

# *Bible Study Guide for New Believers*



## *Book of Hebrews*

New Believer's Bible Study Guide Resource

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## About the Authors

This guide is written by a married couple that wishes to remain anonymous.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ asked us to write this guide together to help new believers understand the Book of Hebrews. We pray that this guide will be useful to you in understanding God's truth.

## ***Preface***

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

The Bible has promised blessings to believers, who read, meditate upon and apply its timeless truth and wisdom. This is a Bible study guide that is designed to instill daily habits of prayer, meditation on the word and life application. It is our prayer that this guide be used to build up believers everywhere for the work that needs to be done for the kingdom of God.

## How to Use this Guide

This bible study guide can be used for your individual study or can be a part of a Bible study group. In either setting, the authors suggest that the believer(s) first pray and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding scripture. Then read the passage and consider it carefully. Once that is done, we encourage the believer to read the commentary.

We also want to emphasize that reading and understanding the Word of God requires time, patience and (most importantly) the leading of the Holy Spirit. We do encourage you, however, to be consistent in your Bible reading habits (i.e. daily reading). In time you will begin to see and understand the many spiritual riches the Word of God has to offer. It is our prayer that God will speak to you individually as you spend time reading his word one day at a time.

# **Book of Hebrews**

## **Introduction**

The book of Hebrews is primarily written to those of the Jewish faith. The book of Hebrews is best understood by a Gentile (non- Jewish person) when one reads the book of Hebrews from a Jewish perspective.

## **Hebrews 1**

### **God's Final Word: His Son (Hebrews 1: 1-4)**

1. Verse 1 describes how God has been speaking to the forefathers of the Jewish nation. In Old Testament times, the message that God wanted to convey was given through the mouth of specially chosen followers of God who are called prophets.
2. a) In the Old Testament, prophecies (messages given by the prophets) were restricted to the Jewish people.  
b) This is in contrast to the New Testament, where God himself proclaimed to all of humanity the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

## **Jesus Christ**

- a) Jesus Christ was exalted as God the Son by God the Father Himself.
- b) As God the Son, Jesus Christ was given power and authority over all things.
- c) This was in direct contrast to His birth as a human being.

- d) During His life here on earth, Jesus Christ was humiliated and died a shameful death.
- e) From a human perspective, Jesus was not highly esteemed.
- f) Jesus Christ was present at the creation of the world as part of the Trinity.

### **God's Love for Humanity**

- a) The Creator of the world humbled Himself (Jesus Christ) to assume the form of His own creation (a human being).
- b) God the Father loved humanity and desired to have a relationship with them. However, because of sin, there was a separation in that relationship between God and man.
- c) There was no human being who could atone for their own sins as well as those of humanity due to what is called original sin.
- d) Original Sin is a theological term that refers to the first sin that was committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Read Genesis 3).
- e) Humanity was destined to condemnation and judgment for eternity if there was no sacrifice that would wash away the sins of the world.
- f) Jesus Christ was the only one who could atone for the sins of all humanity. This was because He did not have an earthly father (and therefore He had no original sin).
- g) He lived a sinless life and became a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.
- h) Jesus Christ is also seated permanently at the right hand of the Father. He is the chosen heir of all the earth.

## **The Son Superior to Angels (Hebrews 1:5-14)**

### **Jesus Christ and the Angels**

1. Jesus Christ is exalted above the angels.
2. The relationship of God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ) is described in verse 5.
3. The angels of God are directed to worship Jesus Christ (verse 6).
4. The angels are created by God to serve Him. They are created to minister to those who will inherit salvation (verse 14).

### **The Exaltation of Jesus Christ**

1. In contrast, verse 8 speaks of the exaltation of Jesus Christ. The exaltation of Jesus Christ is described as of one ascending to the throne of a kingdom.
2. A description of His throne (which represents the length of rule of a king) and a scepter (which represents power) are noted.
3. The rule of Jesus Christ is powerful and eternal. Jesus Christ rules with the scepter of righteousness (which is a right standing with God).
4. Jesus Christ again was also referenced in verses 10-12 as being present at the creation of the world. There is also an emphasis on Jesus Christ and His eternal nature as God.
5. A final distinction between the exalted position of Jesus Christ and the angels are noted in verse 13. Jesus Christ has been given a special position at the right hand of God the Father. In this position, the enemies of Jesus Christ will bow before Him.



## **Jesus Christ and the Law**

1. It also notes that Jesus Christ loved being in a right standing with God (righteousness) and upheld the law and fulfilled it completely.
2. In Matthew 5:18, Jesus Christ describes how the Law of God is eternal and that heaven and earth would disappear first before the Law is ever changed.
3. Since Jesus Christ loved righteousness and hated lawlessness (sin) God the Father has anointed Him with the oil of gladness (the Holy Spirit) for His purpose here on earth.

## **Hebrews 2**

### **Warning to Pay Attention (Hebrews 2:1-4)**

1. As believers, we are to remember what we have learned so that we don't wander away from the truth.
2. God used angels to deliver messages to people in the Bible. A person who was disobedient to God's message was punished.
3. This is compared to the message of salvation that Jesus Christ (who Himself was greater than any angel) delivered to mankind. Disobedience to this message of salvation has dire consequences (the reality of hell).
4. The salvation message of Jesus Christ was not quietly spoken. It was loudly announced by Jesus Christ Himself.
5. The salvation message of Jesus Christ (the Gospel) was also confirmed by God the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17).
6. God the Holy Spirit also testified to the truth of the salvation message by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are referenced to 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.
7. The signs were recorded throughout the Gospels. They included Jesus healing the sick, casting demons out of those who are possessed, and raising the dead.

## **Jesus made fully human (Hebrews 2:5-18)**

There is a comparison made between Jesus and mankind. (Verses 5-10)

### **Mankind**

1. Verses 6-8 are direct quotations from Psalms 8:4-6. It emphasizes that (in creation), mankind has a special place.
2. Mankind was made in the image of God. However, mankind was created as an earthly being. (This is in comparison to the angels, who were heavenly.)
3. Despite being a little lower than angels and earthly, man is crowned with glory and honor. All of creation has been made subject to him.
4. There is also a direct comparison made between mankind and the how the earth was subject to them and how the whole world is subject to Jesus Christ.
5. We can read about this specifically in (Genesis 1:26-28), where God gives a command regarding the place of man over all creation.
6. However, when the natural world is viewed by ourselves, we do not readily see how it is subject to us as mankind.

## **Jesus Christ**

1. Similarly, Jesus Christ has dominion over the whole earth. Even though He has dominion over the whole earth, it is not easily seen
2. The reality of how the earth is under the dominion of Jesus Christ is furthermore clouded when Jesus Christ assumed the form of a human being and was executed by His own creation (the crucifixion).
3. Jesus Christ was crowned with glory and honor by the Father for completing his will. Jesus Christ suffered the punishment that was due to all of mankind.
4. In doing so, Jesus Christ has brought many to glory (eternal life).
5. Jesus Christ, (because of this), is also called the pioneer (someone who leads the way) of those who have been saved.
6. God perfected Jesus Christ to become the leader of our salvation. This was done through the example of His sinless life and faithful obedience to the will of the Father.
7. Jesus Christ has made those who are saved holy, just as He is holy.

## **Family of God (Verses 11-13)**

1. We who have been saved have been made a part of the family of God.
2. In addition, just as a biological or adopted child is an heir to a physical inheritance, we are heirs (as part of the family of God) of the inheritance of eternal life.
3. Since we are a part of the family of God, we are called brothers and sisters in Christ.
4. Jesus Christ is not ashamed of us (who are saved) being a part of His family.
5. In fact, He has declared our names in front of the Father and indicated that we are His (Read Mark 8:38)

### **Jesus Christ Our Perfect Sacrifice (Hebrews 2:14-15)**

1. In verse 14, we read that Jesus Christ became human. Through Jesus Christ's death as a human being on the cross, He was able to break the power of sin and death.
2. We understand by reading other scripture that mankind was enslaved by sin and the fear of death. Death was feared, as it would guarantee an eternity in hell for those who were unbelieving (Romans 6:19-23).
3. Jesus Christ by His sinless life, death, and resurrection broke the power of death.

### **Abraham's Descendants (verse 16)**

1. Jesus Christ came to help Abraham's descendants, not heavenly beings.
2. Abraham's physical descendants are the Jewish people.
3. Abraham's spiritual descendants are those who have been brought into the lineage of his family through the work of Jesus Christ (Romans 4:16-17).

### **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Hebrews 2:17)**

1. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement for the Jewish people.
2. In the Old Testament times, the high priest (on the day of Yom Kippur) would go to the "Holy of Holies" where the Ark of the Covenant was located.
3. The "Holy of Holies" was a special place in the temple where the presence of the Lord was present. The high priest would offer a blood sacrifice for the sins of himself and the nation of Israel while he was in the "Holy of Holies". He would offer the blood sacrifice of atonement by sprinkling it on the mercy seat (lid of the Ark of the Covenant). For more details, read Leviticus 16.
4. However, since the high priest himself was a human being, who was sinful, this sacrifice had to be repeated yearly.

### **Temptation (Hebrews 2:18)**

1. Since Jesus Christ was tempted like us, He understands our temptations and has the power to deliver us from it.
2. Temptation itself is not a sin. However, yielding to temptation is when sin occurs.
3. It is impossible to go through life without being tempted as a human being. However, we know that when we are tempted, we can turn to our Great High Priest for strength and guidance. He is faithful to deliver us!

## **Hebrew 3**

### **Jesus Greater Than Moses (Hebrews 3:1-6)**

#### **Moses**

1. Moses was called the meekest man to have ever lived. He was found to be faithful in all that God has asked him to do.
2. Moses and Jesus are compared and contrasted.
3. Moses was appointed by God to be His messenger to the Jewish people while they were enslaved in Egypt and when they were wandering through the wilderness.
4. Furthermore, we read that Moses was a faithful servant and that his faithful actions would be seen as a testimony of what a faithful servant of God would be like.

#### **Jesus**

1. Jesus was also faithful to God the Father who appointed Him to be the Savior of all humanity.
2. Humanity (like the Jewish people) was essentially wandering in their own spiritual wilderness (sin and the consequences of it) and had no direction.
3. However, the faithfulness of Jesus in doing what God had appointed to Him is worthy of a greater honor than what Moses did.

## **Warning Against Unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-19)**

### **Israelites in the Wilderness**

1. The wilderness refers to the journey the people of Israel took from Egypt to the Promised Land (Canaan) (For further details, read the Book of Exodus)
2. The quotation in verse 7-11 is directly from (Psalm 95:7-11). It refers to the warning against unbelief that the people of Israel had while they were wandering in the wilderness.
3. During many times of that wandering, the people of Israel rebelled against the authority of God that led them (Psalm 135).
4. Even though the nation of Israel was witness to the power of an Almighty God, they quickly forgot His care for them.

### **Rebellion of the People of Israel**

1. The Ten Commandments were received by Moses from God himself. The Ten Commandments were moral laws that guided every interaction that the nation of Israel had with each other and with outside nations.
2. The Israelites assumed Moses died on Mount Sinai because the glory of the God covered it and it was a fearful thing to look at. The Israelites hardened their heart toward God (willingly turned away) from Him and made themselves an idol to worship ( a golden calf).
3. They sinned against God and didn't believe in His promise of leading them to a land "flowing with milk and honey". It was a land where the nation of Israel will not have to toil for crops to grow, for vineyards to be planted, and for olive trees to produce their oil.
4. Since they did not believe God, a short 2-week journey turned into forty years of wandering. In this wandering, all the unbelieving souls of that generation died in the wilderness without even seeing one promise of God come to fruition.



5. Because of their unbelief, God did not allow them to enter into the rest (the land of Canaan the promise land) that was supposed to be given to them.

## **Hebrews 4**

### **A Sabbath Rest for the People of God (Hebrews 4:1-13)**

#### **God's Rest**

1. The unbelief of the nation of Israel and the consequences of it are a warning to us in the modern age.
2. The promise of entering God's rest still has not changed.
3. Everyone has had the promise of God's rest proclaimed to them.
4. Those who have believed in the promise of God's rest have been given entry into God's rest. God's rest was also mentioned in the Book of Genesis when God was finished creating the world and all the creatures that are in it.
5. God noted that all the work that He had done in creating the world and its creatures (Including man) was good.

#### **Sabbath Day**

1. God did not need to take a rest on the seventh day because He was tired. God was setting an example of how we should, as His creation, spend time reflecting on Him.
2. Again, we notice that God's rest was also proclaimed to those who, because of their disobedience, did not enter into His rest.

## **Today**

1. Again there is also a reference to Psalm 95:7-8 that there is a day set in the future called "Today" (Judgment Day) in which those who have been obedient and faithful will enter into God's rest.
2. Joshua led the people of Israel after Moses into the Promised Land. That should have been the finality of God's rest.
3. However, we read in other portions of scripture about another day where God Himself will judge the living and dead.

## **Hebrews 5**

### **Jesus the Great High Priest (Hebrews 5:1-10)**

#### **The Role of the High Priest**

1. In the Old Testament, there were twelve tribes of Israel. Levi was selected for priestly duties in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple.
2. Aaron, who was Moses's brother, was ordained by God to become the first high priest of all Israel. Since Aaron was a human being just like the rest of the nation of Israel, he had to sacrifice and make atonement (covering) for his own sin.
3. The priests in service to God held a special place in all of Israel. They would administer sacrifices, determine what was spiritually unclean or unfit and would often be arbiters (judges) of God's law as it related to practical living.

#### **Jesus Christ Our Great High Priest**

1. Similarly, Jesus Christ did not elect Himself to become the Great High Priest (Psalms 110:4). Like a high priest, Jesus offered prayers and petitions with emotion and passion to God.
2. Even though God the Father heard His petition (because of His willingness to be obedient to the will of the Father), Jesus Christ still had to undergo the suffering of the cross, and in so doing, became the perfect sacrifice.
3. Since Jesus was perfectly obedient, even unto death. He became the source of salvation to all who obey His message of salvation.
4. We finally read in verse 10 about Melchizedek. We will read about Melchizedek further in the Book of Hebrews and we will understand why it was important for Jesus to be called and selected as high priest under the order of Melchizedek.

## **Warning Against Falling Away (Hebrews 5:11-14)**

### **Introduction**

1. The writer of Hebrews takes a few verses (as an aside) to warn against those who are not keeping in line with the truth of God's salvation message.
2. The writer openly notes that those who do not understand this message have not put the effort into being acquainted with the truth of Jesus Christ being the Savior of the world.
3. The state of those who choose not to spend time understanding God's word is compared to babies who are relying on milk for sustenance.

### **Spiritual Food**

1. A human being is born as a baby. A baby initially relies on milk for nutrition and sustenance. However, for that baby to grow into an adult, it needs to progressively change its diet from milk to solid food for continued growth and strength.
2. A person who has accepted Christ's call to become saved is also born again spiritually (see John 3:1-21). In that sense, they are considered spiritual newborns. Like physical newborns, they require milk for initial sustenance. The spiritual milk is the basic tenets of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Some things that would be considered spiritual milk would be concepts of "God is Love" and "Jesus saves".
3. While it is fine for a new believer to partake of spiritual milk, there should always be a yearning (just like a human baby) to progress to solid spiritual food. Solid spiritual foods are the deeper truths of the bible, such as justification and the Second Coming of Christ.
4. A believer who does not partake of spiritual food (the deeper meaning and understanding of God's word) is will to not be able to grow in their faith and knowledge of who God is. They will never be able to grow from a spiritual baby to a mature believer who can correctly understand God's word. (see 2 Timothy 2:15)

## **Hebrews 6**

### **Hebrews 6:1-12**

#### **Growing in the Faith**

1. There is an encouragement that is persistent since the end of Chapter 5: that one does not stop progressing in the growth of their faith.
2. The writer talks about how the basics or the foundational doctrines of the faith such as repentance from sin, salvation by faith through God, baptisms (publically identifying with the salvation message of Jesus Christ), laying on of hands (signifying being commissioned for a particular mission or ministry), resurrection of the dead (the reality that physical death is not the end), and eternal judgment (the reality of heaven and hell).
3. Only God (through the power of His Spirit) can help us grow in our faith beyond the basics of the faith. The consequences of not growing beyond the basics of the faith are dire.

#### **Accepting or Rejecting Christ**

1. Those who chose at one point to become believers and have then chosen to reject Christ afterward have essentially re-crucified Christ.
2. This is because Jesus Christ has given to us a heavenly gift of salvation. In addition, He has given us the power of His Holy Spirit to live as believers.
3. Jesus Christ has also given us the Word of God (The Bible), which has given guidelines to live our lives as believers.
4. If someone chooses to fall away and reject the above, they are due a great punishment (Hebrews 2: 2-4).

### **Faithful and Unfaithful Believer**

1. There is also a comparison made of the faithful and unfaithful believer. Both are compared to a particular piece of land that has abundant rainfall. Both plots of land are intended to produce crops and useful plants, which are supposed to be used by the farmer.
2. The faithful believer is compared to land that produces herbs and useful plants (the fruits of the Spirit that God has cultivated as well as their unique talents and skills, see Galatians 5:22-23) that is of benefit to God's kingdom.
3. The unfaithful believer is compared to the land that produces thorns and thistles (which represents the curse that was placed upon Adam at the Garden of Eden). This land is unfruitful and not beneficial for the farmer (God) who has invested blessings in the life of this believer. Thus, this person is justly cursed and faces judgment.
4. Therefore, we find that as a believer we must be diligent to proceed forward in our faith. This means that we gain a deeper understanding of God and His Word. This is also an encouragement for us to spend time with God daily and for Him to teach us the deeper mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.
5. The writer brings us focus back on those who are reading this book and expresses his confidence that those who are reading this book are progressing in their faith.

### **Labor of Love**

1. The writer also notes that being a believer in Christ and doing what He has told you to do (no matter what it is) a "labor of love". This means that a believer does his or her ministry even though it is apparently of no benefit (and sometimes even harmful) to the one who is doing the ministry.
2. Since a ministry is a "labor of love" we must be continued in our diligence and performance of that ministry. The writer also notes that there have been biblical examples of those who have been obedient to God's calling and ministry on their lives.

## **The Certainty of God's Promise (Hebrews 6:13-20)**

### **Abraham**

1. Abraham is one such example of being diligent to what God called him to do.
2. God made a promise to Abraham that He would multiple His descendants (Genesis 22:17)
3. God swore by His own name that He would fulfill that promise to Abraham.

### **Oath**

1. There is a comparison here made between an oath and contract that is binding between two parties in an agreement.
2. The contract when it is signed is signed underneath the law of the land.
3. As a result, the contract is binding and there is no method of escaping the obligations of the contract until the contract is fulfilled.

### **Oath with God and Abraham**

1. Similarly, God placed a binding contract on Himself and Abraham that He would fulfill His promise to Him.
2. The contract was binding upon God and Abraham because God is a holy and righteous God.
3. God is unable to lie or to be dishonest. God will always be faithful to His promises in the Word.



### **God's Promise to Believers**

1. Just as Abraham received that promise from God, we also have a promise of God. This is through Jesus Christ in whom we have the hope of an eternal salvation.
2. This hope that we have is like an anchor of a ship. That anchor of a ship allows it to stay in one place and be secure despite the action of the waves and wind.
3. Similarly, since our hope in Jesus Christ (as well as our faith in His promise of salvation), we have an anchor that allows us to be secure despite the storms in our lives.

### **High Priest**

1. In addition, there is also a reference made to the high priest atoning for the sins of himself and the nation of Israel on the national Day of Atonement. Today the Jewish people observe it as Yom Kippur.
2. In Old Testament times, the high priest would go a place in the Temple known as "The Holy of Holies". This place was separated from the rest of the Temple by a thick curtain known as the veil of partition.
3. The veil of partition was designed to be a physical reminder of the separation between a Holy God and a sinful human being. Inside the veil of partition was where the Ark of the Lord resided. It also represented where the presence of God resided.
4. The high priest would also sprinkle blood with his finger on the Ark of the Covenant and the covering of the Ark of the Covenant (which known as the Mercy Seat).
5. This was done for the atonement of the sins of both the high priest (who himself was sinful) and for the sins of the nation.

### **Jesus Our High Priest**

1. Jesus Christ (as we previously read before who was a sinless Great High Priest) went into the presence of God (which is represented here by the veil) and made atonement for all humanity.

## **Hebrews 7**

### **Melchizedek the Priest (Hebrews 7:1-10)**

#### **Melchizedek**

1. Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18-20.
2. Abraham first met Melchizedek after he rescued his nephew Lot.
3. Melchizedek blessed Abraham and Abraham gave him a tithe (tenth) of all his possessions.
4. The name Melchizedek meant “king of righteousness”. He was also called the King of Salem, which means, “king of peace”.

#### **Theophany**

1. Scholars submit that Melchizedek was what is called a theophany. This means that God took upon a human form, but was limited to a temporal period.
2. Melchizedek is different than Jesus because he did not have a physical human birth.

## **Theophany in the Old Testament**

1. One example in the Book of Daniel is when King Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the furnace as a punishment for refusing to worship the statute of himself as god.
2. King Nebuchadnezzar looked inside the furnace and saw there were four men inside the furnace instead of the three he threw in.
3. King Nebuchadnezzar was amazed and exclaimed there is a fourth man walking in the furnace and his appearance is as the Son of God. (Daniel 3:13-26)

## **Tithing**

1. Melchizedek was a symbolic representation of the eternal priestly duties of Jesus Christ.
2. Melchizedek was considered so great that he received a tenth of all that Abraham plundered while rescuing his nephew Lot.
3. This was a big deal as Abraham was considered the father of the Jewish nation. Abraham is considered to be a revered figure in Judaism.
4. Thus when he gave a tenth of all he had to Melchizedek it proved that Abraham knew there was one greater than himself whom he gave the tenth to.
5. The writer then goes and describes the Old Testament system of tithing.

## **Tribe of Levi**

1. The tribe of Israel that was designated to perform the priestly service was the tribe of Levi.
2. The tribe of Levi was required to collect a tithe from the people of Israel. This is to be done even though they are all descended from Abraham.
3. Yet, we see Melchizedek was not a priest after the order of the tribe of Levi. He was however, given a tithe by Abraham. In return, Melchizedek gave Abraham a blessing.
4. The writer goes on to also compare how the tithe is collected by those who themselves will die. Yet, Melchizedek collected a tenth from Abraham. Melchizedek was known to be eternal.
5. Because Abraham already gave a tenth of all he had to Melchizedek, he already paid the tithe for his descendants in the tribe of Levi.

## **Jesus like Melchizedek Hebrews 7:11-28**

### **Priestly Duties**

1. Despite all the good we have heard of the priestly duties of the tribe of Levi, there was still a major problem. The men who perform the priestly duties of the tribe Levi were sinners just like the rest of all of humanity.
2. However, we know that perfection did not come to the Levitical priesthood, as they still had to offer sacrifices for all their own sins as well as the people annually.
3. Thus, we understand that there had to be a different order in which the priestly duties (specifically the sacrifice that would atone for sins) would not need to be repeated but would only have to be done once for the sins of all mankind.
4. So because the priesthood has been changed the law must be changed because there is perfection achieved through Jesus Christ alone.

## **Jesus Our High Priest**

1. Jesus Christ is a descendant of the tribe of Judah. The Old Testament priests were not chosen from the tribe of Judah.
2. When Jesus Christ became a priest after the order of Melchizedek the tradition of the Levitical priesthood was broken and done away with.
3. Jesus Christ did not become a priest because of His ancestry, or because He was a descendant of the tribe of Levi or Judah.
4. God Himself chose Jesus Christ and swore it by an oath that He would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (see Psalm 110:4). Jesus Christ, offered himself as a sacrifice for sin for all mankind.

## **Levitical Priesthood**

1. Since the whole tradition of the Levitical priesthood as well as its associated sacrifices for sin was useless (due to the sinful nature of the priest themselves) a new order was instituted.
2. This new order was after the order of Melchizedek. Jesus Christ was a priest after that order forever.

## **Jesus made a Oath**

1. God the Father ordained Jesus Christ with an oath. God also made an eternal promise (oath) to Abraham regarding his future descendants (Hebrews 6).
2. The oath was binding and showed God's intent to permanently change and do away with the Levitical priesthood.
3. Jesus Christ has been ordained by this oath by God the Father.

## **Jesus Christ is Eternal**

1. In comparison, the human priests after the Levitical priesthood (since they were mortal and experienced physical death) could not do their priestly duties forever.
2. Thus, they could not guarantee atonement or salvation to anyone. Jesus Christ, however, is eternal and His performance of the priestly duties is eternal.
3. Since Jesus Christ is eternal, He can intercede for and save those who come to God through Him.
4. Jesus Christ intercedes for us as sinners. Even though He was a human being, like all of us, He was found to be holy, sinless, and exalted in His position in heaven.
5. Since Jesus Christ meets all of these requirements, He truly meets our need for salvation. Jesus Christ only had to sacrifice Himself once for the sins of the people.

## **Conclusion**

1. The writer closes out this chapter with an emphatic declaration that the Levitical priesthood was inherently weak and unable to save mankind from their sins.
2. However, Jesus Christ who was ordained by an oath from God the Father did not have the sinful weakness that these Levitical priests had.
3. Jesus Christ is perfect and is still interceding on our behalf (as sinners) forever.

## **Hebrews 8**

### **High Priest of a New Covenant (Hebrews 8: 1-13)**

#### **Tabernacle**

1. Jesus Christ is the high priest who serves in the sanctuary of God, (the presence of God in heaven) and is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.
2. The high priest in the Old Testament was appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, Jesus Christ also had to offer something as well as being a priest.
3. Jesus Christ was descended from the tribe of Judah. The priest of the Old Testament was descended from the tribe of Levi. Therefore, He would be disqualified from an earthly priesthood.
4. However, earthly high priests (who were sinful) served at a sanctuary that was a foreshadowing of the sanctuary in heaven.
5. This is in contrast to Jesus Christ who offered the gift of salvation and sacrifice of His blood and body for all in the heavenly tabernacle.

### **Levitical Offering**

1. The tabernacle and the Levitical offerings were intended to be a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's sacrifice in the future.
2. Despite the fact that Jesus Christ, was made a high priest, He had an elevated position that was above earthly high priest. We earlier read that the covenant of the Levitical priesthood was the mediators between God and man in the Old Testament.
3. However, Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant based on the oath that God the Father made which ordained Jesus Christ as a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

### **New Covenant**

1. The writer goes on to say that the first covenant was flawed by sinful priests and continuous blood sacrifices could never find perfection in the eyes of God.
2. This is the reason why God made a new covenant with the people of Israel. This new covenant is not similar to the old one. The new covenant was made because the people of Israel were disobedient.
3. The new covenant will be established with the people of Israel through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

### **The Law**

1. There were 600 laws in the Old Testament.
2. If a person broke just one of those laws, he was guilty of breaking all of them.
3. Thus, we see that the law became largely ritualistic and the true intent of the law was lost.



## **Old Testament Law**

1. However, the new covenant will entail God forgiving the sins of the people of Israel and abolishing the sacrifices for sins (as Jesus Christ already made the perfect sacrifice once and for all).
2. The new covenant replaced the old covenant.
3. The old covenant that is being replaced here is the Old Testament system of ritualistic observation of the letter of the law but not the spirit of it.

## **Hebrews 9**

### **Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle (Hebrews 9:1-10)**

#### **Ark of the Covenant**

1. God ordained the first covenant. The priestly service was done by sinful man in an earthly sanctuary that was made by human hands.
2. The Tabernacle that was made by human hands is described as having two distinct portions.
3. The first was called the Holy Place. This is where there was a lampstand as well as a table that had bread that was blessed for use with the priestly duties.
4. The second area (behind a curtain or veil) was called the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). This part of the Tabernacle contained the altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff and the stone tablets of the law given to Moses.

#### **Aaron's Staff**

1. Aaron's staff represented how God had ordained Aaron and his sons to become priests. In the Old Testament, there was a grumbling among the nation of Israel about why Aaron was chosen to become the high priest.
2. The other Israelites did not easily accept God's choice of Aaron and his descendants to become the priests. This issue became so contentious that God had to intervene.
3. Moses was commanded by God to take the staff of all the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were to lay it on the ground. The staffs of the leaders of Israel (one of which was Aaron's) were then examined the next morning.

4. Aaron's staff blossomed and had almonds. Moses was then ordered by God to place Aaron's staff in the Ark of the Covenant. This is a sign of the divine will of God concerning matters of spiritual importance (Numbers 17:1-10, Numbers 18:7).

### **Stone Tablets**

1. The stone tablets of the law that were given to Moses represented the law of God. When the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, they stopped at a place called Mount Horeb.
2. Moses was called by God to go up the mountain and to commune with God. Moses then received from God two tablets of stone that were written by God himself containing The Ten Commandments.
3. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. The people of Israel, when they saw Moses was gone for so long, assumed that he was dead. They also assumed that God had stopped leading them.
4. They turned to worshipping idols, particularly a golden calf. Moses came down and confronted the people of Israel in their idolatry. Moses was so upset that the people of Israel would forget about how God had provided for and had chosen them as a unique people.
5. Instead, they chose to ignore God and worship an idol. Moses then broke the two tablets of stone that God had given him as a symbol of how the people of Israel and indeed (all of mankind) were rebellious and did not choose to follow God and all of His commandments.
6. Moses then had to make two new stone tablets that he created with his own hands at the instruction of God. The Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets were then placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

## **Manna**

1. The gold jar of Manna represented God's provision for the people of Israel when they were being led out of Egypt into the land of Canaan (Exodus 16:30-35).
2. The Ark of the Covenant and its contents represented the following:
  - a) His provision (Manna)
  - b) His will (Aaron's staff)
  - c) His plan (Stone Tablets) for our lives.
3. In addition, the Ark had a cover that was called the mercy seat. The mercy seat had two angels who were on either side and stretched their wings towards the middle.

## **High Priest Duties**

1. The priests routinely entered into the Holy Place to carry out routine priestly activities.
2. However, only the high priest was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year.
3. The one time that the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, it was to offer a blood sacrifice for the sins of himself and sins of the people.
4. This was intended to show that the way into the Holy of Holies for every person had not been fully revealed. It was merely to show the sinfulness of man and the Holiness of God and that man, in and of himself, could not approach God directly.
5. In addition, we also see that sacrifices that were given in the Old Testament did not remove sin, but only covered it. Jesus Christ's sacrifice removed sin from those who believe on him.
6. The Mosaic Law and the priestly duties also extended into external regulations. These were matters of the law that applied to food, drink, and ritualistic worship. These external regulations were in force until Jesus Christ came established the new covenant, which did away with all of the external regulation.

## **Blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:11-28)**

### **Christ's Blood (Verse 11-14)**

1. The earthly Tabernacle and priestly duties that were established under the first covenant (The Mosaic Law) are compared to the work of Jesus Christ and the heavenly Tabernacle.
2. During the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament times, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies with an animal blood sacrifice. This is in contrast to Jesus Christ who entered the Holy of Holies with His own blood.
3. In doing so, Jesus Christ obtained eternal redemption.
4. There is also a comparison between blood from animals versus the blood of Christ.
5. The blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer only outwardly make a person clean. However, the blood of Christ, which He offered to God the Father cleanses us from our sins.

### **Mediator of New Covenant (Verse 15)**

1. Jesus Christ is called the mediator of a new covenant.
2. Jesus Christ stood in the gap between God and man and sacrificed Himself as a ransom. This ransom was paid so that we, as prisoners of sin, could be set free!

### **A Will (Verse 16-22)**

1. A will is a legal document that indicates how a person would like his financial and personal assets to be distributed to his heirs.
2. Furthermore, we also know that a will does not take effect until the person by whom the will is written dies.
3. Due to this fact, the Mosaic covenant or (law) was instituted with a blood sacrifice.
4. When Moses proclaimed every commandment of the law, he ceremonially purified the Holy Books that were in the Tabernacle and the people of Israel themselves. Moses then sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and all the utensils inside the Tabernacle. The reason for this was because the law required that almost everything be cleansed with blood.
5. He purified and dedicated the covenant that made with God through what is known as a blood covenant. A blood covenant was the most serious or binding agreement that one could enter into in the Old Testament. The reason why it was the most serious agreement one can enter into was because the covenant would only be dissolved only with the death of one of the parties involved.
6. In addition, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, we see that the earthly Tabernacle and all the things that were in it had to be purified with the blood of animal sacrifice.

### **Heavenly Sanctuary (verses 23-28)**

1. However, we see that Jesus Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary. We understand that the earthly Tabernacle was a copy of the true Tabernacle that was built without human hands.
2. The true Tabernacle of God is heaven itself and in the presence of God. Jesus Christ went once (with His own blood) into the presence of God and offered Himself as a sacrifice once and for all for all of humanity.
3. We also understand that humanity are all destined to die a physical death once. However, we also know that after death that there is a judgment that must take place to those who have rejected Christ.
4. We also understand that since there is a judgment, that there will also be rewards as well. Jesus Christ made mention of this in the Gospels where He talked about either receiving the reward of eternal life or the punishment of eternal damnation and hell.
5. Christ therefore suffered and sacrificed Himself once to take away the sins of all those who believe on Him. We also await His second coming where we know that He will come as our Messiah and King!

## **Hebrews 10**

### **Christ Sacrifice Once For All (Hebrews 10:1-18)**

#### **Animal Sacrifices (verse 1-10)**

1. The Old Testament law only points to the perfection that is found in Jesus Christ.
2. The law of the Old Testament proves that humanity, in and of itself, is hopelessly imperfect and sinful.
3. The law does not make perfect those who observe it. If the law did make those who observe it perfect, the sacrifices of the Old Testament should have stopped being offered.
4. The sacrifices would have stopped because the sins of the worshippers were taken away from them once and for all. In addition, the worshiper would not have felt guilty about their sin. The writer goes on to say that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away the cost of human sin. That is why when Jesus Christ was born into this world He stated that God was not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings (the blood of bulls and goats) because they did not fully remove sin from those who were offering the sacrifice.
5. The sacrifices that were offered were to atone for or cover the sins that were committed.
6. It was a system that was designed to fail and would point the worshiper toward the need for a true Savior and Redeemer.



### **Christ's Sacrifice (verse 11-18)**

1. To make way for the sacrifice that God would ultimately find both pleasing and cleansing, He had to set apart the law of the Old Testament and its ceremonial and ritualistic methods of atonement for sin.
2. That is how Jesus Christ could perform the functions of being both a perfect sacrifice for all mankind and the priest who would sprinkle the blood (His own blood in this case) before the presence of the Father.
3. In so doing, He was able to function as a great high priest who offered up a perfect sacrifice once and for all of humanity.
4. After Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for the sins of all mankind He was given a special position at the right hand of God the Father (this is also described in Hebrews 1).
5. Not only does God the Father speak of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but the Holy Spirit, (speaking through the prophet Jeremiah in (Jeremiah 31:33-34) notes that there would be a new covenant that will sanctify those who were previously considered sinful.
6. In addition, once this covenant has been established, the sins of these formally sinful people would not be remembered anymore.
7. Since there is no remembrance of former sins and since sin has been completely removed from the sinner, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there is no longer a need for animal sacrifice.

## **A Call to Persevere in Faith (Hebrews 10: 19 –39)**

### **The Veil (verses 19-25)**

1. The sacrifice of Jesus allows us to enter the presence of God as righteous in God's sight.
2. Previously all of humanity was unable to directly approach the presence of God due to sin. The veil in the Tabernacle was intended to be a reminder of how far apart humanity was from God. However, when Jesus Christ died, the veil was torn from top to bottom ( see Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45), signifying that mankind could directly enter into the presence of God, without the need for human intervention or animal sacrifice.
3. The person who believes in Christ as Savior and Redeemer from their sins has been cleansed through the blood of Christ (this is what having our hearts sprinkled means). In addition, through the act of water baptism, we publically and symbolically declare our faith in Jesus Christ (similar to how a priest in the Old testament would wash himself prior to offering sacrifices as a symbolic representation of he was cleansed and ready to perform the priestly duties).
4. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have a great hope and promise of eternal life. We know that the one who promised us this is faithful (meaning that he will fulfill his promise). Since we know that our hope is not based on fables or stories (2 Peter 1:16) and is guaranteed by God himself, we have a responsibility to not wander from the faith.
5. In our community of believers, we need to encourage each other to perfect our faith and actions to be more like Jesus.
6. To encourage each other in our faith, we should (as believers) meet regularly (ie Sunday church). We need to encourage each other more, not less, as time passes and the Second coming of Christ is drawing close.

### **God the Judge (verses 26-31)**

1. There is a warning to avoid deliberately sinning when we know the truth about sin. When one did not believe in Jesus, committing sin was a part of our way of life. However, once we have become believers and have turned away from sin, deliberate sin incurs dire consequences. This is because we are, as believers, supposed to be a light to this world. God holds us to a much higher standard of conduct as a believer than as non-believers.
2. This does not mean that deliberate sin, after we have become believers, is grounds for losing your salvation. Jesus Christ died for all the sins of mankind (past, present and future). This does mean, however, the consequences for your deliberate sin will be present. God's grace is no excuse to continue to sin (see Romans 6:1-2, Jude 4).
3. God will always judge sin. God in the OT dealt directly with the people of Israel for their sins. The result was death. God has not changed in his standards for holiness and sinless perfection since the OT. God was willing to allow his son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for his creation. His creation was hopelessly lost in their sin. God gave up everything he had for you, a sinner.
4. Now that you have become a believer, and continue to sin deliberately, you are essentially taking the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for granted. When you deliberately sin, you are devaluing your salvation and denying the grace that has saved you from eternal hell.

### **Persecution (verses 32-39)**

1. The Christian life, especially in the early days of the church, was full of persecution. Believers at that time had a loss of their reputation and social status. Some suffered the confiscation of their homes and property. Others were jailed due to their faith. In numerous cases, some even lost their lives for their faith they professed. In short, becoming and professing you were a Christian would mean losing everything you had.
2. The writer of Hebrews encourages the Christians who were undergoing persecution at that time. Even though the believers of that day did lose everything for their faith, they knew that the sufferings that they would undergo would be eclipsed by the glory that awaited them in heaven (see Romans 8:18).
3. The writer closes this chapter of Hebrews by encouraging the believers to persevere and stand strong in their faith and receive the reward that is awaiting them.

## **Faith in Action (Hebrews 11:1-39)**

### **Abel, Enoch (verses 1-6)**

1. Chapter 11 reviews opens with a definition of faith. Faith it is not about being confident about things that are tangible. Anyone can have the belief in something that they can plainly see. However, it takes a person who has real Faith to believe in something that they cannot see, touch or handle.
2. In particular, this chapter deals with the faith of several people that are mentioned in the Old Testament. As we will see, each of these " heroes of faith" had a situation in which they put their faith in God to fulfill a promise that was not readily apparent.
3. Abel was the first person mentioned. His faith is described in Genesis 4: 1–12. Abel, even though he did not have directions regarding his sacrifice, gave an animal sacrifice that God found pleasing. Cain, his brother, brought to sacrifice the first fruit of his crops. Got was not pleased with Cain and his sacrifice.
4. God was not pleased with Cain and his offering. Cain's offering represented how he wanted please God with his own effort. This was an early example of trying to achieve God's favor through one's self effort. This is commonly called "works based" salvation.
5. Abel did not try to please God through his own effort. Able came to God in humility and gave God the best of all he could give. This was despite Abel not being able to see a clear tangible benefit of his faith and sacrifice.
6. Abel's faith in God is an example to us today as believers. Abel's faith teaches us that God is pleased when we come to him with a humble heart and we do not rely on our own effort to try to please him.
7. Enoch is the next person mentioned. Enoch is one of two people from the Old Testament (the other being Elijah) who did not experience physical death. His life is described in Genesis 5:21 – 24. Enoch was described as a person who walked faithfully with God. It is interesting to note that Enoch was faithful despite living in a generation that was increasingly wicked. His faith speaks to us today as believers who live in a wicked world.

### **Noah (verse 7)**

1. Noah was also mentioned in this chapter. For details regarding Noah and the ark, please see Genesis 6:9 – Genesis 8:22. Noah found favor in the eyes of God. However, humanity was increasingly found to be sinful.
2. God regretted the fact that he had created humanity because of their sinfulness. God passed judgment on the world.
3. However, God showed favor to Noah and allowed him and his family to escape the judgment of God. This is a picture of how we as New Testament believers put our faith in the grace of God and we were spared judgment for our sinfulness.

### **Abraham (verses 8-16)**

1. Abraham was the next person mentioned in Hebrews 11. He obeyed God's call to leave his family, his kindred and tribe to a land that God would lead them to (See Genesis 12:1-4).
2. Abraham went despite not knowing where he was going or where God was leading him. He went, not knowing that there would be a reward for his faith and obedience. Abraham was blessed beyond his wildest dreams. Through his faith, we have an example of how God rewards those who are faithful and diligently seek Him (See Hebrews 11:6).
3. Sarah (Abraham's wife) is also mentioned in this chapter. Sarah and Abraham did not have children. However, through their faith they were able to have a child. This was despite conventional wisdom that dictated that Sarah could not possibly conceive and have a child.
4. Abraham's faith is commended by his both spiritual (the New Testament believers) and physical descendants. Abraham is not only known as a father, but as a father of many nations (Genesis 17:4-8).
5. These saints of the Old Testament demonstrated faith despite initially not seeing the reward for their faith and obedience. One important characteristic that all these saints had was that they longed to be with God and to reside with God in heaven (See

Hebrews 11:16). Because of this, Abraham was able to successfully pass the test of faith that God requested of him.

### **Abraham's Faith (17-19)**

1. Abraham's test of faith involved God asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. God never really intended for Abraham to kill Isaac. However, God tested Abraham to know his faith and obedience in what said was not due to being physically blessed. Abraham passed the test by not holding back from God his only physical descendant (which God has promised him).
2. Abraham possibly could have thought God could raise his son Isaac from the dead (after all He did allow Sarah to conceive and give birth to Isaac in the first place when she was physically thought to be unable to conceive).
3. Abraham had faith in the God of the impossible. Abraham believed that God would still keep His promises despite him asking Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.
4. Through this same type of faith we read about the blessings of Abraham's descendants.

### **Jacob and Esau (verse 20-21)**

1. We learn about how Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau (his sons) in regard to their future. This is mentioned in Genesis 27. It was customary in those days, prior to a father's death, to bless the oldest son. This was a blessing that carried both physical and spiritual implications.
2. This blessing would often mean that the oldest son would be the heir of everything the father owned or had. Isaac received Abraham's blessing of being the heir of both his physical and spiritual blessings. Isaac planned to give these blessings to his oldest son Esau.
3. However, Esau's blessing was inadvertently given to his younger son Jacob. This was given inadvertently due to the deception of Jacob and his mother Rebekah. At first glance, it would seem God approved of this deception. However, if we read Genesis 25, we get a complete picture of what happened.
4. Esau despised the physical and spiritual blessings (birthright) that were rightfully his as the firstborn son. Esau did not care about the spiritual responsibilities that his father wanted him to have.
5. Esau wanted to only have the physical blessing without any sort of spiritual obedience or discipline. Due to this, God allowed Jacob to obtain his brother's blessing and become an heir of Abraham's promise.
6. Jacob, before he died, blessed Joseph's sons. This was an act of faith as Jacob thought that his son Joseph (who was his favorite son) was dead. Jacob learned later on that his brothers sold Joseph into slavery in the land of Egypt. God was with Joseph and he prospered in Egypt.
7. Jacob not only saw his son Joseph but also his grandsons (Manasseh and Ephraim). Jacob could not see at the time he blessed both his grandsons. Jacob blessed his grandsons in which he put his right hand on the younger son and his left hand on the older son. This indicated that the younger son (Ephraim) would be the heir of the promises of Abraham. In addition, whenever a future blessing was given to the nation of Israel it was given in the name of Ephraim and Manasseh.



### **Joseph (verse 22)**

1. Joseph is also mentioned as one who is found faithful. Joseph's life included his family betraying him, being sold into slavery, as well as being imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. Joseph could have easily lost his faith and paid more attention to his circumstances than to the promises of God.
2. However, Joseph kept his faith and gave instructions to his sons and others to bury him in Israel, for he knew that he was a stranger in the land of Egypt and his true home was in the land of Canaan.
3. Joseph's faith in wanting to be buried in his true home is an example to the modern day believer in which we understand that this life, and the world that we live in today, is not our true home. We are strangers that are on our journey to our heavenly home where we will live forever.

### **Moses (verses 24-29)**

1. Moses was the next to be mentioned in this chapter. Specifically, Moses's parents (Amram and Jochebed). They defied Pharaoh's command to kill their son. (This was due to the fact the Egyptians were afraid that the Israelites would outnumber them and take over their land).
2. Moses was eventually adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses could have easily enjoyed a life of privilege and luxury being the prince of Egypt. He gave up a life of sinful enjoyment to share in the suffering of his fellow Israelites. Moses had his faith because he was not blinded by the material wealth of this world.
3. He was looking forward to a reward that would be far greater and eternal in nature. Moses left the land of Egypt (due to the fact that he defended a fellow Israelite and killed an Egyptian who was mistreating the Israelite).
4. Moses went to become a shepherd. It was a drastic change from someone who enjoyed the position that he had as being one of the leaders of a world power and now being reduced to being a shepherd.

5. However, it was by faith that Moses (through the instruction of God) came back and led the people of Israel.
6. God ordained the first Passover (the word Passover refers to how the angel of death “passed over” the first born children of the Israelites and spared them death). The angel of death passed over the Israelite homes that had the blood of a Passover lamb (a sacrifice) placed on the doorposts.
7. The people of Israel are also mentioned. After the Passover occurred, the Egyptians demanded that the Israelites leave Egypt. Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt. However, the Egyptians eventually realized that the people of Israel (who were their slaves) had left. They began to pursue them to try to bring them back into slavery.
8. The people of Israel were facing imminent destruction. Initially, they turned against Moses and forgot about how God had saved them from the land of Egypt. However, Moses told the people to have faith in God and that God would fight their battles for them.
9. God told Moses to raise his staff over the Red Sea and the water was divided into two walls of water on both sides and dry land in between. The Israelites then went through the Red Sea and came out the other side. The Egyptians started to chase after the Israelites on dry seabed. However, God told Moses to raise his hand over the sea again. When Moses did this, the waters of the Red Sea came back down and destroyed the Egyptians. Not a single one of them survived.

### **Joshua (verse 30)**

1. After some time, Moses died and a new leader of Israel called Joshua arose. Joshua led the people in crossing the Jordan River. God ordered them to conquer the land of Canaan.
2. The first city that was to be conquered was a city called Jericho. However, the people had to cross the River of Jordan to get to Jericho. Again, God provided a way in which they would be able to cross the River Jordan.
3. God instructed that the priest would carry the Ark of the Covenant into the Jordan River. As soon as their feet touched the River of Jordan the waters were made dry and similarly to what happened at the Red Sea, the Israelites walked on dry land.
4. The people of Israel then went to Jericho and besieged it. The city of Jericho was a fortified city and the Israelites were not able to take the city as the gates were closed. God instructed the people of Israel to walk around the city for seven days.
5. The first six days the Ark of Covenant (accompanied by priests blowing a rams horn) would walk around the city once. On the seventh day, the priest and the people of Israel would walk around the city seven times and once the seventh time around the city was completed, the priest would blow the ram's horn and the people would all shout at the same time. This happened exactly as God commanded. The walls of Jericho then collapsed and the people were then able to take the city of Jericho. These two examples are a lesson to us as believers.
6. When we put our faith in God, He will fight for us. He will defend us against those who are out to cause us harm. He will surely deliver us and He is faithful in defending those who are putting their trust and faith in Him.

### **Rahab (verse 31)**

1. Rahab, (a prostitute) was saved from death due to her faith and obedience in the promises that were given to her by the spies that she hid in her house. She believed in the God of Israel who would give the Israelites victory in battle.

### **Old Testament Prophets (verse 32-39)**

1. The writer also notes that he has many other examples of faith in the Old Testament. The writer notes that the faith that was shown by these people in the Old Testament allowed them to overcome various obstacles.
2. However, in overcoming the obstacles that were before them, they underwent intense persecution for their faith. The writer details many of the subsequent hardships that they faced. The writer notes that these people died before they finally saw the promise that was given to them.
3. However, us (as the New Testament believers) and them (as Old Testament believers) will receive the promise that was given for all of us. This would be something better than if we had both received the fulfillment of the promises separately.
4. What this means is that there will be a time when both Old and New Testament believers will be able to singularly receive the fulfillment of the promise that God had given to them and in so doing, glorify God.

## **Hebrews 12**

### **Hebrews 12:1-3**

#### **Race of Faith**

1. Since we have many examples of the faith that has endured intense persecution, let us not hold on to anything or allow anything to hinder our spiritual walk. This means that we rid ourselves (through the power of the Holy Spirit) of the sin, addictions, relationships and desires that hold us back in our walk with Jesus.
2. To run a race, one needs a goal and a focus to finish. The writer encourages us to set our eyes upon Jesus who is the author and perfecter (one who strengthens and focuses our faith) of our faith.
3. When we see the example of Jesus Christ, and how he endured not only physical but also emotional and spiritual pain, so that we could be free.
4. When we remember these things we are not likely to give up on our faith and we are more likely to finish our race.
5. We will receive the reward for faithfully running the race and following the example of Jesus.

## **God Disciplines His Children (Hebrews 12:4-13)**

### **Earthly Father Discipline His Children (verses 4-6)**

1. The relationship of God as a Father to us, His children, is more clearly explained. The writer opens this portion of Hebrews by noting that there has been no shedding of blood in our struggle with sin. This is in contrast to Jesus Christ who shed His own blood to make us free from sin.
2. The relationship between a father and his children is explained through the understood human concept of disciplining a child that is disobedient. A child that is disobedient is in need of discipline.
3. Discipline is not about corporal punishment, even though it is a tool by which discipline is administered. Discipline teaches a child what is right and wrong.
4. Discipline makes sure that a child understands and follows the will of its father. Discipline guides future actions of a child.
5. Discipline prevents a repetition of the same mistake by the child, and its consequences.
6. Even though it is difficult for an earthly father to discipline his child, it needs to be done as a child without discipline will become a child that grows to disobey authority, disregard spiritual truths and misunderstand the relationship that God the Father has with us, his children.

### **God Disciplines His Children (verses 7-11)**

1. Similarly, God the Father loves us dearly. God the Father, when He disciplines us, shows us that we are loved and that we indeed are his children.
2. God's discipline perfects our faith and teaches us how to be holy like God. It also produces righteousness (a right standing with God) and peace. This is because when God sees us as His children, through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, He sees that we are being perfected in our faith.
3. Since we are more and more like Him, there is no need to discipline us when we have learned our lesson from God's discipline. It opens a door for us to receive the blessings of God and in turn produce fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:18-22).

### **Encouragement (verse 12)**

1. Because of this, we must be encouraged to do what God has asked us to do (the feeble arms) and go where God asked us to go (the weak knees). In addition, we are reminded to take a path that God has shown us to be acceptable in our spiritual walk.
2. When we do this, we will proclaim the glory of God and in so doing we can see the power of God move in a mighty way in difficult circumstances. Isaiah 35:3-10, describes the power of God in healing the lame, the mute, the blind and the deaf.
3. All of these handicaps are representative of the various spiritual flaws that are found in those who are unsaved. It also goes on to say that where there was once a desert that there will be streams flowing in the desert. This represents those who were devoid of spiritual life (the desert) will be receiving of new life i.e. the streams of living water and will bring forth abundant spiritual fruit.
4. Because of the obedience of believers like this in generations past, many have received Christ and have been saved from eternal judgment. The question that you should ponder is this: Am I obedient to what God has called me to do? And if I am not why not?

## **Warning and Encouragement (Hebrews 12:14-17)**

1. We are instructed as Christians to live at peace with everyone. This means that we don't provoke foolish arguments of an accusatory nature.
2. The writer continues to say that your lifestyle, actions and convictions are convincing enough to those who are unsaved to cause them to come to Christ. We should be vigilant as believers that we are firm in our faith and in our convictions that we do not allow any sin or unforgiveness (bitter root) to alter our walk with God.
3. The writer also warns us (the believer) against sexual immorality.
4. Next, we are instructed as believers to not be godless or irreverent. A classic example of someone who had all the blessings of God and who despised its responsibility and blessings was Esau.
5. Esau represented a person who was given the inheritance to his father's wealth, prestige and position. Esau obtained this through what was known as a birthright. A birthright was the right of inheritance that was given to the firstborn son of a Jewish family.
6. One day however, Esau came from hunting he was hungry. He went to his brother Jacob who was cooking some soup. Esau demanded that Jacob given him something to eat otherwise he was going to die of hunger (an exaggeration on Esau's part).
7. Jacob (being the crafty one) asked Esau for his birthright in exchange for a bowl of soup.
8. Esau is representative of a believer who, is entitled to receive to promises of the inheritance of being a child of God. Despite having the promise of this inheritance, the believer who is like Esau does not respect the promise that God. For more details read Genesis 25 and 27. Esau did not have a second chance at regaining his inheritance, even though he begged his father for it again.



## **The Mountain of Fear and the Mountain of Joy (Hebrews 12: 18-29)**

### **Mount Sinai (verses 18-21)**

1. The writer in this passage directly refers to and contrast Mount Sinai (Exodus 19) and Mount Zion (Revelation 21).
2. Mount Sinai was a place where God gave the people of Israel the Law and the Ten Commandments. When Moses went up to Mount Sinai, it was a place where even Moses himself was afraid to go to because the Glory of the Lord was seen there.
3. There was a fire from heaven that came down and billowed smoke. In addition, there was a sound of a trumpet that grew louder and louder. It was a terrifying site. The mountain was considered so holy that if anyone, even an animal, should go upon the mountain, it would be stoned to death.

### **Mount Zion (verses 22-24)**

1. This is in contrast to Mount Zion where we have come as believers and have come to worship God in joyful worship.
2. In addition, not only will we see God the Father face to face, but we will also see our Savior Jesus who was a mediator of the new covenant between God and man through His blood that was shed at the cross.

### **Blood of Abel**

1. There is also mention here of the blood of Abel. Abel was the world's first murder victim. His brother Cain killed him unjustly.
2. Abel's blood that was shed demanded justice from God for his unjust murder. This is because Abel was an innocent man and did nothing was worthy of death.

## Blood of Jesus

1. The blood of Abel is contrasted against the blood of Jesus. Jesus Christ was innocent of any crime. He was sinless. Even the ruling authorities (the Roman governor) examined Jesus Christ and found Him to be innocent of anything that would require capital punishment.
2. However, Jesus Christ was executed via a crucifixion. His death was indeed unjust. However, His death and His blood that was spilled did not demand justice from God to avenge His murder. It, however, did pardon and redeem those who were destined to face the wrath of God.
3. The comparison is also continued between those who spoke the will of God to those who are witnesses of God's power both in heaven and at Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai, Moses went up to the mountain and the people did not see him come back for a long time. The people of Israel quickly forgot about the power and the terrifying site of the mountain they have witnessed.
4. They quickly turned from being in reverent awe of God whose power that had witnessed to following after a golden calf that Aaron had made. At that time, God was angry at the people of Israel and His voice thundered and was heard by the people of Israel. A violent earthquake also accompanied this.
5. However, despite this, the people of Israel refused to hear what Moses was trying to instruct them. The people of Israel did not listen to Moses or the commands of God and three thousand of them died that day. God has also promised (see Haggai 2:6) to shake the earth and the heavens again.
6. This is referring to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The writer also notes that those who did not obey what God had commanded in the Old Testament faced immediate judgment. If those who did not obey at that time did not escape judgment, how can we expect not to face judgment if we ignore the commandments of God?
7. Since we are heirs and are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and worship God with reverence that our promise can never be taken away. We also have to remember, however, that our God is the righteous judge of all sin. God will judge all sin and justly reward and punish those who are righteous or sinful respectively.

## **Hebrews 13**

### **Concluding Exhortations (Hebrews 13:1-18)**

#### **The Family of God Verses 1-6**

1. All believers are part of the family of God and as such we have one Father and are brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Being hospitable to others is a practical way in which you can show the love of God.
3. Abraham unintentionally was hospitable to angels who delivered God's promise of a physical descendant. (Genesis 18:1-15)
4. Since we are all one family, we should remember our family members who have been imprisoned for their faith. We should never forget our fellow believers who are chains in other parts of this world. Not everyone has the ability to worship freely. For those who are being persecuted, we must remember to pray for them and support them.
5. The writer notes that marriage is an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman.
6. We are reminded that we should respect that a married man or woman belongs to their spouse and to avoid adultery. In this way, the marriage bed is pure. And there will be no judgment for keeping it pure. However, there will be a judgment for those who are adulterous and those who engage in sexual immortality.
7. The love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Thus, we are reminded to be content with what we have and not to covet anything that belongs to someone else. We are reminded not to covet because God is the one who will provide for us and will determine what is best for us. Accordingly, he has given us a promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will meet your needs.
8. Since God has promised to be with us and to never forsake us, we do not fear those who stand against God. Our hope and our trust is in Him.

### **Jesus Never Changes Verses 7-14**

1. We are also reminded to remember those who have the responsibility to lead the local church. We are to imitate their faithful service and way of life.
2. We can have faith in the confidence that our Lord Jesus Christ is the same and He does not change. He has not changed from time past or today and the future.
3. If we understand that our Lord Jesus Christ is the same and He does not change, we do not need to worry about adding anything to the bible that would indicate that there is something more than we would have to do (works based faith) to achieve salvation or God's favor.
4. The writer makes a point of saying that foods that were dedicated for ceremonially use for the temple was not to be eaten by the general public. However, in the Old Testament times, the priests were the only ones who were allowed to eat of that ceremonially food. In doing so, the priests implicitly stated that most were not worthy of entering into the presence of God.

### **Old Testament Sacrifice Verses 11-15**

1. With the background of understanding the Old Testament temple sacrifices and worship, we understand that there is an altar that a sacrifice was given that no one can partake of.
2. The writer references the Jewish Day of Atonement (now called Yom Kippur) when the high priest would carry the blood of an animal into the holy of holies (The Most Holy Place) as a sacrifice for the sins of the nation.
3. However, the bodies of the animals themselves were taken and burned outside of the borders of the nation of Israel. This was to signify how revolting and abhorrent sin was to God and to the nation of Israel.
4. Jesus Christ, when He died, was led to a place outside the city of Jerusalem (outside the borders of the nation of Israel) and was sacrificed as a sin offering for all of humanity.
5. To become the sacrifice for all humanity's sin, He had to become rejected and abhorrent to God the Father. Following that example, we also would go and identify with Him and go to Him to have our sins atoned for.
6. We remember that we identify with Jesus Christ, that we will be rejected by this world. Our hope is that of the promise of an enduring city that will come from which there will be no more sorrow, pain, disgrace, fear, worry or sickness.
7. Since Jesus has done all this for us, let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise which is the sounds of our voices that openly thank God for what He has done and how He is going to fulfill His promises towards us.

### **Be Charitable Verse 16 -18**

1. We are also reminded to be charitable and to share our resources with those who are less fortunate.
2. As believers, we are also asked to support your spiritual leaders (Pastors) and they have to give an account for their ministry to God themselves.
3. We are to follow the example of the writer of this book, which states that they have a clear conscience to both God and man. This means that you are living in accordance with God's will for your life as well as being a law-abiding citizen.

### **Benedictions and Final Greetings (Hebrews 13:20-25)**

1. In this benediction, the writer reminds the readers of this book of how God through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ (who is called The Great Shepherd) will equip us to do all things for the furtherance of His will.
2. In doing God's will, He will change us to become the believer that He wants us to be.
3. The writer concludes this book with a universal blessing of grace to be given to all believers to live in oneness with God's will.