



Hebrews

A letter encouraging Christians to cling to Christ despite persecution, because he is greater. A passionate call to un-saved Jews to accept Jesus for the Messiah that He is.

Author: Nobody knows, but written in the style of Paul, I believe it was Paul.

In Hebrews – Jesus is our High Priest

Hebrews 10:25 "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

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"The book of Hebrews is a standalone masterpiece of literary excellence." DH

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This gold engraving is the Hebrew word Chai in the Star of David.

The Star of David is a symbol adopted by the Jewish people in the 19th century as an emblem of their Jewish heritage, much like the Cross identifies us as Christians. Since WWII, its meaning has deepened to include martyrdom and heroism. Never again.

The Hebrew word Chai (pronounced "hi") means life. When toasting, a shout of L'Chaim! Means to life!



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TEACHER: 13 CHAPTERS

(Scripture wasn't yet divided into chapters and verses as we enjoy today, so they will be notated for cross reference in parenthesis, italics and un-bolded as Paul doesn't site the references he is quoting from in the letter.)

The big issue with Hebrews among scholars, is authorship, not so much for me. When I read it, Hebrews seems undoubtedly Paul's open letter to his deeply loved Jewish countrymen. Most likely written without his name attached, due to the fact his deeply loved Jewish countrymen hated him.

Clement of Rome, who knew Paul and who succeeded Linus and Anacletus as head of the church Paul pastored in Rome, said it was authored by Paul, as did Justyn Martyr.

None-the-less, it is a beautiful apologetic for the church to use to witness to Jewish people. Written to the Scholarly Jew with strong Pharisaical leanings, it points the Old Testament scholar to Jesus as the Messiah, and salvation by faith in Christ alone as the only way we must be saved. Paul wastes no time.

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STUDENT:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end.³ He reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being, sustaining the universe with his powerful word. After achieving forgiveness for the sins of all human beings, he sat down in heaven at the right side of God, the Supreme Power. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul in effect, just told the people responsible for killing Jesus, that Jesus is God.

He also used as his outline Jesus parable from Matthew 21:33-43.

There was once a man, a wealthy farmer, who planted a vineyard. He fenced it, dug a winepress, put up a watchtower, then turned it over to the farmhands and went off on a trip. When it was time to harvest the grapes, he sent his servants back to collect his profits.

³⁵⁻³⁷ *"The farmhands grabbed the first servant and beat him up. The next one they murdered. They threw stones at the third but he got away. The owner tried again, sending more servants. They got the same treatment. The owner was at the end of his rope. He decided to send his son. 'Surely,' he thought, 'they will respect my son.'*

³⁸⁻³⁹ *"But when the farmhands saw the son arrive, they rubbed their hands in greed. 'This is the heir! Let's kill him and have it all for ourselves.' They grabbed him, threw him out, and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Now, when the owner of the vineyard arrives home from his trip, what do you think he will do to the farmhands?"*

⁴¹ *"He'll kill them—a rotten bunch, and good riddance," they answered. "Then he'll assign the vineyard to farmhands who will hand over the profits when it's time."*

⁴²⁻⁴⁴ *Jesus said, "Right—and you can read it for yourselves in your Bibles:*

The stone the masons threw out is now the cornerstone.

This is God's work; we rub our eyes, we can hardly believe it! (MSG) (Psalms 118:22-23)

In the next chapter Paul addresses a new theory on who Jesus might be.

There was a school of thought during the time this letter was written among some scholars that Jesus perhaps was an angel like Lucifer, with Jesus being good and Satan evil.

Another popular theory was in a dual messiah. It was based on the scapegoat sacrifice from Leviticus 16 where 1 goat was sacrificed and a 2nd goat was driven into the wilderness. Jesus was the Messiah that was slain, and another Messiah would come as a king and would be the 1 driven into the wilderness and return to conquer Rome.

Here Paul dispels those ideas. 1st that Jesus was an Angel.

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STUDENT:

⁴ The Son was made greater than the angels, just as the name that God gave him is greater than theirs. ⁵ For God never said to any of his angels,

"You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

Nor did God say about any angel, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son." (Ps. 2:7)

⁶ But when God was about to send his first-born Son into the world, he said,

"All of God's angels must worship him." (LXX Deut. 32:43)

About the Son, however, God said: "Your kingdom, O God, will last forever and ever!

You rule over your people with justice. (GNT) (Ps. 45:6-80)

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TEACHER:

Now Paul dispels the notion that Jesus was just a human Messiah to be slain, and not the Son of God.

STUDENT:

⁹ You love what is right and hate what is wrong.

That is why God, your God, has chosen you and has given you the joy of an honor far greater than he gave to your companions." (Ps. 45:6-7)

¹⁰ He also said,

"You, Lord, in the beginning created the earth, and with your own hands you made the heavens.

¹¹ They will disappear, but you will remain; they will all wear out like clothes.

¹² You will fold them up like a coat, and they will be changed like clothes.

But you are always the same, and your life never ends." (GNT) (Ps. 102:25-27)

TEACHER:

Paul then tells us the angel's role in God's plan and our lives.

STUDENT:

¹⁴ What are the angels, then? They are spirits who serve God and are sent by him to help those who are to receive salvation. (GNT)

TEACHER:

As we go to chapter 2, Paul reasons, "how can we escape God's wrath if we reject the superior testimony of Jesus, when those before us who rejected the law couldn't escape God's wrath?"

Paul is saying the modern man who rejects the Gospel and does as he pleases is the same as the Old Testament Jew who would not follow the Law.

CH. 2

STUDENT:

That is why we must hold on all the more firmly to the truths we have heard, so that we will not be carried away. ² The message given to our ancestors by the angels was shown to be true, and those who did not follow it or obey it received the punishment they deserved. ³ How, then, shall we escape if we pay no attention to such a great salvation? The Lord himself first announced this salvation, and those who heard him proved to us that it is true. ⁴ At the same time God added his witness to theirs by performing all kinds of miracles and wonders and by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul next, talks about our role in the New Kingdom when we are in Heaven.

STUDENT:

⁵ God has not placed the angels as rulers over the new world to come—the world of which we speak. ⁶ Instead, as it is said somewhere in the Scriptures:

"What are human beings, O God, that you should think of them;
mere human beings, that you should care for them?

⁷ You made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you crowned them with glory and honor, ⁸ and made them rulers over all things." (Ps. 8:4-5)

STUDENT:

It says that God made them “rulers over all things”; this clearly includes everything. We do not, however, see human beings ruling over all things now. ⁹ But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, so that through God's grace he should die for everyone. We see him now crowned with glory and honor because of the death he suffered. ¹⁰ It was only right that God, who creates and preserves all things, should make Jesus perfect through suffering, in order to bring many children to share his glory. For Jesus is the one who leads them to salvation. (GNT)

TEACHER:

So we will rule in Heaven, over Angels and all things, with Christ at the head, next to our Father. All made possible by Christ's death on the cross.

STUDENT:

¹¹ He purifies people from their sins, and both he and those who are made pure all have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his family. ¹² He says to God, “I will tell my people what you have done; I will praise you in their meeting.” ¹³ He also says, “I will put my trust in God.” And he also says, “Here I am with the children that God has given me.” (GNT)

TEACHER:

We are the children God the Father, has given to God the Son, Jesus Christ.
Next we see why it was necessary for Jesus to become like us.

STUDENT:

¹⁴ Since the children, as he calls them, are people of flesh and blood, Jesus himself became like them and shared their human nature. He did this so that through his death he might destroy the Devil, who has the power over death, ¹⁵ and in this way set free those who were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that it is not the angels that he helps. Instead, he helps the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ This means that he had to become like his people in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven. ¹⁸ And now he can help those who are tempted, because he himself was tempted and suffered. (GNT)

TEACHER:

In Hebrews 3 the author explains how Christ is greater than Moses. This is very important in that Moses is so highly regarded by all in Judaism to this day. The Jewish people, faced with the Gospel, feel they must choose between the two. Rather, they must join Moses in serving Christ.

STUDENT:

My Christian friends, who also have been called by God! Think of Jesus, whom God sent to be the High Priest of the faith we profess. ² He was faithful to God, who chose him to do this work, just as Moses was faithful in his work in God's house. ³ A man who builds a house receives more honor than the house itself. In the same way Jesus is worthy of much greater honor than Moses. ⁴ Every house, of course, is built by someone—and God is the one who has built all things. ⁵ Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant, and he spoke of the things that God would say in the future. ⁶ But Christ is faithful as the Son in charge of God's house. We are his house if we keep up our courage and our confidence in what we hope for. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul again quotes the Old Testament to bolster his position.

STUDENT:

⁷ So then, as the Holy Spirit says,

“If you hear God's voice today, ⁸do not be stubborn, as your ancestors were when they rebelled against God, as they were that day in the desert when they put him to the test.

⁹ There they put me to the test and tried me, says God, although they had seen what I did for forty years.

¹⁰ And so I was angry with those people and said, ‘They are always disloyal and refuse to obey my commands.’

¹¹ I was angry and made a solemn promise:

‘They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest!’” (GNT) (Ps. 95:7-11)

TEACHER:

In the next 2 segments the author warns them not to make the same mistake that Israel made when they came out of Egypt. Let's read.

STUDENT:

¹² My friends, be careful that none of you have a heart so evil and unbelieving that you will turn away from the living God. ¹³ Instead, in order that none of you be deceived by sin and become stubborn, you must help one another every day, as long as the word “Today” in the scripture applies to us. ¹⁴ For we are all partners with Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at the beginning.

¹⁵ This is what the scripture says: “If you hear God's voice today, do not be stubborn, as your ancestors were when they rebelled against God.” (GNT) (Ps. 95:7)

STUDENT:

¹⁶ Who were the people who heard God's voice and rebelled against him? All those who were led out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷ With whom was God angry for forty years? With the people who sinned, who fell down dead in the desert. ¹⁸ When God made his solemn promise, “They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest”—of whom was he speaking? Of those who rebelled. ¹⁹ We see, then, that they were not able to enter the land, because they did not believe. (GNT)

TEACHER:

In chapter 4 the author warns, that being warned of a calamity, doesn't equal escaping a calamity. God had promised Israel in the desert after Egypt that He wanted to give them their own homeland, as He promised to Abraham's children. But they never entered.

CH. 4

STUDENT:

Now, God has offered us the promise that we may receive that rest he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive that promised rest. ² For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith. ³ We who believe, then, do receive that rest which God promised. It is just as he said,

“I was angry and made a solemn promise:

‘They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest!’” (Ps. 95:11)

He said this even though his work had been finished from the time he created the world. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Starting at verse 12 Paul shows the magic of God's word.

STUDENT:

¹² The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart. ¹³ There is nothing that can be hid from God; everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes. And it is to him that we must all give an account of ourselves. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul's conclusion of the chapter? Jesus is our High Priest!

STUDENT:

¹⁴ Let us, then, hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we have a great High Priest who has gone into the very presence of God—Jesus, the Son of God. ¹⁵ Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it. (GNT)

TEACHER:

In chapter 5 the author shows how Jesus is the perfect High Priest because He was appointed to the office by God Himself.

STUDENT:

Every high priest is chosen from his fellow-men and appointed to serve God on their behalf, to offer sacrifices and offerings for sins. ² Since he himself is weak in many ways, he is able to be gentle with those who are ignorant and make mistakes. ³ And because he is himself weak, he must offer sacrifices not only for the sins of the people but also for his own sins. ⁴ No one chooses for himself the honor of being a high priest. It is only by God's call that a man is made a high priest—just as Aaron was.

⁵ In the same way, Christ did not take upon himself the honor of being a high priest. Instead, God said to him,
"You are my Son; today I have become your Father." (Ps. 2:7)

⁶ He also said in another place,

"You will be a priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek." (GNT) (Ps. 110:4)

TEACHER:

Paul then further supports the assertion that Jesus is perfect for the position of High Priest.

STUDENT:

⁷ In his life on earth Jesus made his prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to God, who could save him from death. Because he was humble and devoted, God heard him. ⁸ But even though he was God's Son, he learned through his sufferings to be obedient. ⁹ When he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him, ¹⁰ and God declared him to be high priest, in the priestly order of Melchizedek. (GNT)

TEACHER:

That verse for some time was the most controversial verse in the Bible, almost negating the inclusion of Hebrews into canon in the Council of Nicaea. Was Christ not perfect *before* His suffering? We already know from Paul and others that He was. His suffering made Him the perfect candidate for High Priest because He was tested, and passed, even unto death, and all the while being innocent.

All this having been said, Paul admonishes us to “hold fast to the faith.”

STUDENT:

¹¹ There is much we have to say about this matter, but it is hard to explain to you, because you are so slow to understand. ¹² There has been enough time for you to be teachers—yet you still need someone to teach you the first lessons of God's message. Instead of eating solid food, you still have to drink milk. ¹³ Anyone who has to drink milk is still a child, without any experience in the matter of right and wrong. ¹⁴ Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil. (GNT)

TEACHER:

In chapter 6 Paul wants to go into the weightier matters of the faith.

CH. 6

STUDENT:

Let us go forward, then, to mature teaching and leave behind us the first lessons of the Christian message. We should not lay again the foundation of turning away from useless works and believing in God; ² of the teaching about baptisms and the laying on of hands; of the resurrection of the dead and the eternal judgment. ³ Let us go forward! And this is what we will do, if God allows.

STUDENT:

⁴ For how can those who abandon their faith be brought back to repent again? They were once in God's light; they tasted heaven's gift and received their share of the Holy Spirit; ⁵ they knew from experience that God's word is good, and they had felt the powers of the coming age. ⁶ And then they abandoned their faith! It is impossible to bring them back to repent again, because they are again crucifying the Son of God and exposing him to public shame. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Be careful not to misread the passage we just covered. Paul is saying that once a person receives Christ, and is baptized in the Holy Spirit, and then abandons their belief that Jesus is God their Savior, and then says that the Holy Spirit that lived in them is fake, having experienced God's word, and tested it to know that it is good, and felt the powers of the end times, if they then abandon their faith, they are reprobates. Many believe this is what Jesus was referring to when He said the term “Blaspheming the Holy Spirit.” To reject God after you have tasted Him.

Moving down to verse 9 Paul assures them that is not their lot in life.

STUDENT:

⁹ But even if we speak like this, dear friends, we feel sure about you. We know that you have the better blessings that belong to your salvation. ¹⁰ God is not unfair. He will not forget the work you did or the love you showed for him in the help you gave and are still giving to other Christians. ¹¹ Our great desire is that each of you keep up your eagerness to the end, so that the things you hope for will come true. ¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to be like those who believe and are patient, and so receive what God has promised. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Our joy then comes from our knowledge that our salvation and anchor is in Jesus.

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STUDENT:

¹³ When God made his promise to Abraham, he made a vow to do what he had promised. Since there was no one greater than himself, he used his own name when he made his vow. ¹⁴ He said, "I promise you that I will bless you and give you many descendants." ¹⁵ Abraham was patient, and so he received what God had promised.

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STUDENT:

¹⁶ When we make a vow, we use the name of someone greater than ourselves, and the vow settles all arguments. ¹⁷ To those who were to receive what he promised, God wanted to make it very clear that he would never change his purpose; so he added his vow to the promise. ¹⁸ There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary. ²⁰ On our behalf Jesus has gone in there before us and has become a high priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

In chapter 7, the author elaborates on the Priest Melchizedek. Melchizedek is a king and priest appearing in the Book of Genesis and interacts with Abraham. He is thought by myself and others to be Shem, (the son of Noah, who died around the time Abraham died), and by some to be Jesus, and yet others another person all-together. I don't feel the need to explain my position on this, but if forced, my vote is this is Shem. I cover this in more detail in other lessons of this bible study, so I won't belabor the issue here. The name means "King of Righteousness." He is the first individual to be given the title *Kohen* (priest) in the Hebrew Bible. In the KJV, the Book of Psalms names Melchizedek as representative of the priestly line through which a future king of Israel's Davidic line was ordained. My position is Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek because, like Melchizedek, Jesus was not a descendant of Aaron, and thus would not qualify for the Jewish priesthood under the Law of Moses, but Melchizedek was before the law and Aaron's line by 5 generations. Also there is a separation of powers between the priests and kings under the law where you couldn't be priest and king. Here Melchizedek is both. So Jesus who pre-dates the law, and is after the law, *can* be both. Let's read what Paul has to say in chapter 7.

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CH. 7

STUDENT:

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. As Abraham was coming back from the battle in which he defeated the four kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him one tenth of all he had taken. (The first meaning of Melchizedek's name is "King of Righteousness"; and because he was king of Salem, his name also means "King of Peace.") ³ There is no record of Melchizedek's father or mother or of any of his ancestors; no record of his birth or of his death. He is like the Son of God; he remains a priest forever. (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁴ You see, then, how great he was. Abraham, our famous ancestor, gave him one tenth of all he got in the battle. ⁵ And those descendants of Levi who are priests are commanded by the Law to collect one tenth from the people of Israel, that is, from their own people, even though they are also descendants of Abraham. ⁶ Melchizedek was not descended from Levi, but he collected one tenth from Abraham and blessed him, the man who received God's promises. ⁷ There is no doubt that the one who blesses is greater than the one who is blessed. (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁸ In the case of the priests the tenth is collected by men who die; but as for Melchizedek the tenth was collected by one who lives, as the scripture says. ⁹ And, so to speak, when Abraham paid the tenth, Levi (whose descendants collect the tenth) also paid it. ¹⁰ For Levi had not yet been born, but was, so to speak, in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met him. (GNT)

STUDENT:

¹⁵ The matter becomes even plainer; a different priest has appeared, who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶ He was made a priest, not by human rules and regulations, but through the power of a life which has no end. ¹⁷ For the scripture says, "You will be a priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸ The old rule, then, is set aside, because it was weak and useless. ¹⁹ For the Law of Moses could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been provided through which we come near to God. (GNT)

STUDENT:

²⁰ In addition, there is also God's vow. There was no such vow when the others were made priests. ²¹ But Jesus became a priest by means of a vow when God said to him, "The Lord has made a solemn promise and will not take it back: 'You will be a priest forever.'" ²² This difference, then, also makes Jesus the guarantee of a better covenant. (GNT) (Ps. 110:4)

STUDENT:

²³ There is another difference: there were many of those other priests, because they died and could not continue their work. ²⁴ But Jesus lives on forever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else. ²⁵ And so he is able, now and always, to save those who come to God through him, because he lives forever to plead with God for them.

STUDENT:

²⁶ Jesus, then, is the High Priest that meets our needs. He is holy; he has no fault or sin in him; he has been set apart from sinners and raised above the heavens. ²⁷ He is not like other high priests; he does not need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins first and then for the sins of the people. He offered one sacrifice, once and for all, when he offered himself. ²⁸ The Law of Moses appoints men who are imperfect to be high priests; but God's promise made with the vow, which came later than the Law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect forever. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

In chapter 8 Paul explains the reason for the change in the priesthood. We will skip through and discuss after every segment.

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CH. 8

STUDENT:

The whole point of what we are saying is that we have such a High Priest, who sits at the right of the throne of the Divine Majesty in heaven. ² He serves as high priest in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the real tent which was put up by the Lord, not by human hands. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁷ If there had been nothing wrong with the first covenant, there would have been no need for a second one. ⁸ But God finds fault with his people when he says,

“The days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will draw up a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

⁹ It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors
on the day I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt.

They were not faithful to the covenant I made with them, and so I paid no attention to them.

¹⁰ Now, this is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel in the days to come, says the Lord:

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STUDENT:

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ None of them will have to teach their friends or tell their neighbors, ‘Know the Lord.’

For they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.

¹² I will forgive their sins and will no longer remember their wrongs.” (GNT) (*Jer. 31:31*)

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STUDENT:

¹³ By speaking of a new covenant, God has made the first one old; and anything that becomes old and worn out will soon disappear. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

The author in chapter 9 goes on to draw the parallels between the old covenant and the new.

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CH. 9

STUDENT:

The first covenant had rules for worship and a place made for worship as well. ² A tent was put up, the outer one, which was called the Holy Place. In it were the lampstand and the table with the bread offered to God. ³ Behind the second curtain was the tent called the Most Holy Place. ⁴ In it were the gold altar for the burning of incense and the Covenant Box all covered with gold and containing the gold jar with the manna in it, Aaron's stick that had sprouted leaves, and the two stone tablets with the commandments written on them. ⁵ Above the Box were the winged creatures representing God's presence, with their wings spread over the place where sins were forgiven. But now is not the time to explain everything in detail. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁶ This is how those things have been arranged. The priests go into the outer tent every day to perform their duties, ⁷ but only the high priest goes into the inner tent, and he does so only once a year. He takes with him blood which he offers to God on behalf of himself and for the sins which the people have committed without knowing they were sinning. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁸ The Holy Spirit clearly teaches from all these arrangements that the way into the Most Holy Place has not yet been opened as long as the outer tent still stands. ⁹ This is a symbol which points to the present time. It means that the offerings and animal sacrifices presented to God cannot make the worshiper's heart perfect, ¹⁰ since they have to do only with food, drink, and various purification ceremonies. These are all outward rules, which apply only until the time when God will establish the new order. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Starting in verse 11, Paul compares the symbol, (the Priest going into the inner Holy of Holies with the blood of sheep and goats) to what Jesus did for us on the cross.

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Student:

¹¹ But Christ has already come as the High Priest of the good things that are already here. The tent in which he serves is greater and more perfect; it is not a tent made by human hands, that is, it is not a part of this created world. ¹² When Christ went through the tent and entered once and for all into the Most Holy Place, he did not take the blood of goats and bulls to offer as a sacrifice; rather, he took his own blood and obtained eternal salvation for us. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a burnt calf are sprinkled on the people who are ritually unclean, and this purifies them by taking away their ritual impurity. ¹⁴ Since this is true, how much more is accomplished by the blood of Christ! Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice to God. His blood will purify our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may serve the living God. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

The author further explains how we are made clean.

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STUDENT:

¹⁶In the case of a will it is necessary to prove that the person who made it has died, ¹⁷for a will means nothing while the person who made it is alive; it goes into effect only after his death. ¹⁸That is why even the first covenant went into effect only with the use of blood. ¹⁹First, Moses proclaimed to the people all the commandments as set forth in the Law. Then he took the blood of bulls and goats, mixed it with water, and sprinkled it on the book of the Law and all the people, using a sprig of hyssop and some red wool. ²⁰He said, "This is the blood which seals the covenant that God has commanded you to obey." ²¹In the same way Moses also sprinkled the blood on the Sacred Tent and over all the things used in worship. ²²Indeed, according to the Law almost everything is purified by blood, and sins are forgiven only if blood is poured out. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul finishes the lesson in chapter 9 telling of Jesus Heavenly Priesthood.

STUDENT:

²³Those things, which are copies of the heavenly originals, had to be purified in that way. But the heavenly things themselves require much better sacrifices. ²⁴For Christ did not go into a Holy Place made by human hands, which was a copy of the real one. He went into heaven itself, where he now appears on our behalf in the presence of God. ²⁵The Jewish high priest goes into the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of an animal. But Christ did not go in to offer himself many times, ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer many times ever since the creation of the world. (GNT)

STUDENT:

Instead, now when all ages of time are nearing the end, he has appeared once and for all, to remove sin through the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God. ²⁸In the same manner Christ also was offered in sacrifice once to take away the sins of many. He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are waiting for him. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Moving to chapter 10, the author explains the "symbol verses the actual" in relationship to our hearts and consciences.

CH. 10

STUDENT:

The Jewish Law is not a full and faithful model of the real things; it is only a faint outline of the good things to come. The same sacrifices are offered forever, year after year. How can the Law, then, by means of these sacrifices make perfect the people who come to God? ²If the people worshiping God had really been purified from their sins, they would not feel guilty of sin any more, and all sacrifices would stop. ³As it is, however, the sacrifices serve year after year to remind people of their sins. ⁴For the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sins. (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁸First he said, "You neither want nor are you pleased with sacrifices and offerings or with animals burned on the altar and the sacrifices to take away sins." He said this even though all these sacrifices are offered according to the Law. ⁹Then he said, "Here I am, O God, to do your will." So God does away with all the old sacrifices and puts the sacrifice of Christ in their place. ¹⁰Because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do, we are all purified from sin by the offering that he made of his own body once and for all. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹¹ Every Jewish priest performs his services every day and offers the same sacrifices many times; but these sacrifices can never take away sins. ¹² Christ, however, offered one sacrifice for sins, an offering that is effective forever, and then he sat down at the right side of God. ¹³ There he now waits until God puts his enemies as a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴ With one sacrifice, then, he has made perfect forever those who are purified from sin. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Then the New Covenant.

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STUDENT:

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also gives us his witness. First he says,

¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them in the days to come, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts and write them on their minds."

¹⁷ And then he says, "I will not remember their sins and evil deeds any longer." ¹⁸ So when these have been forgiven, an offering to take away sins is no longer needed. (GNT) (*Jer. 31:33*)

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TEACHER:

Now that the debt has been paid, and the sins are forgiven, how does that affect our position in the Kingdom of God?

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STUDENT:

¹⁹ We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. ²⁰ He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body. ²¹ We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. ²² So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

²³ Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. ²⁴ Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. ²⁵ Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

If that is our position in God's kingdom, what then is our responsibility having received such a wonderful gift? And, how does this affect the doctrine of eternal security which some believe?

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STUDENT:

²⁶ For there is no longer any sacrifice that will take away sins if we purposely go on sinning after the truth has been made known to us. ²⁷ Instead, all that is left is to wait in fear for the coming Judgment and the fierce fire which will destroy those who oppose God! ²⁸ Anyone who disobeys the Law of Moses is put to death without any mercy when judged guilty from the evidence of two or more witnesses. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

²⁹ What, then, of those who despise the Son of God? Who treat as a cheap thing the blood of God's covenant which purified them from sin? Who insult the Spirit of grace? Just think how much worse is the punishment they will deserve! ³⁰ For we know who said, "I will take revenge, I will repay"; and who also said, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul concludes chapter 10 with the encouragement that it will be worth it all.

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STUDENT:

³⁵ Do not lose your courage, then, because it brings with it a great reward. ³⁶ You need to be patient, in order to do the will of God and receive what he promises. ³⁷ For, as the scripture says,

"Just a little while longer, and he who is coming will come; he will not delay. (*Hab. 2:3*)

³⁸ My righteous people, however, will believe and live; but if any of them turns back, I will not be pleased with them." ³⁹ We are not people who turn back and are lost. Instead, we have faith and are saved. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter. Paul shows that even before Christ, faith was the key to God's approval, not sacrifice. Let's look at the 1st 3 verses of chapter 11 in several different translations to get the real meaning.

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CH. 11

STUDENT: *Good News Translation*

To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. ² It was by their faith that people of ancient times won God's approval. ³ It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen. (GNT)

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STUDENT: *Amplified Bible*

Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]. ² For by this [kind of] faith the men of old gained [divine] approval. ³ By faith [that is, with an inherent trust and enduring confidence in the power, wisdom and goodness of God] we understand that the worlds (universe, ages) were framed *and* created [formed, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose] by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. (AMP)

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STUDENT: *King James Version:*

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

² For by it the elders obtained a good report. ³ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (KJV)

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TEACHER:

Clearly God's approval is obtained by our faith in Him. He names a list of over 10 different people and people groups who all received their approval from God by faith. And not just believing in Him, but that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. We will read portions here of each.

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STUDENT: #1 ABEL

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

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STUDENT: #2 ENOCH

⁵ By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (KJV)

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STUDENT: CLARIFICATION THAT IT'S NOT JUST BELIEVING THAT HE EXISTS, BUT THAT HE WILL REWARD US.

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (KJV)

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STUDENT: #3 NOAH

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

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STUDENT: #4 ABRAHAM

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (KJV)

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STUDENT: #5 SARA

¹¹ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. (KJV)

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STUDENT: ELABORATION ON THE FACT THAT THEY TOOK THEIR FAITH TO THEIR DEATH NEVER GIVING UP

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, (KJV)

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STUDENT: #6 ABRAHAM AGAIN, THIS TIME FOR THE RESSURECTION OF THE DEAD

¹⁸ Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹ Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (KJV)

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STUDENT: #7 ISAAC

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (KJV)

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STUDENT: #8 JAKOB

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. (KJV)

STUDENT: #9 JOSEPH

²² By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. (KJV)

STUDENT: #10 MOSES PARENTS

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. (KJV)

STUDENT: #11 MOSES REJECTS PHAROAH'S DAUGHTER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (KJV)

STUDENT: #12 MOSES REJECTS EGYPT

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.
²⁸ Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (KJV)

STUDENT: #13 THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND THE RED SEA

²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. (KJV)

STUDENT: #14 THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND THE WALLS OF JERICO

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. (KJV)

STUDENT: #15 RAHAB

³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. (KJV)

STUDENT: OTHER PEOPLES AND GROUPS

³² And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: ³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. ³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (KJV)

STUDENT: *CONTINUED*

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

³⁸ (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (KJV)

TEACHER:

We must realize also, that everything they did, they did it without the New Testament, without easy access to the Old Testament, if they had it at all, without the book of Acts, the Epistles, without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, without the Blood of Jesus. Impressive. Taking this into account, chapter 12 couldn't start out better.

STUDENT:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (KJV)

TEACHER:

He then tells us to consider His position.

STUDENT:

³ Think of what he went through; how he put up with so much hatred from sinners! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up. ⁴ For in your struggle against sin you have not yet had to resist to the point of being killed. ⁵ Have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as his children? "My child, pay attention when the Lord corrects you, and do not be discouraged when he rebukes you. ⁶ Because the Lord corrects everyone he loves, and punishes everyone he accepts as a child." (GNT) (*Deut. 8:5-6*)

TEACHER:

Now Paul asks us to view God's instruction like we would our earthly father's instruction.

STUDENT:

⁷ Endure what you suffer as being a father's punishment; your suffering shows that God is treating you as his children. Was there ever a child who was not punished by his father? ⁸ If you are not punished, as all his children are, it means you are not real children, but bastards. ⁹ In the case of our human fathers, they punished us and we respected them. How much more, then, should we submit to our spiritual Father and live! ¹⁰ Our human fathers punished us for a short time, as it seemed right to them; but God does it for our own good, so that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ When we are punished, it seems to us at the time something to make us sad, not glad. Later, however, those who have been disciplined by such punishment reap the peaceful reward of a righteous life. (GNT)

TEACHER:

The chapter ends with final instructions to study more at home, we will list some of them from the text.

CH. 12

STUDENT:

¹⁴ Try to be at peace with everyone, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it.

¹⁵ Guard against turning back from the grace of God. Let no one become like a bitter plant that grows up and causes many troubles with its poison. ¹⁶ Let no one become immoral or unspiritual like Esau, who for a single meal sold his rights as the older son. ²² you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its thousands of angels. ²³ You have come to the joyful gathering of God's first-born, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, who is the judge of all people, and to the spirits of good people made perfect.

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STUDENT:

²⁴ You have come to Jesus, who arranged the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that promises much better things than does the blood of Abel. ²⁵ Be careful, then, and do not refuse to hear him who speaks. Those who refused to hear the one who gave the divine message on earth did not escape. How much less shall we escape, then, if we turn away from the one who speaks from heaven! ²⁶ His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, "I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven as well."

²⁸ Let us be thankful, then, because we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be grateful and worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and awe; ²⁹ because our God is indeed a destroying fire. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

In this the final chapter of Hebrews (Chapter 13), the author gives some general counsel regarding a God pleasing Christian life.

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CH. 13

STUDENT:

Keep on loving one another as Christians. ² Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁴ Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." ⁶ Let us be bold, then, and say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁷ Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. It is good to receive inner strength from God's grace, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give to God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness, and that would be of no help to you. (GNT)

STUDENT:

²⁰⁻²¹ God has raised from death our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep as the result of his blood, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory forever and ever! Amen. (GNT)

NEXT LESSON JAMES

Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

The Hebrew alphabet which reads from right to left





