inciting them to noble living.
 - Exhorting them not to forsake the assembly of God’s people.
 1. Some had evidently stopped meeting with them.
 2. Others were on the verge of falling away.
 3. The natural place for encouraging one another—assemblies
 4. We all need this time together to keep growing—faithful.
 5. They would especially need it when the DAY arrived!
 - Note:
 1. Possibly the destruction of Jerusalem.
 2. Jesus said it would test even the elect.
 3. They needed to be strong to face the trials ahead.
 4. If they survived, they would know God’s judgment had come upon the unbelieving Jews and Judaism.

II. WARNINGS IN VIEW OF THESE GREAT TRUTHS (10:26-31)

A. The Writer warns of the grave danger of willful sin.

- 1) Apostasy was a very real possibility with some of these people.
- 2) They needed to realize upon what dangerous grounds they were standing.
- 3) Apostasy takes place after one has become a Christian & then falls away.
 - a) It is to so sin that there is no turning back to God.
 - b) It is willful sin that is cold, calm, deliberate, abandonment of Christ.
 - c) It is to turn from our only source of forgiveness—The Blood of Christ.

B. Willful sin described.

- 1) It is to trodden under foot the Son of God!
 - a) To take love’s offer and trample it under foot.
 - b) To show little regard for the gift of love.
 - c) Illustration:
 - A man was arrested, condemned, tortured, put in a concentration camp in Germany during WWII.
 - He survived it all and stood it all with his spirit unbroken.
 - Until he found out who informed on him.
 - It was his own son whom he loved dearly who had betrayed him.
 - He died of a broken heart.
- 2) It is counting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing.
 - a) It is a failure to treat sacred things as sacred.
 - b) It is to count the blood of Jesus as something common, not holy.
 - c) It is a failure to appreciate the sacredness of what Christ has done.
- 3) It is doing despite unto the Spirit of grace.
 - a) To turn a deaf ear to Him that offers grace, mercy & pardon.
 - b) It is to insult the Spirit of God.

- c) It is to ignore His pleadings, invitations, and commands.
- 4) Willful sin is not just breaking of Law, but:
 - a) The breaking of a personal relationship with God.
 - b) It is to defy, to wound, to violate the heart of God.

C. The severe punishment for willful sin.

- 1) Willful sin was punished severely under the Law of Moses.
- 2) How much greater the punishment is called for under this New & Better System.
- 3) There will be no more sacrifice for sins for this person.
 - a) He places himself back under the Old System of animal sacrifices.
 - b) All that go back under this System are under a curse.
 - c) They can only look for judgment, condemnation, and fiery indignation.
- 4) A reminder is given here:
 - a) Vengeance belongs to God—He will punish.
 - b) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

III. ENCOURAGEMENTS IN VIEW OF THESE THINGS (10:32-39)

A. He reminds them of their first days as Christians.

- 1) They endured a great fight of affliction.
 - a) They were stoned, put into prison, lost their goods, and reproaches.
 - b) They had endured such willingly.
 - c) Their spirit had been strong—they were victors over their persecutors.
 - d) They had even been made a public spectacle—and endured it.
- 2) They were even willing to be identified with those who were so treated.
 - a) They had shown compassion, selflessness, and concern for others.
 - b) The writer was one of those.
 - c) They knew of the dangers of being identified with him, yet they did it.
- 3) Their strength to endure all this was found in:
 - a) The thought of heaven.
 - b) Their reward was not here, but there.
 - c) Earth had no reward or compensation for what they had endured.
 - d) True happiness & joy not in possessing earthly things, but heavenly.

B. Don't treat your former boldness & endurance lightly.

- 1) It helped you in a critical time before, it can help again.
- 2) Don't give up your confidence in Christ so easily.
- 3) God will reward, but only after we have patiently endured to the end.
- 4) Reward is at the end of a faithful life, or a set period of time.
- 5) Be patient, for:
 - a) The end is near (set period of time—not the end of the world).
 - b) God will soon come in vengeance upon this unbelieving nation.
 - c) Their just punishment will come swiftly (See Matthew 23-24).

C. Remember, God's word teaches: "The just shall live by Faith."

- 1) Victory goes to the one who holds on to his profession steadfastly.
- 2) Survival depends upon trust in the promises of God—not sight.
- 3) Only those who put their trust securely in God will survive the ordeals that were coming.

- 4) And besides—God takes no pleasure in them that turn back—no joy in an apostate.
- 5) The writer, however, does not identify them as being this kind of people.
 - a) They had been well taught, confirmed in the faith, and well admonished.
 - b) He was full assured that they would keep on believing unto the saving of their souls.

CONCLUSION

1. We today have been enlightened, taught, exhorted, warned & encouraged.
2. There is no reason for our looking back—there is nothing there worthwhile.
3. We must continue on faithfully unto the end to receive the reward.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The Christian can be bold in his approach to God, but not arrogant.**
- 2. Timidity shows a feeble appreciation of the worth of our High Priest.**
- 3. Full assurance comes from believing God's promises that we are acceptable to Him.**
- 4. Consideration of one another is the unselfish way to live.**
- 5. The "DAY" that was approaching was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem.**
- 6. One cannot fall away from what he never was a part of.**
- 7. Willful sin is that which is cold, calm, and deliberate in one's abandonment of Jesus.**
- 8. An apostate is one who does not appreciate the sacrifice of Christ.**
- 9. If one rejects Jesus' sacrifice for sin, there is no other sacrifice to which they can turn that has any value in giving remission of sins.**
- 10. There is no joy in seeing a person turn away from Christ.**

Lesson Eight

“The Challenge to Believe”

(Hebrews 11:1-28)

The Bible has its “Hall of Fame!” Hebrews 11 gives a long list of the faithful of God. These people showed what can be done through faith. They serve as great encouragement for us today in times of discouragement, temptation, persecution, and affliction. The theme verse of the chapter is verse 6: **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”** The main thrust of the chapter is to define & illustrate faith and its great rewards. All the examples come from the Old Testament and possibly the “Maccabean period.” We will need to break this chapter up into two sections.

DISCUSSION**I. FAITH IS DEFINED (11:1)*****A. Faith deals with things that men hope for—see a value in.***

- 1) These things are invisible to the eye.
- 2) But there are strong convictions that they do exist.
 - a) God has promised them and He is faithful—they are there.
 - b) It is taking God at His Word.
- 3) What we cannot see, we place in the realm of faith.
 - a) Our faith says I have a strong assurance of their existence.
 - b) Thus, my faith prompts me to great deeds and actions.

B. True faith is full submission to God.

- 1) Whether we fully understand why or not—we do it.
- 2) It is a recognition that God is God—and I am the finite creature.

II. MAN’S FAITH PLEASES GOD (11:2-3)***A. As illustrated in our belief in creation.***

- 1) We were not there to observe God at work.
- 2) But we are fully assured that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.
 - a) He spoke, and they came into existence.
 - b) That which did not exist before—now exists!
- 3) Men who doubt God speculate as to the universe’s origin.
- 4) Men of faith know it was created by God.

B. Abel’s faith pleased God.

- 1) Forgiveness is an intangible (can’t feel it, touch it, taste it, etc.).
- 2) But we all know that we need it.
- 3) If man wants forgiveness, he has to obey God.
- 4) Abel put his faith in the promises of God and obeyed exactly.
 - a) He brought the correct offering—sacrifice an animal.
 - b) Cain did not!

C. Enoch’s faith pleased God.

- 1) The world was very wicked in His day.
- 2) Yet, Enoch would not be influenced by that wickedness.

3) He walked with God and was not for God took him.

D. It is man's faith that pleases God—He rewards them who diligently seek Him.

III. FAITH IS BELIEF IN THINGS NOT SEEN (Illustrated) (11:7-12)

A. Illustrated in Noah's actions.

- 1) The world was so wicked in Noah's day that God had to destroy it.
- 2) God told Noah He was going to destroy the world by something not seen before.
- 3) Noah did not rely upon his sense, but trusted in God's Word.
- 4) He built an Ark to the saving of his house.

B. Illustrated in Abraham's actions.

- 1) God told Abraham he was going to inherit a land.
- 2) But Abraham went out from his homeland not knowing where it was.
- 3) He implicitly trusted in the promise of God.
 - a) He was only a so-journer in this land himself.
 - b) He dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob.

C. Illustrated in Sarah's actions.

- 1) When she was past the time of child bearing, she was promised a son by God.
- 2) Her faith was strong enough in God's promises that she had that son.
- 3) She judged God faithful to His word.

IV. THESE ALL DIE IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISE (11:13-16)

A. They lived in hope, and died in expectancy.

- 1) The chief end of life is not pleasure, possessions, or power.
- 2) It is to serve God faithfully—all the way to the end—believing His promises.
- 3) Illustration:
 - a) Emperor Nero may have once condemned Paul to death.
 - b) But that was not the end of the matter.
 - c) The long view is:
 - Men call their sons, Paul.
 - They call their dogs, Nero.

B. It is the certainty of the future that makes hope so bright.

- 1) God is in control and His promises are sure.
- 2) They could see them out there in the future.
- 3) They were fully persuaded of them & embraced them.
- 4) They freely confessed themselves to be strangers & pilgrims on earth.
 - a) For they were not seeking a home here, but a home with God.
 - b) One that God was preparing for them.
 - c) Because He was not ashamed to be called their God.

V. BUT TRUE FAITH MUST AND CAN MEET THE TEST OF TRIALS (11:17-28)

A. As illustrated in Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac, his son.

- 1) So much of God's promises rested upon Abraham having a son.
 - a) He was given to them in their older years.
 - b) But then, God called upon Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice.
- 2) A supreme test of his faith.

- a) To do something that did not make sense.
- b) But Abraham met the test; he did not sell God short.
- c) He was willing to do as God said.
- d) Believing that God could raise him from the dead in order to fulfill His promises.

B. As illustrated in Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

- 1) They all believed that God would give them the promised land.
 - a) Even though they died not having received it.
 - b) They showed the kind of faith that blessed their descendants.
- 2) They all died, not in despair, but in hope that someday the promised land would be given to their descendants.

C. As illustrated by Moses' parents.

- 1) They knew that if they had a son he would be in danger of being killed by Pharaoh.
- 2) Yet, they went ahead and had a son.
- 3) They believed that God could overrule—even a Pharaoh.

D. As illustrated by Moses himself.

- 1) He could have remained as Pharaoh's daughter's son.
- 2) He could have enjoyed all the conveniences and pleasures of Egypt.
- 3) But, he also believed that there was more to life than this.
- 4) He turned his back on it all to be identified with God's people.

E. As illustrated in the institution of the Passover.

- 1) Not only that God would pass over their first-born & not kill them.....
- 2) But, it was to become a yearly remembrance throughout their generations.
- 3) Thus, again putting an emphasis upon hope for the future.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Faith is defined and illustrated in the lives of the faithful.
- 2. It shows the necessity in believing what God says above all else and all other persons.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Faith deals with things that men hope for, but may not be able to see.**
- 2. Those who come to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek him.**
- 3. Men who do not trust God have to find another explanation for the existence of this universe.**
- 4. Abel offered the right sacrifice to God showing that he believed God.**
- 5. Cain offered a sacrifice, but neglected to do what God commanded.**
- 6. Noah had seen floods before, but not one big enough to destroy all living things.**
- 7. Abraham was willing to leave his homeland and family in order to find riches.**
- 8. Enoch did not see death because his faith in God was strong.**
- 9. Even though Sarah had problems with her faith, she came around to believe that she could have a child in her old age.**
- 10. Abraham's supreme test was when God told him to send Ishmael away.**

Lesson Nine

“Faith—When Facing Impossible Odds”

(Hebrews 11:29-40)

We continue our study of the great chapter on faith (Hebrews 11). Great examples are given to show how strong their faith had to be in order to be faithful to God. But some situations were possibly a greater challenge to their faith and trust in God’s Word.....but they believed! Time would not permit the writer to list all who could and should be in this great “Hall of Heroes!” So, it becomes necessary to summarize towards the end of his examples by just giving the names of some more that have shown great faith.

DISCUSSION**I. FAITH IS TRUST IN GOD IN FACE OF IMPOSSIBLE ODDS (11:29-34)*****A. As illustrated in the Red Sea incident.***

- 1) With Pharaoh’s army pursuing them, Israel was in a tight spot.
- 2) Great faith was needed that God would provide an escape.
- 3) A great miracle occurred—the dividing of the waters to allow Israel to escape.

B. As illustrated in the overthrow of the city of Jericho.

- 1) The city was so well fortified, it was almost impossible to take it.
- 2) Especially by an ill-equipped group of people.
- 3) God called upon them to show faith in the impossible.
 - a) To march around the city each day for 6 days.
 - b) On the 7th day, to march around it 7 times and blow horns & shout.
 - c) The walls would come down.
 - d) Would you have believed it??

C. As illustrated in Rahab the harlot.

- 1) To believe in God, she had to:
 - a) Turn her back on her own gods and her own people.
 - b) And...against all common sense & reason that involved the overthrow of the city.
- 2) And yet, she believed that God would give the city to Israel.

D. As illustrated in Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.

- 1) Through their great faith—great deeds were done!
 - a) They subdued kingdoms.
 - b) Brought about a righteous condition among God’s people.
 - c) Obtained great promises from God.
 - d) Lion’s mouths were stopped in their presence.
 - e) Fire was made harmless upon their bodies.
 - f) Avoided death many times by the sword.
- 2) In each case:
 - a) Faith made their weaknesses strong.
 - b) It made them valiant in battle.
 - c) Their faith turned great armies to flight before them.
- 3) They faced overwhelming odds.

- 4) They took tremendous chances upon the promises of God.
- 5) They endured terrifying risk because of their faith.

II. THIS FAITH MUST SOMETIMES PAY A TREMENDOUS COST (11:35-38)

A. God calls for us to do mighty deeds through faith in Him.

- 1) But He also calls upon many to suffer great affliction as well.
- 2) A list of the kind of sufferings endured by the faithful are here given:
 - a) Accepted torture instead of release.
 - b) Endured cruel mockings & scourgings, and bonds & imprisonments.
 - c) They were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, and slain with the sword.
 - d) They were driven from their homes to wander:
 - In skins of animals for clothing;
 - Suffering destitution, afflictions, and torment.
 - Living in deserts, mountains, dens, and caves of the earth.

B. If we follow the world's standards:

- 1) We may have ease, comfort, and prosperity.
- 2) But, we will receive no reward from God.

C. If we follow God's standards:

- 1) We may have pain, loss, discomfort, and unpopularity in this life.
- 2) We will probably have to give up the world's prizes.
- 3) But it is better to suffer with God than to prosper with the world.
- 4) It is better to stake everything on God than to trust in the rewards of the world.

D. Of such people—the world is not worthy to have in their midst.

III. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REWARDS OF FAITH? (11:39-40)

A. Do we receive them here and now in this life?

- 1) Many times we do not.
- 2) These great heroes of faith did not receive the reward in this life at times.
- 3) They looked to the future for it....
- 4) And so must we at times also.

B. And yet, we have received the promise they looked for—THE MESSIAH!

- 1) We need to look at the great cost that these men & women endured to make God's plans possible to be fulfilled.
- 2) What a great cost has been paid by the great heroes of faith.
- 3) So that we can have the great kingdom of God among us today.

C. But, we too must:

- 1) Look to the future for our great hope—heaven.
- 2) We must look to it with great certainty & assurance.

CONCLUSION

1. God was pleased with their faith.
 - a) He was not ashamed to be called their God.
 - b) The world was not worthy of such great men & women of faith.
2. Today:
 - a) God is still seeking for such great men & women of faith to serve Him.
 - b) A faith that will enable us to live courageously, daringly, and victoriously in a world

- full of sin and wickedness.
3. How strong is our faith?
- a) Do we take God at His word or do we question His Word?
 - b) Do we believe that God can turn our weaknesses into strengths?
 - c) Do we have absolute confidence in the promises of God?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. It was Moses great faith that caused God to divide the waters of the Red Sea.
- ___ 2. An idolatrous and immoral woman can help us see the value of faith in God.
- ___ 3. Great faith on the part of some have brought about the subjection of kingdoms.
- ___ 4. The Bible actually tells us that it was Isaiah that was sawn asunder.
- ___ 5. Common Sense and Faith do not go hand-in-hand.
- ___ 6. All of God's people will face the same kind of challenges that these men and women of faith faced.
- ___ 7. Of all the people that should have been mentioned....Job was not in this listing.
- ___ 8. Great faith does not mean that we will escape paying a great price for that faith.
- ___ 9. The Bible says that such men & women of faith do not deserve to live in the midst of a wicked world.
- ___ 10. The greatest reward of the faithful of the Old Testament is the assurance of a city who builder and maker is God.

Lesson Ten

“The Christian Life Involves Chastening”

(Hebrews 12:1-13)

The Christian Life is a race to be run. We have a course set out before us. We are being encouraged and cheered on by those who have gone on before us. There are obvious handicaps to deal with along the way; and, at times it is a real struggle to finish the race. Peter speaks of the fact that the righteous are scarcely saved (1 Peter 4:18). So, we must not quit or give up until the race is over. In order to run our race well we must take heed to ourselves. But we also need the encouragement we can receive from other Christians. It is important that we also realize the value of chastening to help us be stronger and more determined. It takes courage to be faithful to the end, but this we must do!

DISCUSSION**I. TO RUN WELL, WE MUST TAKE HEED TO OURSELVES (12:1)*****A. By laying aside every weight that hinders us.***

- 1) That which is superfluous.
- 2) That which will hinder me in running my race with God.
- 3) Any hindrance in obeying God needs to be removed or set aside.
- 4) You and I know what these are—we must deal with them!

B. By laying aside the sin which so easily besets us.

- 1) There was one underlying sin that the writer has been dealing with—the sin of unbelief.
- 2) Unbelief that results in disobedience or turning away from God’s will.
- 3) From the beginning to the end, the writer has been hammering away at this gnawing cancer of the soul.
- 4) It must be dealt with by putting doubt to rest in my soul.

C. By running the race with patience.

- 1) Patience has both a passive and active concept.
 - a) It is passive when we endure trials—when we wait on God.
 - b) It is active when we are still running the race set before us.
- 2) This course is rugged at times, hard and narrow (Matt. 7:14).
 - a) There will be hardships, persecutions, and trials.
 - b) We must keep on running in spite of all of these.
 - c) We need to run steadfastly—with dogged endurance.
- 3) But there is another thought here also.
 - a) There is a danger to beware of.
 - b) Some run too fast—it is a long race (life-time)—don’t give out.
 - c) Some run too slow—get too far behind, discouraged, and give up.
 - d) Many stumble, fall, faint, and give up.
 - e) We need to set a pace—steady gait and keep at it.
- 4) The reward goes to the person who finishes the course.
 - a) We must get to the end faithfully.
 - b) We must not disqualify by misconduct or not observing the rules.

II. TO RUN WELL, WE NEED THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF OTHERS (12:2-4)***A. We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses.***

- 1) Who are these witnesses?
 - a) The writer has just finished a long list of names of some of them.
 - b) They have finished their course and won the prize.
- 2) They are recorded to encourage us to finish our race and win the prize.
 - a) They bear witness that God is faithful and His promises sure.
 - b) Their lives testify to the faith that can enable heroic living for God.
- 3) So, let them cheer us on in our great race with God.

B. Encouragement from Jesus.

- 1) No greater example of one who ran His race well.
 - a) The greatest example of all.
 - b) And the greatest encouragement of all.
- 2) Look and compare closely what He endured.
 - a) The Shameful death of the cross.
 - b) But He did not let such a death turn Him from His course to be run.
 - c) He endured all kinds of contradiction of sinners.
- 3) What helped Jesus to endure such things?
 - a) For the “Joy that was set before Him.”
 - b) The end result—the redemption of mankind.
 - c) The results made the other bearable.
- 4) By such an example of Faith in God—He has become our leader.
 - a) He has shown us the end result of such a faith.
 - b) He has illustrated a perfect obedient faith.

C. We, too, need to look to our reward to give us encouragement.

- 1) We can endure hardship in our race.
- 2) We, too, can despise the shame brought upon us, but not let it deter us.
- 3) But, we must keep our reward constantly before us.

D. We must also realize that we haven't lost our lives as others have before us.

- 1) Many of the great heroes of faith lost their lives in the race.
- 2) This had not yet been required of those to whom he was writing.
- 3) However, if such is called for, God can provide the grace sufficient to deal with this too—as He did for them.

E. Look to Jesus less you grow weary and faint!

- 1) He did not grow weary and quit—neither should we!
- 2) He did not give up too soon—neither should we!
- 3) He was faithful to the end—it is finished—so must we!
- 4) This faithfulness has cost the lives of saints for centuries.
- 5) What are we willing to give up to perpetuate this great faith?
- 6) Are we willing to show ourselves worthy of such a calling?

**III. TO RUN WELL, WE MUST REALIZE THE GREAT VALUE OF CHASTISEMENT
(12:5-11)*****A. Some have forgotten what God has said about such.***

- 1) Prov. 3:11-12
- 2) We need to call such to remembrance and hold it in our hearts.

3) To forget is to invite feebleness, ruin, and disaster.

B. We need to endure God's chastening hand.

1) How a person looks upon afflictions, tribulations, and trials can make a big difference in the outcome.

a) We can accept them as inevitable and resign ourselves to them.

b) We can accept them with grim determination.

c) We can accept them with self-pity.

d) We can accept them as a token of God's anger & wrath & as punishment.

e) Or, we can accept them as the discipline of a loving Father.

- We need to be concerned when God leaves us alone.

- He may be saying to us—"You are unteachable, incurable, and hopeless to work with."

2) To accept discipline from God is to desire to be His child.

a) To reject it is to reject being His child.

b) God's children will be disciplined because he loves them (Prov. 13:24).

c) Even earthly fathers who love their children chasten them for their good.

C. We need to respect God's efforts to help us.

1) We show respect to our earthly fathers by submitting to their discipline.

2) Even though at times, it may have seemed quite arbitrary.

a) Their discipline may not have always been the best.

b) And yet, we respected their efforts.

3) How much more should we respect God's efforts for His children.

a) His discipline is always correct and for our good.

b) He is all-wise... knowing what is best for us.

c) Why shouldn't we submit to His chastening gladly.

D. God chastens us for our profit.

1) Earthly fathers chasten us only for a short time with intentions of helping us.

2) But God's chastening is obviously for our good altogether—no mistake.

3) But Chastening is never pleasant in and of itself.

a) We can rejoice in the outcome of chastisement.

b) It can make us to become partakers of God's holiness.

- It can deliver us from sinful ways.

- It can establish us in the ways of holiness.

- It can even help to perfect us in holiness.

c) Chastening is necessary to keep down the Old Man of Sin.

d) It can lead us into the way of righteous living.

- But only if we will be instructed, corrected, and disciplined by God.

- We are shown how to walk in righteousness.

IV. TO RUN WELL, WE MUST TAKE COURAGE, BRACE UP (12:12-13)

A. No man ever finished a race in the depths of despair.

1) "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."

2) Take a close look at yourself—do you look like a victorious runner?

- a) With hands dangling down.
- b) With wobbly knees—carrying all that extra weight.
- c) Wandering from side to side??

B. Straighten up and run the course with confidence in God!

- 1) Let God heal your infirmities that are hindering you.
- 2) Set your eye on a straight course of obeying God—trusting in Him all the way.

CONCLUSION

- 1. No race can ever be won unless one enters the race.
 - a) One must become a Christ by obedience to the Gospel to qualify for the race.
 - b) We must then conform to the rules that God has set down.
- 2. We must not only begin the race, but patiently run it all the way to the end.
- 3. How well are we running our race with God?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ **1. Every person has things that must be laid aside if he is to run the race successfully.**
- ___ **2. The besetting sin is disobedience to God.**
- ___ **3. Patience is not really a requisite of running the Christian's race.**
- ___ **4. Jesus said that this race was strait and narrow.**
- ___ **5. Most of us do not really need the encouragement from others to run our race.**
- ___ **6. Jesus becomes the perfect example of One who ran His race perfectly.**
- ___ **7. Not everyone who follows Jesus must lose his life by martyrdom, but he must lose his life.**
- ___ **8. If God leaves us alone and does not chasten us—this is a sign that He has given up on us.**
- ___ **9. A parent who will not discipline his children hates them.**
- ___ **10. A loving parent is a parent who disciplines his children.**

Lesson Eleven

“The Need for Reverence For God and His Word”

(Hebrews 12:14-29)

The Christian race has a grand prize at the end of it—eternal life! In order to receive the prize we must show diligence in our efforts to run the race—***“Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.”*** (2 Peter 1:10). Also, we must show proper reverence for God and His Word—***“Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.”*** (Eccl. 12:13). Our birthright as children of God is eternal life. However, if we esteem it lightly; if we do not show diligence in our efforts; or if we do not rid our hearts of carnality and faint-heartedness; we will lose our reward!

DISCUSSION

I. DILIGENCE NEEDED LESS WE SELL OUR BIRTHRIGHT (12:14-17)

A. Be diligent to be at peace with all men—as much as we can.

- 1) Not with indifference, but diligence.
- 2) Especially with our brethren.
- 3) A malignant or vindictive disposition is not Christian.
- 4) We must not harbor malice, enmity or hate against others.
- 5) ***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God”***
(Matt. 5:9).

B. Be diligent to be holy!

- 1) Holiness is purity of mind, heart, and life.
- 2) ***“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*** (Matt. 5:8).
- 3) ***“Without which no man can see the Lord.”***
- 4) It is to live in the world, but not be of the world.
 - a) The world’s standards are not our standards.
 - b) The world’s conduct is not our conduct.
 - c) The world’s dress is not our dress.
 - d) The world’s ideals are not our ideals.
 - e) The world’s rewards are not our rewards.
- 5) Our aim is not to stand well before men, but before God.
- 6) Holiness, purity allows us to enter into the presence of God.

C. Diligence will help us not to fail of the grace of God.

- 1) Not to fall by the wayside.
- 2) God’s grace offers us great privileges and blessings—we must not miss them.
- 3) ***“There is no opportunity in this life that cannot be missed.”***
- 4) It is God’s grace & our diligent efforts that make life what God intended.
- 5) Diligence can help us not miss what grace offers.

D. Diligence is needed to avoid becoming a bitter or ungodly person.

- 1) We can become bitter at what life brings us.
- 2) We can become bitter at what others do against us.
- 3) We can become bitter at God for allowing these things to happen.

- 4) Or, we can become an ungodly person—a corrupting person upon others.
 - a) **“And thereby many be defiled.”**
 - b) There are always those who think God’s standards are too strict.
 - c) Those who think nothing is wrong with seeking worldly things first.
 - d) Those who will accept the world’s standards of life & conduct.
- 5) Those that help destroy others with their ungodly influence.

E. Diligence will help us not to be a profane person.

- 1) A profane person is one who lightly esteems sacred things.
- 2) He lacks proper regard or value for the important things of life.
- 3) A fornicator is an example:
 - a) He sells his soul for a few fleeting pleasures of sin.
 - b) He makes a very poor bargain.
- 4) Esau is a classic example of a profane person.
 - a) He lightly esteemed his greatest earthly value—his birthright.
 - b) When he fully realized what he had done it was too late.
 - c) He could not get his father to change his mind towards him—even though he sought it with tears.
 - d) Esau was sensual, earth-bound in his outlook.
 - e) He put the needs of the body before more important things.
- 5) God does not take away some consequences of our decisions we make.
 - a) Time cannot be turned back.
 - b) We cannot undo certain things.
 - c) Forever lost is one’s virginity—purity.
 - d) There are certain finalities of some things in this life.
- 6) We have that same grave danger.
 - a) That of selling our birthright—eternal life.
 - b) For a mess of pottage—fleeting sensual pleasures of this life.
 - c) We need to be diligent, deliberate—and not rash.
 - d) If we value earthly & material things more than eternal things, we shall lose our inheritance.

II. PROPER ESTEEM & REVERENCE FOR THE THINGS OF GOD ARE ALSO NEEDED (12:18-24)

A. A contrast is drawn between what happened at Mt. Sinai & Mt. Zion.

- 1) At Mt. Sinai:
 - a) God’s presence was manifested by awesome things: Fire, Blackness, Darkness, Tempest, Sound of trumpets, and a Terrible voice of God they could not endure.
 - b) They were warned not to touch the mountain lest they die.
 - c) Even Moses feared exceedingly & quaked.
 - d) Why was all of this done?
 - To impress the hearts of the people with the holiness of God.
 - To realize the unapproachableness of God by sinful people.
 - To cause them to serve Him with reverence & respect.
- 2) At Mt. Zion:
 - a) Changes from awesomeness to gloriousness.

b) Mt. Zion is:

- The city of the living God.
- The heavenly Jerusalem.
- The place of countless Angels.
- It is that great assemblage of redeemed people.
- It is in the very presence of the great Judge of the universe.
- It is the place of Jesus our Mediator:
 1. Who took away the terror of Judgment.
 2. Who opened this way into the very presence of God.
 3. Whose blood calls for reconciliation.

III. WE MUST NOT TURN OUR BACKS UPON HIM WHO SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN

(12:25-29)

A. Speaks contrasted:

1) Moses:

- a) He was God's mouthpiece to the people.
- b) Those that refused to hear Moses were put to death.
- c) But Moses spoke from the earth.

2) Jesus:

- a) Christ speaks from heaven.
 - His authority cannot be denied.
 - His power cannot be resisted.
 - His vengeance cannot be prevented.
- b) His voice in Moses' day shook the earth.
 - That same voice will speak again & shake heaven & earth.
 - Thus, emphasizing the removing of the Old & replacing with the New.
 - Or, replacing the things that can be shaken with that which cannot be shaken.
 - We are dealing with eternal realities.
 - We are part of an eternal kingdom that can never be destroyed.

B. Therefore, great reverence towards God is called for.

- 1) We must worship God with reverence & godly fear.
- 2) This needs to be shown by:
 - a) An acceptable service of the heart (showing faith, love, unselfishness, persistence, and diligence).
 - b) With proper respect & awe of God.
 - c) With proper humility as we walk before Him.
- 3) Coupled with a realization that God is a consuming fire.
 - a) He will carry out His threats.
 - b) He will punish the unrepentant & profane person.

CONCLUSION

1. Are we putting our trust in the things that perish or that which will last forever?
2. Do we treat lightly the great things of God or properly reverence them?
3. Are we giving diligence in our service to God or are we haphazard?

4. Are we selling our great birthright—eternal life—or cherishing it?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. The Christian's birthright is eternal life.**
- 2. Our birthright is made secure when we diligently seek peace and holiness.**
- 3. A person cannot fail the grace of God.**
- 4. Being bitter and profane can cause us to lose our birthright.**
- 5. God does not take away some of the consequences of our wrong choices.**
- 6. We can lightly esteem our birthright.**
- 7. Mt. Sinai manifested the awesomeness and holiness of God.**
- 8. Mt. Zion manifested the gloriousness of God.**
- 9. Jesus' voice in Moses day shook the earth.**
- 10. God will punish the unrepentant and profane person.**

Lesson Twelve

“Concluding Exhortations to Godliness” (Hebrews 13:1-25)

In reading the Book of Hebrews we tend to gather that these “Jewish Christians” were having a problem with speaking out to others about Christ. They seem to be hiding their profession as a Christian. They did not want to endure the ridicule that might come from their fellow Jews. They may have resented the shame and hardship that it would bring to them. It was easier to hide their profession and be a secret follower of Christ. Today, we are faced with this same challenge. Even though our persecution is not what they faced, but at times we do have to endure shame, ridicule, or hardship if we openly confess to be a Christian. The application of this chapter is important to us from this standpoint.

DISCUSSION

I. EXHORTATIONS TO BASIC CHRISTIAN LIVING IN FACE OF TRIALS (13:1-6)

A. Showing love to our brothers is a must!

- 1) Earnestness in serving God can have a two-sided danger:
 - a) A strong urge to preserve the purity of the faith;
 - b) A lack of sympathy for the weak & failing.
- 2) When the going gets rough:
 - a) Many weaken and accept false ideas to lessen persecution.
 - b) Others may just stop attending to get the pressure off.
- 3) It is easy to get out of patience with such brethren!
 - a) “*They should stand fast, be faithful, and be loyal to Jesus.*”
 - b) Yes, but...we should watch for censoriousness, being too critical, too faultfinding, condemning, harshness, and being unsympathetic to such brethren.
- 4) Brotherly love is crucial to hold things together!

B. Show hospitality to those who need help.

- 1) Everyone knew the value of hospitality.
 - a) Their INNS were a disgrace in most instances.
 - b) To open one’s doors to strangers is often not an easy thing, but needed.
- 2) So, when the need arose:
 - a) Christians driven from their homes by persecution;
 - b) Preachers traveling about would need a place to stay;
 - c) Emergency situations would call upon Christians to help.

C. Also, show sympathy to those suffering.

- 1) Christians suffered greatly in the early years of the church.
 - a) They were imprisoned just because they were Christians.
 - b) Their property was often confiscated.
 - c) Even when released, they may have been destitute.
 - d) Some were put to death.
- 2) They needed help desperately.
 - a) So, put yourself in their place and show empathy.
 - b) Come to their help in whatever way possible.

- c) It was said of ORIGEN when he was young as a Christian: “*Not only was he at the side of the holy martyrs in their imprisonment and until their final condemnation, but, when they were led to death, he boldly accompanied them into danger.*”
- d) Another quotation coming from this period of time: “*All monies accruing from honest labor do ye appoint & apportion to the redeeming of the saints ransoming thereby slaves & captives, and prisoners, people who are sore abused or condemned by tyrants.*”

D. Keep yourselves from defilement of the world.

- 1) Respect the marriage bonds—it is God-ordained.
- 2) Immorality of all kinds will be judged & punished by God—even if men allow it.
- 3) The greatest influences for good, generally, come from the home.
- 4) The early Christians presented a concept of purity that the world had to admire.

E. Keep yourselves free of covetousness.

- 1) Learn to be content with what you are blessed with for the time.
- 2) Flee from the love of possessions.
- 3) Remember—you have the help of God at all times—“*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*” “*The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*”

II. ESPECIALLY IN TRIALS, LOOK TO YOUR LEADERS’ EXAMPLES (13:7-14)

A. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors (Elders), Teachers were all involved in the work of building up God’s people (Eph. 4:11-16).

- 1) True leaders:
 - a) Teach Christ, not themselves.
 - b) Bring people to Christ to be saved.
 - c) Encourage Christ to live in them, so He can be seen in action.
 - d) If necessary, show their devotion to Christ by dying for him.
- 2) Leaders can then leave two things behind them:
 - a) A good example of following Christ;
 - b) Inspiration to others to follow Christ.
- 3) Remember them:
 - a) Remember their messages from the word of God.
 - b) Remember their behavior of faith & follow such.

B. But above all—look to Christ as the unswerving leader, the unchangeable teacher.

- 1) All other leaders must die, but Christ is alive for evermore.
- 2) Sometimes men change, disappoint us, but Christ does not, He is dependable.

C. Be diligent to avoid strange doctrines that have no profit.

- 1) Be settled in your convictions about Christ.
- 2) Be unmovable in your faith.
- 3) Be steadfast in your aims, burning in your zeal.
- 4) Be patient in tribulations.
- 5) Don’t be drawn away from God’s grace unto disputes over meats (foods).
- 6) It is God’s grace that gives strength to our spiritual lives, not meat observance.

D. Be willing to follow Christ—even if it means shame!

- 1) He endured the shame of the cross for us—He suffered outside the city.
- 2) He was despised by the Jewish Nation.
- 3) To be identified with Jesus was to be cut off & despised as well.
- 4) The city of Jerusalem will no longer be your city here.
- 5) But you are to be looking for a new Jerusalem—a heavenly city.

III. PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS (13:15-19)

A. Offer sacrifice of praise & thanksgiving to God.

- 1) We no longer have animals to offer.
- 2) We have something far better—more desirable—the praise of our hearts!
 - a) Showing great reverence & respect for God.
 - b) Shows that our hearts have been won to God.

B. Reach out to the needy & help them.

- 1) Jesus said: ***“In as much as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.”***
- 2) Such is pure & undefiled religion before God (Jas. 1:27).
- 3) We need to be concerned how we can help others.

C. Be submissive to chosen leaders.

- 1) They are concerned for your souls.
- 2) They feel the responsibility of an accounting for your spiritual well-being.
- 3) Make it easy for them, make their work a joy, not a grief.
- 4) Be obedient to what they are trying to teach you—it is God’s Will!
- 5) Be in harmony with their leadership, so that all may profit.
- 6) Hold up their hands—be respectful of their diligent efforts in your behalf.

D. And—pray for this writer!

- 1) We are trying to keep a good conscience in all our actions!
- 2) Even the most sincere & dedicated person needs prayers of others.
- 3) Especially, pray that he will be restored to them soon.

IV. FINAL THOUGHTS TO END THIS LETTER (13:20-25)

A. His prayer for them:

- 1) First, he gives recognition of God’s work for them.
 - a) He is the God of peace who brings peace to all men.
 - b) He raised Jesus from the dead for our redemption.
 - c) Jesus is that great Shepherd of the sheep who cares for them dearly.
 - d) Who shed His blood to make our great Covenant with God possible.
- 2) Make you perfect in every good work to do His will.
 - a) God not only gives us work to do, but the strength to do it.
 - b) God supplies us with the grace to serve Him faithfully.
 - c) But we must desire to do His will.
- 3) God’s will is designed to cause us to be well-pleasing to Him.
 - a) To make us acceptable in the beloved.
 - b) To prepare us for our eternal abode with Him.
- 4) And it is all made possible by Jesus Christ, His Son—to whom glory is rightfully due for ever & ever.

B. A simple request—accept this simple letter from my hand.

C. The writer's hope of coming to visit them shortly is expressed.

- 1) Timothy had been released.
- 2) When he arrives, then he planned to come.

D. Greetings expressed to:

- 1) The rulers or leaders.
- 2) To all the saints.
- 3) That God's grace would be with them all.

CONCLUSION

1. We also need to suffer a word of exhortation!
2. Let this letter build us up and challenge us to greater usefulness.
3. Let this letter cause us to honor & praise the God of heaven with our lips and our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Love for brethren is especially needed to be shown to the weak & failing.
- ___ 2. Hospitality is not only a command, but a necessity, if we love our brethren.
- ___ 3. The early Christians contributed money to redeem their brethren from slavery or from prison.
- ___ 4. Marriage, when kept pure, is one of the greatest influences for good in our world.
- ___ 5. Covetousness is a real danger to all Christians.
- ___ 6. Leaders are to be remembered for their faith and example set before them.
- ___ 7. Christians were encouraged not to be ashamed of Christ.
- ___ 8. The hands of leaders were to be upheld by the church.
- ___ 9. God's people are to continually offer us a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God.
- ___ 10. The writer spoke about Timothy indicating that it was probably Paul who wrote this letter.

