

Fighting Apostasy Through the Superiority of Christ (Hebrews)

I. One of the most commonly confused issues concerning God's plan of redemption is where the Law of Moses fits in.

- A. Some say we live by Law in its entirety.**
- B. Some say we live by an abridged version of the Law, Sabbatarians.**
- C. Some say we live by an even smaller segment of the Law, Ten Commandments.**

II. This issue is not new. The early church struggled with the place of the Law in the scheme of redemption.

- A. The Jerusalem council. Acts 15:1,2**
- B. The Galatian Epistle. Gal 1:6,7; 3:1,2**

III. Ultimately Paul answers the question of where the Law of Moses fits into God's plan of redemption. **Galatians 3:19**

IV. One of the common threads we find in these discussions of where the Law fits into God's plan of redemption, is the preeminence of faith in Christ over living by the Law of Moses.

- A. Concerning the Jerusalem council. Galatians 2:4**
- B. Concerning the purpose and end of the Law. Galatians 3:23-29**
- C. 2 Corinthians 3:1-18.**

V. One epistle in particular was written to discuss in great detail why Christ takes preeminence over the Law of Moses; this is the epistle to the Hebrews. In speaking of the author of Hebrews, Brother Robert Milligan in his commentary on Hebrews puts it this way:

He argues that since it is an indisputable fact, that God has spoken to us by His Son, who is Himself the Heir of all things, the Creator of all things, and the Upholder of all things; the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His essence; and since He is Himself the expiator of our guilt, endowed with all the attributes of Divinity, and infinitely exalted above all angels, it follows, of course; that "we should give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" from the Father, through Him and concerning Him.

VI. The Hebrew writers' goal is to show that the Law of Moses had its purpose, but Christ is superior to that Law. Christ is the end of the Law for God's plan of redemption. (**Romans 10:4**) Therefore, we must have faith in Him and the work He has done.

VII. *Recognizing the Superiority of Christ in God's plan of redemption is at the core of stopping apostasy.*

VIII. In our lesson today we are going to consider a brief overview of Hebrews. This will be broken down into three points.

- 1. Apostasy through Law keeping is the issue.**
- 2. Judaizers are the offenders.**
- 3. Unwavering faith in Christ is the solution.**

Trans: A common issue with Christians is the possibility of apostasy, falling from God's grace. This can happen in different ways. Going back into a life of sin is one way, 1John 2:15-17. Another way is to seeking redemption through the Law of Moses.

1. Apostasy through Law keeping is the issue.

A. Hebrews 3:12-14

B. There are multiple passages which support this as the main issue in the Hebrew epistle.

Hebrews 2:1-3

Hebrews 3:6,12

Hebrews 4:1,11,14

Hebrews 5:11-14

Transition: If turning back to the Law of Moses as means of justification is an act of apostasy, why would someone do it?

2. Judaizers are the offenders.

A. Judaizer is not a term we find in the Scriptures. But the act of Judaizing is seen in what some attempt to do. **Galatians 2:14**

B. The term refers to those who seek to combine redemption in Christ with some aspect of the Law of Moses. It can also refer to a complete abandonment of Christ for the Law.

C. The Hebrew epistle shows that this belief was in practice during the first century.

Hebrews 13:7-14

Transition: What is the solution to overcoming the work of the Judaizers?

3. Unwavering faith in Christ is the solution.

A. Since God's plan for man's justification was carried out in Christ. His work and priesthood are far superior to the Law of Moses.

Galatians 3:16-21

B. In the Hebrew epistle the argument of the Superiority of Christ over the Law of Moses is presented in support of having an unwavering faith in Christ.

1. Christ is superior to prophets and angels.

Hebrews 1:1-2:4

2. Christ is superior to humans.

Hebrews 2:5-2:18

3. Christ is superior to Moses.

Hebrews 3:1-4:13

4. Christ has superior qualifications as High Priest.

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

- 5. Christ priesthood is superior to Aaronic priesthood.**
Hebrews 7:1-8:5
- 6. Christ is superior as the mediator of a superior New Covenant.**
Hebrews 8:6-8:13
- 7. Christ priesthood is superior because of His service in a better Tabernacle.**
Hebrews 9:1-9:14
- 8. Christ is superior because the New Covenant is based upon His death.**
Hebrews 9:15-28
- 9. Christ priesthood is superior because of a better sacrifice.**
Hebrews 10:1-18

Conclusion: The Law of Moses had a purpose and it served that purpose. According to Galatians 3:19-29, the Law was to lead the Jew to Christ, once Christ fulfilled His purpose, the Law was no longer necessary.

Justification by faith in Christ was always God's end game. The Law cannot accomplish that and seeking salvation through the Law of Moses is to seek salvation in a way that is not offered by God.

Recognizing the Superiority of Christ in God's plan of redemption is at the core of stopping apostasy.

He Has Spoken to Us in His Son
Hebrews 1:1

- I. I think we all understand the importance of a message being delivered by someone we trust.

- II. This is taught throughout our lives beginning at the earliest of ages.
 - A. A parent is speaking to a child concerning matters in general. The child listens to the message because of the messenger.
 - B. A teacher or coach conveys a message. We listen because we accept the authority of the messenger.
 - C. As an adult we understand that when our boss calls us into their office the message could be of great importance, because we recognize their position.

- III. This same idea applies when the one bringing the message is a representative of the one sending the message. For example, when an assistant to the coach or manager brings a message, we do not disregard it.

- IV. All of these people that we are willing to listen to are often referred to as our superiors. Not that they are superior people per-se, but that they are in a position that is superior to the one being spoken to.

- V. Last week as we began our series in the Hebrew epistle we saw that the writer was attempting to keep these Christians from falling into apostasy.
 - A. Judaizers were pressing the need to live by the old law while accepting Christ.
 - B. The Hebrew writer shows that all we need is Christ because He is superior to all things pertaining to the Law.
 - C. It is the superiority of Christ that keeps us from falling into apostasy.

- VI. As the writer begins His epistle he does so by establishing the superiority of Christ as the messenger of God.

- VII. The fact that God has spoken to us in His Son shows He is the superior messenger and we should listen to Him.**

- VIII. In our lesson we are going to consider the superiority of the messenger as reason to heed the message spoken. We will consider two points.
 - 1. God has spoken in the past.**
 - 2. God has spoken in these last days.**

Trans: If you were trying to convince someone to listen to a particular message the one doing the speaking is important. In times past God spoke through different people in different ways.

1. God has spoken in the past.

A. Hebrews 1:1

B. The writer is not arguing about the validity of the past message. The message is from God. He spoke.

C. The ones God chose to reveal that message through are not in question. He spoke to the Fathers in the prophets.

1. We could conceive that the writer is speaking all past events, Adam to Malachi or even John.

2. But being that Hebrew epistle is dealing with Judaizers we might narrow this to Moses to John.

3. This probably is of no real consequence being that the writer is simply focusing on the fact that God has spoken to them in the past and He used particular individuals to do this. **From Adam to John, God has spoken to mankind.**

D. Of interest is the fact that in times past God spoke through these individuals about the coming of His Son whom He would speak through in the last days.

1. **Gen. 3:15**, To Adam and Eve.

2. **Gen 12:1-3**, To Abraham.

3. **Deut. 18:15-18**, To Moses

E. God spoke through these individuals in many portions and many ways.

1. The portions refers to the limit of the revelation.

a. **Isa. 28:9-14**

b. God never revealed His entire plan through one messenger.

2. The many ways refers to how the message was revealed.

a. Dreams – Joseph in **Genesis 37:5ff**

b. Visions – **Isaiah 1:1**

c. Symbols – **Exodus 13:21** – pillars of fire and smoke

d. Urim and Thummim – **Exodus 28:30**

e. Audible voice – **Genesis 12:1**

f. Inspiration – **2Peter 1:20-21**

Application: The Hebrew writer is not diminishing the work of God in the past through the prophets. He is fact stating that these are credible sources of God's revelation.

But these sources are inferior to the One who was to come. These sources left a distance between God and man.

Trans: There was a superior source coming. This is our second point.

2. God has spoken in these last days.

A. Hebrews 1:2

B. Again, the message is still coming from God. It is a valid message.

C. The time frame for this message from the Hebrews writer perspective is present. It is these last days or ***at the end of these days***.

1. The final time period of God revealing His will to mankind. **Jude 3**
2. This is an indication to the Jews of the end of the days of the Law.
3. The messages spoken in the past have been fulfilled through God speaking in His Son.

D. By referring to God speaking to us in His Son the writer establishes a Superior messenger.

1. The expression indicates that Jesus was more than an ordinary human.
John 19:6-8 (blasphemy)
John 20:31 (tied to salvation)
2. As such He is Superior to past messengers.

E. To support that the Hebrew writer goes further by making some strong points about who this Son is. **Hebrew 1:2,3**

1. He is appointed as heir of all things
2. He made the world through Him.
3. He is the radiance of His glory.
4. He is the exact representation of His nature.
5. He upholds all things.
6. He made purifications of sins.
7. He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

F. Each of these provide a stark contrast between those that God spoke through in the past and the ways He did it, and how He did it at the end of these days.

Illustration: 2Peter 1:16-19

Application: These facts concerning the Son of God show that Gods final messenger to be Superior to all previous messengers.

The fact that God has spoken to us directly through His Son also closes the gap between man and God. This is, as it were, a face to face message. God speaking directly to us.

The fact that God has spoken to us in His Son shows He is the superior messenger and we should listen to Him.

Who Is the Son of God?
Hebrews 1:1-3

I. Most of us know that in November this country will be participating in the mid-term elections.

II. Over the past several weeks I have been receiving material related to this.

- A. I received a book titled VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE.
- B. I also received an EARLY VOTER BALLOT.

III. With a high degree of certainty I believe these two pieces of mail will fill their intended purpose.

- A. Inform about the candidates running for office.
- B. Allow me to cast my vote and that that vote will count.

IV. Why do I trust this material in these matters?

- A. Both are official state documents.
- B. The Voter Education Guide is a nonpartisan publication which contains statements written by the candidate.
- C. The Ballot is the form on which we cast our vote and is considered accurate.

V. Now let me ask you a question. When it comes to the most important decision of your life, why do you trust the one advising you in that decision?

VI. Last week I noted that the Hebrew writer called those reading his epistle to listen to what Jesus had to say because of who He is and what His work was. **Hebrew 1:1,2**

- 1. Jesus is the Son of God
- 2. God has spoken through Him.

VII. If this is not enough reason for us to pay attention to the words and work of Jesus, we are given some deeper insights to what God has done through His son. **Hebrew 1:1-3**

VIII. Because of who He is and what God has accomplished through Him, we are called to commit ourselves to His Son.

Trans: Let's consider why it is we are called to commit ourselves to the Son of God.

1. We have already discussed the fact that Jesus is His "Son"

- A. **Hebrews 1:2**
- B. This is reference to His deity.
- C. He is the Word of God (vs. 1,2)
- D. He is the final word from God is the Son of God.
- E. All that God has to say to us is to be found in this Son.
 - 1. Through the things He taught.
 - 2. Through the One He sent. **John 16:12-15**

2. He is the Appointed Heir

A. **Hebrews 1:2**

B. Being an heir brings dignity and dominion.

C. The heir is treated with the same respect as the father. **Matthew 21:33-46**

D. The extent of Jesus' appointment is to "*all things*" which means He has authority in heaven and earth. **Matt. 28:18**

3. He is the Creator of the World

A. **Hebrews 1:2**

B. This has been declared before.

John 1:3

Col. 1:16

C. Jesus is not something less than God.

D. This is the Word that came forth from God, bringing everything into existence.

E. The word "world" here is the word for "ages" and should be taken as a reference to the visible and invisible worlds, or the totality of the universe. **Hebrews 11:3**

4. He is the radiance of His Glory

A. **Hebrews 1:3**

B. This is not as the moon reflecting the light of the sun, but rather as the rays of the sun revealing its brightness.

C. Just as the glory of the sun is revealed by its rays, so Jesus reveals the glory of the Father.

D. Just as the rays of the sun cannot be separated from the sun, so Jesus and the Father are One. **John 10:30**

E. Radiance may be understood as either active, in the sense of light radiating out from some source; or passive, meaning "reflection". Here, we should understand it in its active sense. Jesus does not merely "reflect" the glory of God ... He radiates it.

5. He is the Exact Representation of God's Nature.

A. **Hebrews 1:3**

B. Modern photograph best catches the meaning. In photos we have "exact representations" of whatever we take a picture of.

C. Jesus is, in essence, a photograph of God.

D. **John 14:9.**

1. When Philip said, "*Show us the Father,*" Jesus responded that they had seen a picture of Him.

2. The picture was standing before them.

E. The phrase "Exact representation" may be transliterated "character."

1. The term meant to engrave or inscribe.

2. It was used to refer to the wax impressions made by a signet ring.

3. This was a trusted seal.

F. Koster in TDNT suggests that in Hebrews the word "Nature" "always denotes the 'reality' of God which stands contrasted with the corruptible, shadowy, and merely prototypical character of the world ... "

6. He Upholds All Things

A. **Hebrews 1:3**

B. The "*All things*" has to do with the created order.

C. All that we see continues because Jesus keeps them going. **Col. 1:7**

D. Jesus literally is "bearing" up all things. Their existence rest upon Him

7. He is the One Who Made Purification of Sins.

A. **Hebrews 1:3**

B. This recalls the work of the Jewish high priest on the Day of Atonement.

C. **Hebrews 10:12**

D. **2 Pet. 1:9**

E. It is interesting to note that few sins are listed specifically in Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:4,5

F. Nevertheless, the Hebrew call is to avoid apostasy and unfaithfulness to the one who provided purification for sins. **Titus 2:11-14**

G. This is especially true regarding what the Judaizers are attempting to do.

Hebrews 9:11-14

8. He Now Sits at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High.

A. **Hebrews 1:3**

B. The word "sat down" is an aorist denoting the fact of this action ...a single act of exaltation and enthronement. It has occurred ...and is reality.

1. Sitting down denotes that one has completed the task.

2. Once purification has been made, need He offer additional sacrifice? His job is done. He sits down!

3. Also consider the contrast of what the Judaizers are attempting.

Hebrews 10:11,12

C. The Son position is secure through who He is and what He has accomplished.

D. There is no greater position in all the universe.

Application: It might be enticing to want to go back under that old Law. The Judaizers were trying to convince them that is a good thing.

But the Son of God finished His work. He no longer walks among us on earth, He is now within the realm of spirit beings ... in the realm of angels.

He is the Appointed Heir

He is the Creator of the World

He is the radiance of His Glory

He is the Exact Representation of God's Nature.

He Upholds All Things

**He is the One Who Made Purification of Sins.
He Now Sits at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High.**

Because of who He is and what God has accomplished through Him, we are called to commit ourselves to His Son.

Jesus is Superior to The Angels
Hebrews 1:4-14

- I. One of the clearest indicators that God wants us to know His will is the fact that he conveyed that message to us. **Hebrews 1:1**

- II. The messages came by God's authority and as such it is expected that the hearers follow them. All revelations of His word were to be accepted as authoritative.

- III. Certainly the credibility of the messenger is important. There were those who said they spoke from God but did not. **Deuteronomy 18:22**

- IV. As the Hebrew writer is laying out his argument as to why these Christians should follow Christ over what the Judaizers are suggesting he reminds the readers of Jesus' status as a messenger of God.

- V. To support the legitimate message of Jesus He places Him up against the works of God's angels. The spiritual messengers of God who brought His word to the people.

- VI. The conclusion of the Hebrew writer is that **Jesus is the superior messenger of God. We cannot neglect the message of salvation delivered by Him.**

- VII. The Hebrew writer lays out two points for us.
 1. **The superior nature of God's Son.**
 2. **The inferior nature of angels.**

Transition: Just as the people followed the message of God's Angels because of who they were and whom they spoke for, they must also commit themselves to what God has said in His Son.

1. The superior nature of God's Son.

A. The Hebrew writer has already established that God has spoken to us in His son in these last days. **Hebrews 1:2**

B. One of the messengers of God that the people listened to in the past were the angels of God. Those heavenly beings.

Matthew 1:20

Luke 1:5-13

C. Of great importance to the discussion of the Hebrew epistle is the angels work in the revelation of the Law.

1. **Galatians 3:19**

2. **Acts 7:53**

3. We are uncertain of the angel's function in this but they are credited with taking some part and the people recognized this. **Deut. 33:2**

D. The Hebrew writer lays out a string of reason why Jesus is superior to those messengers that they held in high regard.

1. He has inherited a more excellent name. **Hebrews 1:5**
 - a. The excellent name is Son of God. He is Deity.
 - b. **John 5:18**
 - c. **Phil. 2:9**
2. He is the begotten of God. **Hebrews 1:5**
 - a. Jesus is the one resurrected from the dead.
 - b. **Acts 13:33-41**
 - c. **Romans 1:1-4**
3. He is worshipped by angels. **Hebrews 1:6**
 - a. No one was to worship angels
 - b. **Revelation 22:8,9,16**
4. He is called God. **Hebrews 1:8,9**
Psalm 45:6,7
The word God is Elohim
5. He reigns forever. **Hebrews 1:8**
Daniel 2:44
6. He is the anointed One. **Hebrews 1:9**
 - a. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit
 - b. **Matthew 3:13-17**
 - c. **Acts 10:38**
7. He is the creator of all things. **Hebrews 1:10-12**
 - a. **John 1:1-3**
 - b. **Col. 1:17**
 - c. The world will perish but the Son of God will not. **Hebrews 13:8**
8. He is given the "right hand" position. **Hebrews 1:13**
 - a. Jesus is in a position of continual authority.
 - b. His place is with the Father, having subjected Himself to Him.
 - c. **1Cor. 15:27,28**

Application: In laying out the argument as to why Jesus is the one they should follow the writer provides an abundance of incontrovertible evidences.

If they were going to listen to anyone concerning what God has to say there is no one superior to Jesus. He outranks them all.

Transition: The second argument the writers provides is showing where the angels fall in regards to their work for God.

2. The inferior nature of angels.

A. I have listed it this way not to indicate to degrade the nature and work of the angels, but as a way to show that Jesus holds a position above them. The point being they

listened to the message given by the angels they must listen to the message sent through Jesus. **Hebrews 2:1-4**

B. The Hebrew writer does not show the angels in a negative light. They are messengers of God after all. But He does show that the Son of God is superior to them and they were subject to Him, even in His lowered state of humanity. **Hebrews 2:7-9**

C. The Hebrew writer provides a list of reasons why the angels are inferior to Christ.

1. No angel was ever called My Son. **Hebrews 1:5**
2. No angel was ever begotten of God. **Hebrews 1:5**
3. God was not a father to the angels. **Hebrews 1:5**
4. The angels worship Him. **Hebrews 1:6**
5. The angels are merely servants of God. **Hebrews 1:7,14**
6. The angels were not given the “right-hand” position. **Hebrews 1:13**

D. There is one other thing we can add to this, which really closes the door on whom they should be listening to.

Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews 2:2,3

Application: If you hold the angels in high regard, because they participated in the giving of the law in the same way, how much more should you hold in regard the Son of God, who is superior to them.

Clearly the Hebrew writer is laying a solid foundation for his readers.

Although the angels had their work **Jesus is the superior messenger of God. We cannot neglect the message of salvation delivered by Him.**

Hold Fast to The Word Preached
Hebrews 2:1-4

I. One of the necessities of life is to have a system in place where we might be warned of some impending danger.

II. We can do this in two ways.

1. **Verbally / Audible through words and noises.**

Someone says the word. STOP!

Makes a noise. Whistle or beep – Cross walk for the visually impaired.

2. **Visually through signs and colors.**

Skull and cross bones.

Traffic lights.

III. It is no less important that we have a system in place to warn us of spiritual dangers. The Scriptures support this being done in at least two ways.

1. Verbally

1. **Deut. 18:22**

2. **1 John 4:1-3**

2. Visually

1. **Exodus 3:2**

2. **Acts 2:22**

IV. God has not left us without the means to determine if what is being taught concerning Him is true or not. The danger of not knowing the truth is so severe that God made it absolutely clear that we could determine what is truth. **John 17:17**

V. As we have been exploring the Hebrew epistle, we find that Judaizers are seeking to corrupt the faith of the Christians. To keep this from happening the Hebrew writer has established that the one we should be listening to is God's own son.

1. In the last days He has spoken to us through Him. Heb. 1:2

2. He has also shown that He is the superior messenger of God, being God in the flesh.

Heb. 1:4-14

VI. In closing out the introduction to the epistle the writer now gives a warning based upon all that He has presented. It is a warning that that is supported by both vocal and visually evidences.

VII. If we reject the evidence of the Superiority of Christ, we will pay the penalty.

VIII. Today we are going to consider Hebrews 2:1-4 in support of our theme. Here the Hebrew writer provides A warning and then two scopes of evidence.

1. **The call to pay attention.**

2. **Verbally evidence as reason to pay attention.**

3. **Visually Evidence as reason to pay attention.**

Transition: If someone was attempting to get you to do something that was contrary to what you have done in the past what would keep you from doing it?

1. The call to pay attention.

A. Hebrews 2:1,2a

B. The warning is to “we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard.”

1. The phrase is intended to alert the reader to the need to not neglect what they have already heard from God’s Son.

2. The word “must” signifies obligation.

a. Verb, present, active, indicative, third person, singular.

b. Each Christian is obligated to continually do this.

c. **Hebrews 11:6** (“and”)

3. “Pay attention” is to give heed, or be concerned about, even too “occupy oneself with” what’s been heard.

4. “Much closer” is an adverb of degree. It implies a greater degree of careful attention, even excessive.

5. We cannot become the least bit lax in our knowledge and understanding of God’s word. In fact, the command implies going in the other direction extremely.

C. The reason being., if we don’t, we might “drift away”.

1. The word designates the possibility of coming to a place of disbelief.

2. The person is passive in this, in the sense that they are not directly choosing to drift away, but it is a result of their neglecting to pay attention.

3. Neil Lightfoot describes the “drifting away” to something that slips away. As an arrow that slips from the quiver, or a ring that slips from the finger, or an idea that slips from the mind.

4. It can be visualized as a ship flowing past its place of rest.

5. The examples quoted in LSJ Greek-English Lexicon are predominantly psychological, suggesting that the metaphor of flowing was dead or dying.¹

D. The warning also involves the message presented by the angels.

1. This is referring to the message delivered by the angels directly or associated with the prophets and to the Old Law which they were present at its giving.

2. Those who refused to listen to those messages paid the penalty.

Numbers 11:1

Numbers 16:1-3; 28-35

3. The warning is “**how will we escape if we neglect the message of salvation?**”

¹ Ellingworth, P. (1993). *The Epistle to the Hebrews: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 137). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

Application: R. Milligan writes; “He argues that since it is an indisputable fact, that God has spoken to us by his Son, who is Himself the Heir of all things, the Creator of all things; and the Upholder of all things; the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his essence; and since He is himself the expiator of our guilt, endowed with all the attributes of Divinity, and infinitely exalted above all angels, it follows, of course; that “we should give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard” from the Father through Him and concerning Him.

Transition: Upon giving the warning the writer now present two pieces of evidence as to why we must pay closer attention.

2. Verbally evidence as reason to pay attention.

A. Hebrews 2:3b

B. What they are called to pay much closer attention to the message spoken.

1. It was first spoken though the Lord. The Son of God brought us the Fathers will.
Heb. 1:2
Isa. 61:1
John 12:49,50
2. The message was confirmed by those who heard.
 - a. The word “confirmed” means “proven true”.
 - b. Prior to Jesus’ death, John the Baptist - **John 1:29**
 - c. Following His death, this was the command of Jesus - **Acts 1:6-8**
 - d. The Apostle John - 1 John 1:1-4
 - e. The disciple Mark - Mark 9:1-8 (2 Peter 1:16-21)
 - f. The Apostle Peter - Acts 2:22-24

Application: The word that they had received was supported by credible witnesses. If it were not enough that the Son of God spoke the Father’s will, upon His departure His chosen witnesses continued that work.

Transition: If those proclaiming the message is not enough evidence God provided ironclad proof for those testifying of His will.

3. Visually Evidence as reason to pay attention.

A. Hebrews 2:4

B. The evidence now involves God personally.

1. The word “testifying” is to bear witness with another.
2. It is a present active verb, which means it was in conjunction with the other testimony. What was spoken and done go hand in hand.
3. Through supernatural means God proclaims that those bringing His message to mankind are in fact sent by Him. **Acts 2:22**

C. The Hebrew writer uses four expressions describing the supernatural confirmation. These are synonymous but retain the individual nuances.

1. Signs - This is a supernatural act.
2. Wonders - Emphasizes the response in the minds of the hearers.
3. Miracles - Literally "powers", emphasizing the source of the act as supernatural.
4. Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Supernatural abilities from God. **1Cor. 12:4-11**

Application: God did not solely rely on the message spoken to convince mankind to follow this message of salvation. He understood that man in His weakness needed more so he gave ironclad proof.

Both Jesus and His disciples did things beyond the means and scope of humanity. This was not sleight of hand or magic. These were supernatural occurrences. These things were completely out of reach of humanity. Only God could bring about what they saw.

In this God testifies to what His Son and His disciples spoke.

Conclusion: We have warning signs in our society. Ignoring them will be to our on peril.

What other proof is needed to heed the word they have already received?

God gave both verbal and visual proof. The warning them must be heeded.

If we reject the evidence of the Superiority of Christ, we will pay the penalty.

Hold Fast to The Word Preached
Hebrews 2:1-4

I. 1John 1:1-4

II. God has never expected us to believe in Him without proof, both audible and visual.

Gen. 1:26-30

Romans 1:18-23

III. The proof that God provides is both necessary to believe and to stay faithful once we believe.

Hebrews 2:1-4

IV. If we reject the evidence of the Superiority of Christ, we will pay the penalty.

Verbal evidence as reason to pay attention.

A. **Hebrews 2:3b**

B. What they are called to pay much closer attention to the message spoken.

1. It was first spoken though the Lord. The Son of God brought us the Fathers will.

Heb. 1:2

Isa. 61:1

John 12:49,50

2. The message was confirmed by those who heard.

a. The word “confirmed” means “proven true”.

b. Prior to Jesus’ death, John the Baptist - **John 1:29**

c. Following His death, this was the command of Jesus - **Acts 1:6-8**

d. The Apostle John - 1 John 1:1-4

e. The disciple Mark - Mark 9:1-8 (2 Peter 1:16-21)

f. The Apostle Peter - Acts 2:22-24

Application: The word that they had received was supported by credible witnesses. If it were not enough that the Son of God spoke the Father’s will, upon His departure His chosen witnesses continued that work.

If we reject the evidence of the Superiority of Christ, we will pay the penalty.

Transition: If those proclaiming the message is not enough evidence God provided ironclad proof for those testifying of His will.

Visual Evidence as reason to pay attention.

A. **Hebrews 2:4**

B. The evidence now involves God personally.

1. The word “testifying” is to bear witness with another.

2. It is a present active verb, which means it was in conjunction with the other testimony. What was spoken and done go hand in hand.

3. Through supernatural means God proclaims that those bringing His message to mankind are in fact sent by Him.

Acts 2:22

John 20:30,31

C. The Hebrew writer uses four expressions describing the supernatural confirmation. These are synonymous but retain the individual nuances.

1. Signs - A specific call to attention.

2. Wonders - Emphasizes the response in the minds of the hearers.

3. Miracles - "powers", emphasizing the source of the act as supernatural.

4. Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Supernatural abilities from God.

5. 1Cor. 12:4-11

Application: God did not solely rely on the message spoken to convince mankind to follow this message of salvation. He understood that man in His weakness needed more so he gave ironclad proof.

Both Jesus and His disciples did things beyond the means and scope of humanity. This was not sleight of hand or magic. These were supernatural occurrences. These things were completely out of reach of humanity. Only God could bring about what they saw.

In this God testifies to what His Son and His disciples spoke.

Conclusion: What other proof is needed to heed the word they have already received?

God gave both verbal and visual proof. The warning them must be heeded.

If we reject the evidence of the Superiority of Christ, we will pay the penalty.

Jesus – Humanities Only Hope

I. Have you ever stopped to consider the life choices you make?

1. Job.
2. Relationships.
3. Where you live.
4. Religion.

II. In the end what determines the direction you will go in these choices? Some of these decisions will have life altering effects. Who or what has the ability to influence you in a particular direction?

III. As we have been looking into the Hebrew epistle, we note that the writer is combating the work of the Judaizer. Their influence over these Christians is altering the course of their life.

IV. To shore up the faith of these Christians, the writer is showing actual credible proof that Jesus is the one they should be following.

- A. In last week's lesson we saw a warning of what would happen if they ignored Christ' teachings. **Hebrews 2:1-4**
- B. In this next section of Scripture, the writer continues to provide motivation to stay the course with Jesus. **Hebrews 2:5-9**

V. The life which humanity lost was restored through the humanity of Jesus.

VI. The Hebrew writer has already provided ample proof of Jesus' credentials.

- A. **God has spoken to us through Him.**
- B. **He is God's superior messenger.**
- C. **He is God.**
- D. **God has provided testimony that Jesus is our only hope.**
- E. **HE CAN RESTORE THE LIFE WE HAVE LOST.**

VII. It seems that one of the issues brought up by the Judaizer was the humanity of Jesus. The question being, how can he do anything for us, being one of us?

Transition: What we find is that His humanity is exactly what was needed to restore life to humanity.

1. The lost dominion of humanity.

- A. **Hebrews 2:5-8**
- B. The Hebrew writer turns our attention to God's intended place for humanity.
 1. In the beginning, man was given dominion over God's creation. **Gen. 1:26-28**
 2. David marveled at what God had done in setting man over His creation.
 - a. **Psalm 8:4-6**

- b. The expression, “the Son of man” has been interpreted two ways.
 - 1. It refers to Jesus
 - 2. It refers to humanity.
- c. There are several reasons to understand this as referring to humanity.
 - 1. This expression has been used in respect to humanity.

Ezekiel 2:1-3

- 2. It is a limited dominion. Jesus has supreme authority.

Matthew 28:18

- 3. The word “the” before “son of man” in Hebrews 2:6 is added. It is not in the Greek or Hebrew.
- 4. The context being focused on humanity and God’s purpose for him as compared to angels dictates that we understand this as referring to humanity.

b. Even though man was made "a little lower than the angels," God "crowned him with glory and honor"! **Heb. 2:7**

c. He gave humanity a position of dominion that the angels did not have even though they hold a position above humanity.

d. God appointed man “over the works of His hands!” **Heb. 2:7**

- 3. God put all things in subjection to him.
 - a. This is referring to God’s creation.
 - b. Humanity had complete dominion.

C. Humanity lost dominion.

1. Hebrews 2:8c

- a. There is something that we are not able to see that has been subjected to him.
- b. If all things were subjected to Him what can’t we see?
- c. It’s the thing humanity lost in sin.
- d. As a result of the fall of man, humanity lost dominion.
- e. Sin now ruled over him and so death subdued us.

Ephesians 2:1

Romans 6:16

D. The Hebrew writer also establishes the place of Angels is all of this. Angels were not given dominion over God’s creation. Their work did not have that scope; it was limited to being messengers of God.

1. Hebrews 2:5

2. Hebrews 1:14

Transition: The Judaizers would see the humanity of Jesus as a problem in respects to salvation. How can this man Jesus be part of fallen humanity and save humanity?

2. As a man Jesus regained humanities dominion.

A. Hebrews 2:9

- B. The **“but”** in Hebrews 2:9 is a contrast to our situation as humanity compared to Jesus.
- C. Jesus was also **"made a little lower than the angels"**. He became a human!
- D. The humanity of Jesus was not an obstacle to our salvation. His humanity was exactly what we needed. **Hebrews 4:14-16**
- E. He became human to save us from our sins through the suffering of His death.
 - 1. Because of His suffering of death, He was **"crowned with glory and honor"**!
 - a. This is the crown of victory.
 - b. Jesus overcame what we could not.
 - 2. What was lost, what man once had, Jesus has regained!
 - 3. He tasted death for us.
 - a. He took our burden. Isa. 53:1ff
 - b. He offered Himself for us as a substitute for our indebtedness.
- F. Those who are in Him share in that rule, both now and in the future!
 - 1. Christ rules over all seated at the right hand of God, **Ephesians 1:20-22**
 - 2. All in Christ sit together with Him. **Ephesians 2:4-6**
 - 3. Dominion has been restored to humanity. Hebrews 2:14-18

Conclusion: The main object here is to encourage the believing Hebrews to persevere in the Christian walk. The humanity of Christ and His oneness with us motivates us to do this.

Humanity once had a position of dominion over Gods' creation, but because of sin we lost that. Once impervious to death humanity was now subjected to death.

The life which humanity lost was restored through the humanity of Jesus.

We must follow Him for that life to be restored.

The Need for His Incarnation

- I. I believe most everyone understands the concept of using the right tool for the right job.
- II. In fact, the tools we use can be very specific.
 1. Auto mechanics / Standard (SAE) and Metric.
 2. Knitting and crocheting differ in the use of needles. Knitting needles usually have a standard width. On the other hand, crocheting needles come in a variety of sizes.
- III. The thing about tools is that although you might be able to make a tool work for a job it wasn't intended to do, the tool designed for the job is always the best.
- IV. In our lesson last week we saw that Jesus' humanity was being used as an argument by the Judaizers to disrupt the faith of these Christians. They saw it as a hinderance to salvation.
- V. What the Hebrew writer does is firmly establish the need for God to come in the flesh. He provides three points here.
 1. **He brings many sons to glory through sanctification.**
 2. **He overcame Satan's power and rendered him powerless.**
 3. **He became our High priest and sympathizes with our struggles.**
- VI. **Through His incarnation God was able to provide all we needed for salvation.**

Transition: Where some may see God coming in the flesh as a problem regarding our salvation, God makes it clear in the Hebrew epistle, His becoming flesh was exactly what we needed.

1. He brings many sons to glory through sanctification.

A. Hebrews 2:10-13

B. God says His Son becoming flesh was "Fitting".

1. Rather than seeing the incarnation and suffering of God as offensive, we should see how suitable it was for Him to do this so His Son could become the author of our salvation.

C. God had a work for Jesus to do.

1. To restore mankind to his proper position of glory and honor. Heb. 2:6,7
2. He was to become the "author" (leader even "hero") of man's salvation.
3. It was through His sufferings that He was "perfect" for the work God gave Him.
 - a. "Perfect" has the idea of being "effective, satisfactory"
 - b. Without becoming flesh, so He might suffer, Jesus could not be an effective or satisfactory High Priest and Savior,
 - c. Jesus' sufferings were necessary. Heb. 2:18

- D. Because the Word became flesh, He is able to be one with Humanity.
1. The One who "sanctifies", is one with those "being sanctified."
 2. Our sufferings are "all of one" (in experience)
 3. He is not ashamed to call us brethren because He shares in our struggles.
Heb. 2:12-13

Application: Who better to save us from our sins but one who is like us in flesh but unlike us in that He is God?

2. He overcame Satan's power and rendered him powerless.

A. Hebrews 2:14-16

- B. Because God became flesh, He was able to take away Satan's power over our flesh.
1. Jesus' death and resurrection rendered Satan powerless.
 - a. Satan is still out to destroy us. 1Peter 5:8-9
 - b. But in becoming flesh and dying Jesus took the tool Satan once had. Revelation 1:17,18
 2. Satan's defeat has eternal consequences for Him.
Matthew 25:41
Revelation 20:10-12

- C. Jesus' death and Satan's defeat also provides blessings for those who follow Christ.
1. Romans 6:14-18
 2. We can have freedom because Jesus' death.
 3. The power of Satan led to a humanity who is fearful of death.
 4. Humanity is in bondage their entire lives fearing what is coming.
 5. But the Christian has been set free from this fear death. Romans 8:37-39
 6. As descendants of Abraham, we have help from one made like us.

Application: The right tool was used for the Job. God could not save us from our sins or render Satan powerless without becoming one of us and defeating Satan on the cross of His death by having never sinned. Hebrews 4:14,15

3. He became our High priest and sympathizes with our struggles.

A. Hebrews 2:17,18

- B. Connected to the work of saving humanity from their sins was another work. It was the work of becoming High priest.
- C. If God had not come and suffered in the flesh He would not be "like His brethren."
- D. Becoming like us in all things equipped Him to be a merciful and faithful high priest.
- E. In things pertaining to God" He became our propitiation. He atones for our sins.

F. The role of high priest involved offering gifts and sacrifices for sin. Hebrews 5:1-10

G. His temptations and sufferings make Him the perfect candidate for saving us.

1. Our struggle became His struggle. He can be merciful towards us knowing first hand our struggle.

2. His suffering allows Him to be compassionate toward us. Hebrews 5:2

3. All who come to Him will receive mercy and grace in time of need!

Hebrews 4:16

Conclusion: The word becoming flesh is not a theology issue, which is an affront to God. In fact, it was absolutely necessary for our salvation.

Jesus stands as Superior in Gods' creation because of what He extends to us, being God in the flesh.

Through His incarnation God was able to provide all we needed for salvation.

1. He brings many sons to glory through sanctification.

2. He overcame Satan's power and rendered him powerless.

3. He became our High priest and sympathizes with our struggles.

Remain Faithful to Jesus, The Appointed One of God

I. I believe we could agree the superior quality of something is important when it comes to our allegiance to it. For example, there are certain brands we will always buy because we believe them to be superior products, even if the cost is higher.

II. Lately, I have been purchasing a bunch of battery powered tools for the work I'm doing on my house.

III. I have settled on the Ryobi brand. The reason this has become the brand I will purchase is because I believe it is superior to other comparable brands.

- A. I've tested many others over the years. (Craftsman, DeWalt, Milwaukee, Stanley, B&D)
- B. The battery life is exceptional.
- C. The different kinds of tools available is broad and innovative.
- D. They are sold at a reasonable price.
- E. The quality is superb.

IV. I believe this same concept of loyalty to superior brands can also be applied to our faith.

V. The Hebrew writer certainly accepts this principle. As he fights against the Judaizers leading Christians away from Christ, he continually argues that the Supremacy of Christ as the leading reason to stay faithful to Him.

VI. Another example of this is found in our lesson today, **Hebrews 3:1-6**. In this section of Scripture, he places Christ alongside Moses to illustrate that Jesus' has supremacy over him because of who He is and what HE was appointed to do.

VI. We must stand with Christ because the Father has appointed Him.

Transition: Before we invest our hard-earned money into something, we do our due diligence and investigate the product first. The Hebrew writer says we should do the same thing with Jesus.

1. We Should Consider Jesus

A. Hebrews 1:1,2

B. First, The Hebrew writer addresses who should consider Jesus.

1. He addresses those who are being affected by the judaizers.
2. He refers to them in two ways.
 - a. Holy brethren
 1. This term establishes their current relationship with God the Father.
 2. They are brethren set apart from sin dedicated to Christ.
 - b. Partakers of a heavenly calling.
 1. Again this term addresses their current situation.
 2. The word partaker implies a sharing in or with something.
 3. These Christians are sharing in a calling, an invitation of a heavenly nature, both in origin and destiny.
 4. The invitation came through the gospel, **2Thess. 2:14**.

- c. These two statements reaffirm their present condition apart from what the Judaizers are suggesting.
- C. Second, he tells them to examine the work of Jesus thoroughly to see validity of his point.
 - 1. The word for "consider," means "to learn thoroughly..., hence, to note accurately, consider well..."
 - 2. What they were to consider was His work as an Apostle and High Priest of their confession.
 - a. The word Apostle refers to one who fulfills the role of being a special messenger. This is an ambassador or envoy.
 - b. The reference to Jesus being High Priest, defines His role as being a mediator between man and God.
 - c. The confession we made is the one that took place in our baptism.
 - Romans 10:9,10**
 - Romans 6:3-7
 - 3. You have Jesus bringing the message of God to humanity and that same Jesus being our High Priest to intercede between us and God.
 - Heb. 1:1**
 - Heb. 2:17,18**
 - Heb. 4:14-16
- 3. They were also to consider the fact that Jesus was faithful to the one who appointed Him.
 - a. Jesus did not bestow this position upon Himself, the Father appointed Him to this special position.
 - b. Jesus stayed faithful to that appointment, as Moses stayed faithful to his appointment.
 - c. Where did Jesus demonstrate His faithfulness.
 - 1. He was faithful in His temptation." **Heb. 4:15**
 - 2. He was faithful in the miracles God did through Him. **Heb. 2:4**
 - 3. He was faithful in death.
 - Matthew 26:42**
 - John. 17:4**
 - John 19:30 (it is finished)**

Application: As the Hebrew writer lays out his argument for the supremacy of Christ over Moses, he first wants the readers to understand their present state.

They are on the right path with Jesus. He is the One God the father has appointed. They have obeyed the gospel, which was proclaimed by Jesus and He is now their High Priest. He faithfully intercedes between them and God the Father. Stay put!

As Christians this is our present condition as well.

We must stand with Christ because the Father has appointed Him.

The Supremacy of Christ Over Moses

Hebrews 3:3-11

- I. Sometimes it's difficult to let go of one thing and take hold of another.

- II. I remember when I finally made the decision to cut off **my land line and go strictly cellular**.
 1. The land line was something that had been around a long time.
 2. It was very reliable.
 3. I had learned to trust and depend on it.

- III. The one thing that really convinced me was how much better the cell line was.
 1. Reliable, sure some would argue that you can lose phone reception when you are traveling, but I couldn't even have my land line in that situation.
 2. I could take it with me on the road.
 3. I could do so much more with my cell phone. (Contacts, text, calendars, take a call when I was out, voice mails)

- IV. Because I saw that the cell phone was superior to the land line, I let go of the outdated tool and embraced the new one.

- V. Consider now what the Hebrew writer is trying to do in **Hebrews 3:1-6**.
 1. He is showing these Christians that letting go of the old law to abide with Christ was the right decision.
 2. It is the right thing because Jesus represents something far superior to Moses and the old law.

- VI. **Because Jesus, the Son of God, built the house of God, He is superior to Moses the servant of God. We must follow Him.**

Transition: If you are going to convince these Christians to stay faithful to Christ over what the Judaizers are teaching, then showing the supremacy of Jesus over Moses is a necessity.

Christ the Son Is Greater Than Moses the Servant

A. Hebrews 3:3-6

B. In these four verses we are given two reasons that support the supremacy of Christ over Moses.

1. Jesus built the House of God (3:3,4).

- A. The Hebrew writer makes it clear that Jesus is counted worthy of more glory than Moses.
- B. He is not saying that Moses had no glory, he did, but this glory, which speaks of a good reputation and praise, is found to be great in Jesus.
- C. Why is Jesus deserving of more glory? Because He built the house of God.

1. The architect is worthy of more praise than the house itself.
2. Without the architect there is no house.
3. Arthur W Pink states, "**The purpose of this verse is to establish the deity of Jesus.**" "**Christ has not only built 'the house,' but 'all things.'** Christ is not only Mediator, 'appointed' by God (v.2), but He is God."
 - a. Jesus built the house
 - b. God is the builder of all things
 - c. Jesus is God.

2. Jesus is the Son of God (3:5,6).

A. Although Moses was deserving of praise because of the work he carried out for God, he was still only a servant of God.

1. The term "servant," is THERAPON. It means, to serve, to heal, an attendant, is a term of dignity.
2. Moses served in His (Gods) house.
 - a. The house of God under Moses was Israel.
 - b. Moses did not build that house.
 - c. **Exodus 3:1-10**
3. Moses was a forerunner to the builder of the house.
 - a. **Deut. 18:15**
 - b. **Acts 3:17-22**
4. He carried out the work of God, which is a testimony for us.
Heb. 3:7-11

B. Jesus' position exceeds Moses because of who He is.

1. The Son is superior to the servant. Hebrews 1:14
2. Moses served in God's house Jesus built God's house.
3. The house of God is the church.
 - a. **Col. 1:15-20**
 - b. **1 Tim. 3:15**

Conclusion: As the writer began this section, he referred to these Christians as "holy brethren" Hebrews 3:1. Because they are "holy brethren" they are the house of God.

If this is their current condition because of what the Son did then they must hold fast to their confidence. Their hope is sure in Christ. He is the Son of God who built the house of God and they are that house.

Because Jesus, the Son of God, built the house of God, He is superior to Moses the servant of God. We must follow Him.

The Danger of Open Doors **Hebrews 3:12-19**

I. In our English language if we wanted to convey the idea that we don't want to close off the possibility of something happening in the future, we would use the idiom, "leave the door open". This idiom is used in a positive sense.

II. There are different settings where we see people leaving the door open.

The Door is left open to business opportunity

The Door is left open to love

The Door is left open to friendship

The Door is left open to influence.

III. But leaving the door open is not always a good thing. Sometimes we leave the door open allowing negative things to enter our life. People have done this with bad relationships. Rather than just ending it and moving on they left the door open just enough for this person to find their way back in. **1Cor. 15:33**

IV. For Christians leaving the door open to allow anyone to teach us can be detrimental to our faith. In fact, it can destroy our faith. It's not that we shouldn't be open to listen and consider what someone has to say, but when what they are saying clearly opposes what we know the Bible teaches we must close that door to them.

V. In **Hebrews 3:12-19**, the Hebrew writer is once again warning Christians about the possibility of apostasy. The problem exists because they are allowing certain individuals to influence what they believe.

VI. Allowing ourselves to give audience to those who rebel against God can turn our heart against Him.

Transition: I think we all understand the concept of negative influence. It's imperative that we see that just because someone talks about Christian things, that doesn't mean they are worth listening to.

Admonition to close the door.

A. Heb. 3:12

1. The writer jumps right into the need for these Christians to protect themselves from the Judaizers who are trying to influence them.

2. He says, "Take Care".

a. Take is a present active verb imperative.

1. To reach out and hold with your hand.

2. To carry or bring with one.

b. Care is a present active noun imperative.

1. The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something

2. Serious attention or consideration applied to an action or plan.

3. Christians cannot allow an, “evil, unbelieving heart” to develop. We need to be proactive in protecting ourselves from the influence of false teachers.
 - a. This is the kind of heart the Israelites of the desert had, which brought on them the terrible oath, the kind of heart against which David warned his people in the psalm. ¹
 - b. **Hebrews 3:15-19**
4. Once we develop an unbelieving heart, we fall away from the living God.
 - a. The word fall is an aorist infinitive verb and it expresses actuality, definiteness.
 - b. “Unbelief” is to be understood in the sense of once having believed in the living God and then having turned away from him.
 - b. **2Thessalonians 2:3**
5. The writer also establishes what we turn away from.
 - a. The living God.
 - b. Because He is living, there is not escaping his promises or wrath.
 - c. **Hebrews 10:31**

B. The solution of how to avoid falling away is given in **Hebrews 3:13,14.**

1. We are to encourage one another all the time.
 - a. Encourage is a present active imperative verb.
 - b. It is something we must do continually.
 - c. The idea of keep, keeping on encouraging.
2. We do it while we still have opportunity, “today”.
 - a. Today is not necessarily the present moment, but rather the present condition.
 - b. As long as one has not given themselves over to the false teachers they are still in God’s grace, they have not fallen away. Keep encouraging.
3. There is one other thing we must do, “hold fast”.
 - a. The thing to hold fast is “the beginning of the confidence” which made us and still makes us sharers with Christ.²
 - b. By holding fast, we become partakers of Christ.
 - c. All that belongs to Him, all that He offers and provides is ours.
 - d. **Hebrews 3:1**
 - e. **Hebrews 1:14**

Conclusion: Sometimes because we trust someone, we allow them to influence us. We open up a door of opportunity for them. The issue is not opening the door, its whom we open it too.

Our soul is our most precious asset. We must be careful that we do not allow our minds to be infected with teachings that cause us to develop an evil unbelieving heart.

Allowing ourselves to give audience to those who rebel against God can turn our heart against Him.

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). *The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James* (p. 117). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.
² Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). *The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James* (p. 120). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.

The Rest That Remains

Hebrews 4:1-13

I. What is it that motivates people to continue on a particular path even though it might be extremely difficult?

1. Sports
2. Job
3. Relationships

II. I believe one of the greatest motivating factors in any endeavor is the reward that accompanies the effort.

III. This same method is applied to God's word. The promise of a life far greater than the one we now live motivates us to live faithful to God. **2Peter 3:9-13**

IV. For the people of Israel as they were coming out of captivity there was also a promise that motivated them to follow God. **Deut. 6:10-15**

V. As we have been studying the Hebrew epistle this same type of motivation is being used. The Hebrew writer continually reminds us that what we have in Christ is far, far greater than anything else, especially anything under the Law of Moses.

VI. As the writer begins chapter four, he provides yet another reason to remain faithful to Jesus. God had promised a rest for His people, which was never received under the Moses or Joshua. Hebrews 4:1-13

VII. The rest of God remains for those who faithfully follow Christ.

VIII. This is our motivation. There is a great reward for remaining faithful to Jesus, it is the rest of God. We must be diligent to enter that rest.

IX. In our lesson today we are going consider two points concerning to the rest of God.

- 1. Defining the rest of God.**
- 2. Entering the rest of God.**

Trans: The rest of God is something that should energize us to remain faithful. The name alone sounds great. A greater appreciation is had when we truly understand what this rest is.

1. Defining the rest of God.

A. Sometimes to understand what something is, we must understand what it is not. Let's begin with what it is not.

B. The rest of God is not what was received in Canaan.

1. Joshua provided the Canaan rest. Joshua 21:43-45

2. He did not give them the rest of God.
 3. **Hebrews 4:8,9**
- C. It is not the Sabbath day rest.
1. Moses gave the Sabbath day rest to the people. **Ex. 16:23**
 2. The Sabbath day rest rest was given to Israel only. **Deut. 5:1-5,12-15**
- D. The rest the Hebrew writer speaks of is referred is the rest of God.
1. **Hebrews 4:9**
 2. **Hebrews 3:11**
 3. It is not connected to the Canaan rest or the Sabbath day rest.
 - a. **Hebrews 3:16-18**
 - b. The Israelites observed the Sabbath day rest during the forty years in the wilderness.
 4. The rest of God found in the creation event. **Hebrews 4:4-5,10**
 - a. The rest of God began after the sixth day of creation, the seventh day and existed at the time of the writing of the Hebrew epistle.
 - b. It is a rest that begins when we cease from our work.
 - c. It is the heavenly rest of God. **Revelation 14:13**

Application: The rest that remains for Gods people certainly motivates us to follow Christ. It is a rest that we have yet to enter but are promised by God.

The rest of God remains for those who faithfully follow Christ.

Transition: The Canaan rest was not for Christians. The Sabbath day rest was not for Christians. But there is a rest that is for the Christian it is the rest of God. Question is, how do we partake of that rest?

2. Entering the rest of God.

A. The rest that is compared to the rest of God in Hebrews 3,4 is the Canaan rest.

B. We are told that those who wandered for forty years and did not enter that rest in Canaan did so because of a lack of faith.

Hebrews 3:19

Hebrews 4:1-2,6

C. In the context of the Hebrew epistle, the answer to entering God's rest is faithfulness to Christ. **Hebrews 4:3**

D. When we hear the word of God and faithfully obey His word the promised rest of God will be ours.

Hebrews 4:2

Hebrews 4:6,11

E. The warning of a lack of faithfulness is given in **Hebrews 4:12,13**.

1. We cannot turn from God's word and expect anything good to come of it.
2. As God lives so does His word. It is active with the power of God behind it. What it says we can count on, reward or punishment. (Enter His rest or fall in the wilderness)
3. Because of this we are motivated to live faithful to God's call.

Conclusion: It's always exciting knowing that school is getting out when you work in the school system. You are motivated to keep going because you know rest is coming.

It's always nice knowing that at some time during the year you will get to take a vacation.

While the Judaizers are trying to lead these Christians down a path of disobedience, God is calling them to remain faithful to Christ.

His warning is clear. If they turn from Christ they fall because of disobedience. The rest God has promised will not be theirs. It is only for those who remain faithful to call of God in Christ.

The rest of God remains for those who faithfully follow Christ.

The Power of God's Word
Hebrews 4:12,13

I. I think we all know that people can sometimes hide their true character.

A. Marriages

B. Jobs

II. What if there was a way of preventing that from happening would you be willing to us it?

III. Some might suggest a polygraph "A polygraph or lie detector is a device or procedure that measures and records several physiological indicators such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity while a person is asked and answers a series of questions. This is done to determine if someone is telling the truth or not.

IV. The problem with the polygraph it that is reliable. In 1991, two thirds of the scientific community who have the requisite background to evaluate polygraph procedures considered polygraphy to be pseudoscience. Assessments of polygraphy by scientific and government bodies generally suggest that polygraphs are inaccurate.

V. So, we can't trust the polygraph. But I believe there is another way, a sure way, to determine the character of an individual. **John 17:17**

VI. This method of determining the character of an individual is not simply for other people, but for us as well. If I look into the word of God, I can find out what can of person I truly am.

VII. This may be a scary thought to some but for those seeking truth it is a blessing. I can really discover somethings about myself, good or bad, and then work to become the person God wants me to be.

VIII. In the Hebrew epistle the writer has been warning these Christians about turning away from the truth they have accepted. **Hebrews 3:12**

IX. In his warning he reminds them that the word of God will find them out. **Hebrews 4:12,13**

X. This is our lesson today. **God's word has the power to reveal our true character.**

XI. The Hebrew writer provides two reason why this is possible with the word of God. Hebrews 4:12,13

A. The word of God is living and active.

B. The word of God is a discerner of thoughts.

Transition: The word of God is not dead. It is always truth and that truth will never change. This is our first point.

1. The word of God is living and active.

A. God's word is not dead and without purpose or function

1. **1Peter 1:23-25**

2. **Isaiah 40:8**

B. In fact Jesus established that His word was living and active. **Matthew 24:35**

C. God's Word is eternally living because of the nature of God.

1. God is eternal, He is "the living God". **Hebrews 3:12**

2. God's nature prevents Him from lying. **Titus 1:2**

3. What He says will come to pass. **Hebrews 6:17,18**

D. The word of God is active as seen in what it continually accomplishes.

1. God's word will do what God has intended. **Isaiah 55:10-11**

2. His words give life. **John 6:63**

3. Through the gospel being preached souls are saved. **Romans 1:16-17**

4. Through His word we can be born again - **1Peter 1:22-23**

E. The word of God can make us what we ought to be. **2Timothy 3:16,17**

Application: The word of God is not dead. Since it can do all the things, we have seen we have to conclude that it is living and active.

It lives because God lives, and it carries out the activities God intended.

2. The word of God is a discernor of thoughts.

A. The word is described as being sharper than any two-edged sword. **Hebrews 4:12**

1. This comparison implies that the word of God is powerful object.

2. A sword was a weapon which pierced through the flesh.

3. God's word goes deeper.

a. It reaches the soul and spirit of man.

b. It cuts through bone and marrow.

4. The idea being God's word cuts through all that man is.

5. As a sword would lay a man open so does the word of God. It exposes the inner most parts of man.

B. With its sharpness, it is capable of sifting through and revealing the heart of man

1. It's effect on man reveals his true heart.

2. In some cases, that one's heart is sincere and open to change. **Acts 2:36-37**

3. Other times, a heart has no desire to change.

Acts 5:27-33

Acts 7:54

C. If we read the word of God, we will be affected one way or another.

D. We cannot hide from it. That word will find us out, either now or in the day of judgement.

Hebrews 4:13

John 12:48

Conclusion: The character of a man can be determined by the words and actions of a man.

It is true that people can lie and deceive. They can for a time keep people from knowing who they truly are.

But we cannot hide from God. His word will find us out.

For those who choose to live against God they will want to try and hide from this. But for those who seek to truly be as God desires, they will embrace this and come to know who they truly are.

God's word has the power to reveal our true character.

Don't' Run, Hold Fast and Draw Near
Hebrews 4:14-16

I. Relationships can be tricky things. This is especially true when you're dealing with the kind of relationship that requires a lifetime of commitment. Marriage for example.

II. People sometimes find it difficult navigating their way through a relationship. Doubts will often creep in and people begin to question the decision they have made.

III. One of the ways we are told to work through this is to make a list of the pros and cons of the relationship.

A. What works and what doesn't.

B. What you love about the person and what you can't stand.

C. Why they are good for you and you for them.

IV. Because we sometimes become confused by all the advice we get, making a list allows us to focus on what really matters to us. We look at the person we feel in love with and remember what it was that attracted us to them in the first place. Hopefully this sets our course right and we work through any doubts we may have had.

V. In the Hebrew epistle we find the writer addressing some Christians who are ready to break off their relationship with Christ (Hebrews 2:1-4). False teachers are coming in and giving them bad advice, and they are listening to them and becoming confused.

VI. To counter this the Hebrew writer has been providing a list of reasons why these Christians need to not abandon Christ. He is reminding them of the reasons they accepted Him in the first place.

VII. Each time the Hebrew writer shows how Christ is superior to anything the false teachers have to offer. It is complete foolishness to abandon Him, for what they have to offer.

VIII. In Hebrews 4:14-16 the writer adds another reason to stay with Christ. Let's read that passage.

IX. Because Jesus is our sympathetic high priest, we have confidence that God's grace is extend to us.

X. This passage can be broken into two parts.

1. Jesus is our great high priest.

2. We have confidence to draw near to God.

Transition: The high priest was an important part if the Jewish faith. Only he could go before God for the people. The Hebrew writer tells us Jesus is greater than them.

1. Jesus is our great high priest.

A. Hebrews 4:14,15

B. The word therefore points us back to what has been previously said. Twice Jesus has been called a high priest.

Hebrews 2:17,18

Hebrews 3:1

C. The Hebrew writer has been lifting Jesus up as high priest. His argument for this so far is based upon what Jesus has done. Jesus was made like us and tempted like us.

D. He now calls Jesus “a great high priest”. This term elevates Him beyond the high priest of the day. We are given several reasons for His elevation

1. He is “Jesus, the Son of God.”

a. “Jesus,” calls to mind his incarnation, his life, sufferings, and death.

b. At the same time, He is “the Son of God,” which expresses his deity.

2. He has “passed through the heavens.”

a. Jesus did not simply walk into the Holy of Holies in the temple.

b. In His ascension He passed through the created heavens. **Acts 1:9-11**

c. Jesus entered into the very presence of God on our behalf.

3. He can sympathize with our weaknesses.

a. Jesus knows our weaknesses because He came in the flesh.

b. Jesus knows our weaknesses because He was tempted like us.

c. The status of “great high priest” is a result of Him not sinning, though like us.

Hebrews 5:1-3

Hebrews 9:1-7

E. Because of these facts we are told to “hold fast our confession”.

1. **Hebrews 3:1**

2. Christians are to continue to hold him fast with all their “strength.”

3. We do this by confessing our faith in Him continually.

4. This is something they have been doing and they need to continue to do.

5. Even though they are wavering in their confession, they need to keep on confessing Him with all their being.

Application: What is the reason for turning from Jesus? His flesh cannot be an obstacle because He did not succumb to sin. In fact, that fleshly existence coupled with His sinful life puts Him in a position of being our great high priest. The one who can intercede for us.

Transition: The work of Jesus doesn’t just provide a path to the Father. It provides a path that we have confidence to walk on.

2. We have confidence to draw near to God.

A. Hebrews 4:16

B. Because Jesus is our great high priest, we can draw near to the throne of Grace with confidence.

1. The “throne of grace” God’s throne, is especially appropriate. Here the King allots his unmerited favor upon the guilty.
2. Because our High Priest has made expiation for our sins and now sits at God’s right hand, his expiation makes God’s throne one of grace.
3. We do not have to go before God in fear of our weaknesses (our sin).
4. Because of our calling, the accepting of Jesus’ sacrifice, we go before God in confidence, knowing our sins are no longer an obstacle.

1Peter 3:21-23

Hebrews 9:11-14

Hebrews 10:19-25

C. Because our great high priest, Jesus, the Son of God has made expiation for our sins. The door is opened for what we need most. God’s mercy and grace.

1. “Mercy” is the love that helps the wretched.
2. “Grace” the love that pardons the guilty.¹

D. This is received in our time of need, or before it’s too late.

Conclusion: Whatever the false teachers are offering, it cannot match what Jesus gives us through His work.

Because Jesus is our sympathetic high priest, we have confidence that God’s grace is extend to us.

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [*The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James*](#) (p. 152). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.

Christ, Our High Priest Hebrews 5:1-10

I. As we have been studying through the Hebrew epistle one of the things we have noted about Jesus is that although He is like us, He is also so unlike us. **Hebrews 4:15**

II. The things that are unlike us are what makes Him stand out.

1. Like the star athlete.
2. Like the music prodigy.

III. In the context of keeping us faithful to Jesus those differences keep us committed Him.

IV. One of the recurring themes in Hebrews is that of Jesus as our High Priest.

1. **Heb 2:17**
2. **Heb 3:1**
3. **Heb. 4:14,15**

V. The reason the Hebrew brings this up is to continue to show the superiority of Jesus

1. Prophets – Heb. 1:1-3
2. Angels – Heb. 1:4-2:18
3. Moses – Heb. 3:1-6

VI. The priesthood was a vital part of the Jewish faith. The High Priest stood at the pinnacle, serving as the mediator between man and God.

VII. The Hebrew writer shows that Jesus meets the qualifications of High Priest and can stand as a true mediator between man and God. **Heb. 5:1-10**

VIII. Jesus had all the qualifications necessary to be our High Priest.

1. The qualifications of the High Priests.

A. **Hebrews 1-4**

B. Divine appointment

1. The work of the high priest. **Heb. 2:17**
2. He must "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" **Heb 8:3**
3. Only God can rightfully select a high priest.
 - a. **Ex. 28,29**
 - b. **Lev 8,9**
 - c. **Num 16-18**

C. Human compassion

1. A high priest is selected "from among men"
2. This helps to ensure a spirit of "compassion"...

3. A high priest who knew his own weakness would be more likely to be understanding of his brethren
4. The high priest in the OT offered sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. **Lev 16:11**
5. The high priest would need to be well acquainted with the "human condition" (our struggle against temptation)

2. Christ meets qualifications of high priest

A. Hebrews (5:5-8)

B. Divinely appointed

1. Christ was Divinely called to serve as High Priest.
2. Support of His calling is given in two Messianic prophecies
 - a. His position as God's Son - **Psalm 2:7**
 - b. His appointment as a priest after the order of Melchizedek
Psalm 110:4
3. As God's Son, He is sitting and ruling at the right hand of God.
Psalm 110:1-3

C. Jesus is sympathetic because of his own sufferings

1. While "in the days of His flesh", Christ...
 - a. "offered prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears"
 - b. He prayed "to Him who was able to save Him from death"
 - c. He was heard "because of His godly fear"
2. That Jesus would have "godly fear" and offer such prayers provides insight into the extent of His temptations and sufferings in the flesh.
Hebrews 2:18
Hebrews 4:15
3. Even though He was God's Son, by the things which He suffered "He learned obedience" - what does this mean?
 - a. Certainly He knew obedience as the Son of God
 - b. He came to know what obedience involved as one "in the flesh" (i.e., the challenge of obedience in the midst of suffering, temptations, etc.)
4. Through His suffering, Jesus certainly understands the "human condition" which qualifies Him to serve as High Priest

3. CHRIST'S is a different kind of High Priest

A. Hebrews 5:9,10

B. He is the author of eternal salvation.

1. "Perfected" by virtue of His sufferings "in the flesh", He has become the "author" of eternal salvation

a. The word "author" literally is, "cause."

b. **Heb. 7:24-27**

2. He is the author for "all those who obey Him"

2Thess 1:7-9

1Pet. 4:17-18

C. He is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek

1. Here is the distinct nature of Christ's priesthood

2. As prophesied in Ps 110:4, the Messiah would be "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"

3. Thus His priesthood would be different from the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood

a. Superior

b. The difference between the two priesthoods and the superiority of Christ's over Aaron's is taken up later in this epistle (Heb. 7:1-28)

Conclusion: The author of Hebrew lays a foundation necessary to keep the Judaizers from swaying these Christians away from Christ.

He has established "Christ's Qualifications as High Priest"...

1. He was Divinely appointed.

2. He is sympathetic because of His own sufferings.

Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation"; "to all who obey Him"

Jesus had all the qualifications necessary to be our High Priest.

Time to Grow Up
Hebrews 5:11-14

I. We have all faced problems in our lives where the solution seemed impossible to achieve. For example, Thomas Edison is quoted as saying in Harper's Monthly Magazine,

"I speak without exaggeration when I say that I have constructed three thousand different theories in connection with the electric light, each one of them reasonable and apparently to be true. Yet only in two cases did my experiments prove the truth of my theory. My chief difficulty, as perhaps you know, was in constructing the carbon filament, the incandescence of which is the source of the light."

II. At other times problems arise where the solution is very simple. For example, on vacation, the husband continues to tell his wife that he is not lost and when she finally convinces him to use a map, they arrive at their destination on time and unscathed.

III. The same can be said regarding spiritual matters.

2Peter 3:14-16

2Peter 3:17

IV. In the Hebrew epistle the writer has been providing ample proof as to why these Christians should not follow the teachings of the Judaizers.

Jesus is God's Son

Jesus is superior to Angels

Jesus is superior to Moses

Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aarons priesthood.

V. If these Christians know these things, why are they being persuaded to turn from Christ? The answer is actually quite simple. **Hebrews 5:11-14**

VI. Christians must grow in their understanding of Christ if they are to remain faithful.

VII. Today we are going to consider two simple steps we can take to avoid apostasy, according to Hebrews 5:11-14

1. Educate yourself

A. Hebrews 5:11-13

B. First the writer defines the problem and there are several parts.

1. They have become "dull of hearing". **Hebrews 5:11**

a. This is a compound word.

b. It literally means "no push in hearing"

c. It is translated to mean slow or sluggish in mind as well as in ears.

d. It is difficult for these Christians to understand what they are being taught because their hearing has become numbed and sluggish. **They no longer desire to hear the things concerning Christ.**

2. They are unprepared to stand in defense of their faith.

a. **Hebrews 5:12**

b. There was no need for being unprepared because “by this time you ought to be teachers”

1. "Ought," implies an obligation.

c. As it is, they have need of someone to teach them “the elementary principles of the oracles of God”

1. The word Principles can mean 'elements,' 'fundamentals,' or even 'letters of the alphabet.'

2. It's as if he is saying 'You need to learn the ABC's of Christianity again.'

3. They had drifted away from the fundamentals of Christianity.

a. Hebrews 2:1-4

b. Hebrew 6:1,2

4. These fundamentals are called "oracles of God."

a. They are the inspired writings.

b. **1Peter 4:11**

d. Their unpreparedness is also seen in the fact that they need milk and not solid food.

1. "Milk," refers to "elementary principles"

2. "Solid food," relates to "more advanced doctrinal teaching" (i.e. the explanation of the Melchizedekian priesthood).

C. Because of these two factors they are not accustomed to the “word of righteousness”

1. The Hebrews could not handle the discussion at hand.

2. They are lost when addressing the deep questions concerning God's word because they are unskilled or inexperienced in these matters.

3. They are in violation of **1Peter 3:13-15**.

Application. Because they have allowed themselves to lose sight of Christ and have closed themselves off to the word of righteousness they are now in danger of apostasy.

This should not be the case. They have had plenty of time to ground themselves in understanding who Christ is. They have just failed to do that.

Transition: We know the problem, what is the solution

2. Train yourself

A. Hebrew 5:14

B. If these Christians are to keep from falling into apostasy, they must train themselves.

1. The word trained is the training which an athlete undergoes.
 - a. It suggests the tremendous self-discipline which an athlete must have if he is to develop his muscles.
 - b. This is a determined, purposeful effort is required on the part of the readers in order to be able "to discern good and evil."
2. They need to partake of the solid food needed for those mature in Christ.
3. The mature are those who are full grown as compared to infants who need milk. **Ephesians 4:11-16**
4. They need to take the meat given them and put it into practice.
 - a. Living the word needs to become a habit for them.

Application: Brother Warren Wilcox concludes, "Solid food, the deeper things of God's word, is for those who are "mature"(those who have had their senses trained by habitual exercise) so that they may be able to come to a deeper understanding of God's word and thus be able to discern good from evil.

In doing this they will stand firm in the truth and not fall into apostasy.

Conclusion: Christians must grow in their understanding of Christ if they are to remain faithful.

Forward or Fall
Hebrews 6:1-8

I. Years ago, I coached little league baseball. In fact, I coached all three summer league teams. The 8,9,10's, the 11-12's, and the 13-15's.

II. The reason there were three teams was because of the difference in skill level. As long as we matched them by age, kids could play ball with other kids close to their own age and skill level.

IV. What enabled you to advance to the next team was your age.

V. But age was not the only factor when it came to who you played with.

1. We had what was called our All-Stars.
2. In this league only those kids which had developed their baseball skills were allowed to play.
3. If someone was allowed to play who wasn't properly prepared with advanced training, serious injury was inevitable. The All-Star games moved at a much faster pace and intensity.

VI. Stop and think for a minute about where you would be as a Christian if you had stopped growing. How would you have fared in those spiritual battles if you were not prepared?

VI. It is imperative that we continue to develop spiritually lest we find ourselves unable to compete against those seeking to destroy our faith. We cannot allow ourselves to stay with the basics of our faith.

VII. Christians who do not move forward from foundational faith, are in danger of irreversible apostasy.

VIII. As the Hebrew writers continues to battle the influence of the judaizers, he reminds us that every Christian has a responsibility to grow in their faith; in doing so they will not allow themselves to be led away from Christ. In last week's lesson he was telling us to grow up. In this week's lesson he is telling us to move forward. **Hebrews 6:1-8**

IX. The writer gives us to points to consider.

1. **Rebuke: Move beyond the elementary principles.**
2. **Warning: Christians can fall irreversibly.**

Transitions: The writer follows up the previous exhortation of "Grow," with another call to get moving past elementary teachings.

1. Rebuke: Move beyond the elementary principles.

A. **Hebrews 6:1-3**

- B. Again, he hits on the need to move on from the milk of God's word.
1. They are to "leave" the elementary teachings about Christ.
 - a. Leaving = means "to leave, leave alone, forsake, neglect."
 - b. Literally "leaving the word of the beginning about the Christ."
 - c. Leaving or dismissing does not imply ceasing to believe in elementary truths or to regard them as important, but leaving them 'as a builder leaves his foundation in erecting his building' (FF Bruce).
 2. It is the elementary teachings are the rudiments of the beginning.
 - a. This is the rudimentary view of Christ's person and office.
 - b. The beginning is just that. The race doesn't begin and end at the beginning.
 3. Christians are to move on towards maturity.
 - a. The word "maturity," can also be rendered "completeness."
 - b. The readers are to strive to full Christian knowledge.
 - c. We do not keep laying the foundation on top of the foundation.
 - d. Vincent states, "the illustrative proposition is that a building is not completed by lingering at the foundation; and so Christian maturity is not attained by going back to subjects which belong to the earliest stage of Christian instruction."
 4. There are six elementary teachings that make up this "foundation."
 - a. Repentance from dead works –
 1. The Law / outward observance of law.
 2. **Heb. 9:13,14**
 - b. Faith toward God
 1. Faith in God and Jesus
 2. **Hebrews 1:1,2**
 - c. Teaching of baptism
 1. Baptism. (has a connection to OT ceremonial washing)
 2. But the foundation for the Christian is not OT baptism.
 3. The plural is concrete to designate the actual baptisms the readers had received. (Lenski)
 4. **Matthew 28:19,20**
 5. **Acts 2:38**
 - d. Laying on of hands.
 1. Probably in reference to miracles.
 2. **Acts 8:14-21**
 3. **Heb. 2:2-4**
 - e. Resurrection of the dead.
 1. **John 5:25-30**
 2. **1Cor. 15:12-18**
 - f. Eternal judgment.
 1. Matthew 25:31-46
 2. Hebrews 9:27,28

5. Verse 3 tells us Christians can accomplish this with the help of God. Through the writer God is instructing them in what they need to do. His rebuking of the listeners is intended to wake them up from their dullness of hearing.

Application: Vincent writes; "Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek . There is much to be said on this subject, and it is hard to explain, because you have become dull, and need elementary teaching, whereas, by reason of your long Christian standing, you ought to be teachers yourselves. For you all recognize the principle that baby-food is for babes, and solid food only for men, whose powers have been trained by habitual exercise. Wherefore, in order that you may be aroused from your sluggishness and have your perceptions brought up to the matured condition which befits men in Christ, and in order that I may, at the same time, complete the development of my theme, I propose that we together move forward to completion: I to the full exposition of the subject of Christ's high-priesthood, and you to that maturity of discernment which be-comes you. This will require us both to leave the rudimentary stage of teaching concerning Christ."

Transition: Having rebuked these Christians for not moving beyond the milk, the Hebrew writers warns them of what will happen if they continue to lay that old foundation.

2. Warning: Christians can fall irreversibly.

A. Hebrews 6:4-8

B. The Hebrew writer makes clear that he is speaking Christians.

1. "Once enlightened."
 - a. Once for all, cannot be undone (they full well know)
 - b. Enlightened is in the aorist accusative tense and is used "of spiritual enlightenment."
 - c. This enlightenment was an event of the past.
 - d. **2Peter 2:24-22**
2. "Have tasted of the heavenly gift."
 - a. The word tasted implies a personal experience.
 - b. At a point in the past they came to know of God's grace in Christ.
 - c. **Hebrews 2:9** (He tasted death on the cross, we taste God's grace)
3. "Have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit."
 - a. This is not referring to those in the world. **John 14:17**
 - b. We become partakers in our baptism. **Acts 2:38**
4. "Have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come."
 - a. These individuals have experienced what was spoken of in the past.
 - b. They are they fulfilment of God's prophetic promises.
 - c. **Hebrews 1:1,2**
 - d. **Romans 1:16,17**

C. Having clarified whom he is speaking about, the Hebrew writer turns his attention to the problem at hand, apostasy.

1. "Have fallen away."
 - a. To fall away, "fall to the side" is not simply committing some sin.
 - b. This is to utterly fall. The once enlightened has moved away.
2. "It is impossible to renew them again to repentance."
 - a. The fall is so severe, the enlightened cannot come back from it.
 - b. The enlightened had once turned from sin but now it is absolutely impossible for this to happen again.
3. "They again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame."
 - a. This is why it is impossible for renewal to repentance to take place.
 - b. The present participles here are durative, which means this is ongoing. There is no point of it ceasing.
 - c. They are crucifying Christ to themselves. It is a personal act of killing the innocent man who died for their sins. It's as if they are mimicking what the Sanhedrin did.
 - d. The open shame takes place because they were once publicly known to believe but are now publicly known to have turned from that belief.
 - e. Christ will now be mocked by outsiders who never knew Him.

D. The Hebrew writer illustrates their situation in verses 7,8.

1. Here is a contrast between two classes of Christians under equally favorable conditions, out of which they develop opposite results."
2. One receives the blessings of God and produces vegetation.
3. The other receives the same blessings but only produces thorns and thistles.
4. One is useful and productive, the other is cast into the fire.

Conclusion: The Hebrew writer is not saying that these Christians have arrived at the point of no return. He is warning them of the dangers ahead if they continue on their current course.

Christians must grow from milk to solid food. They must not keep laying the same rudimentary foundations, not abandoning them, but not staying put on them. They need to move beyond the elementary teachings of Christ and press towards maturity so they will not irreversibly fall.

Christians who do not move forward from foundational faith, are in danger of irreversible apostasy.

Moving Forward, Steadfast in Hope

Hebrews 6:9-20

I. Sometimes it's difficult achieving your goal. Last week I spoke of Thomas Edison and how it is said that he failed thousands of times before inventing an actual working light bulb.

II. Even though his failures were reason to stop trying, thinking he never would reach his goal, Thomas Edison learned something from each failure. Edison is quoted as saying, "I did not fail 10,000 times, I just found 10,00 ways that didn't work."

III. Because he had faith in himself and what he was doing, he kept pressing forward until he finally accomplished his goal.

IV. Last week I brought up the reality of irreversible apostasy. This is the possibility that someone can so fall from Christ that restoration is impossible. (**Hebrews 6:1-8**). The writer is warning these Christians that they are headed in that direction (not that they have arrived).

V. After that lesson I had a few people voice their concern over this. Not the teaching, but the prospect of it. It is a terrifying thing to think that a once faithful member of the body could abandon Christ to the degree that it's impossible to renew them to repentance.

VI. But I am here to share some good news. It's the rest of the story. (**Hebrews 6:9-20**)

VII. Even though irreversible apostasy is a possibility, those who place their hope in God's promises have nothing to fear.

VII. The Hebrew writer makes two points regarding how we might avoid irreversible apostasy.

- 1. Keep serving God.**
- 2. Trust in God's promises.**

Transition: Like Edison we cannot give up just because we struggle along the way. If we are to avoid irreversible apostasy, we must keep on keeping on.

1. Keep serving God.

A. Hebrews 6:9-12

B. The Hebrew writer begins with some good news. (v.9)

1. Although he has been speaking of irreversible apostasy, he is convinced of better things for these Christians.
2. The better thing he is convinced of involves their salvation.

C. Even though these Christians may have fallen behind in their knowledge of God, He has not forgotten them and their work as they ministered to the saints. (v.10)

1. God will "forget" your sin, but not your service to Him. (**Heb. 8:12**)

2. God demonstrates His faithfulness to those faithful to Him. (**2Chron. 16:9**)
3. We may stumble along the way, but when we repent, God takes into account work of love for His cause.

D. The writer proposes three qualities they must possess to avoid irreversible apostasy. (v.11,12)

1. Each one is to remain diligent in their service until the end.
 - a. **Hebrews 3:6,14**
 - b. Earnest in their hope
 - c. **2Pet. 1:5-11**
2. Do not become sluggish.
 - a. This is to become dull.
 - b. **Hebrews 5:11**
 - c. They must not become dull in their work as they had in their hearing.
 - d. **Revelation 2:10**
3. Be imitators of the faithful.
 - a. Abraham is the example used.
 - b. Notice that the writer speaks of faith and patience.
 - c. **Hebrews 10:36**

Application: These Christians have not come to a place of irreversible apostasy, but they can. The Hebrew writer is giving them encouragement to remain faithful to God. They must keep serving Him in love.

As long as we remain active in God's service it is difficult for us to become complacent in it. Active service hinders the judaizers from influencing you. You are too busy doing what is right to be distracted by what is being taught wrong.

Even though irreversible apostasy is a possibility, those who place their hope in God's promises have nothing to fear.

Trans: As we do our part God is sure to be doing His. What God does is so true and sure we can indisputably put our trust in it.

2. Trust in God's promises.

A. Hebrews 6:13-20

B. Although each Christian has their part to do in staying faithful, without the promises of God, we have no hope, faithfulness is then pointless.

C. God uses Abraham as an example of one who was faithful to God based upon the hope He possessed.

1. God had promised to multiply the line of Abraham.
2. This didn't not happen overnight, it took time.

3. Abraham remained faithful to God. He patiently waited and so received the promise.

D. The Abraham argument is a counter attack against the Judaizers.

1. It is possible the Judaizers are suggesting that the promises made in Christ are not true since they do not yet see they outcome. **2Peter 3:1-9**

2. But they cannot forget it is God who swore this oath.

a. An oath by God is something we can absolutely trust.

1. He can swear by no one greater

2. The oath shows God will not change what he has promised.

3. He cannot lie. **Titus 1:1,2**

b. The oath of this promise is a hope which is an anchor to the soul.

1. God's faithfulness is our assurance.

2. Jesus is the proof of God's faithfulness. **Romans 5:8**

3. We have a hope that is both sure and steadfast.

4. It is a hope that goes into heaven itself, beyond the veil.

5. It is hope built upon the foundation of Jesus' priesthood.

Psalm 110:4

Conclusion: Our hope first based upon the character of God. He is a God who does not forget our work and labor of love. He is a God who keeps His promises.

Yet His character of mercy and love does not allow us to ignore our service to Him. We must be careful not to become sluggish. We must be diligent in that service and imitate the patience of those like Abraham who obtained God's promise.

Even though irreversible apostasy is a possibility, those who place their hope in God's promises have nothing to fear.

The Superior Priesthood of Melchizedek Hebrews 7:1-10

I. What keeps you with a particular brand or product?

1. Family use.
2. Typically it is because it is superior to others out there.

II. On occasion people have tried to steer you away from your favorite brand, but even when you try the other you come back to what you know to be a good reliable product or company.

III. This is similar to what we have been discussing in the Hebrew epistle. The judaizers are attempting to pull these Christians away from Christ through offering what they see as a better option. The only problem is what they are offering is inferior to what Christ offers.

IV. One of the key points God has made through the Hebrew writer is that Jesus is superior in all ways to what the Judaizers are offering. He is encouraging these Christians to hold to the truth of God's word in Christ.

V. In our lesson today, the Hebrew writer begins to speak about the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham and the Levitical priesthood. **Hebrews 7:1-10**

1. The author, on several occasions has already made connection between Jesus and Melchizedek, now he is establishing what that connection means. **Hebrews 5:5-10**
2. In this discussion, His goal is to show the superiority of Christ' priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

VI. Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood. Since Jesus is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, His priesthood is also superior to the Levitical priesthood.

VII. In our lesson we will be covering two points from our text.

- 1. Melchizedek is superior to Abraham**
- 1. Melchizedek is superior to Levi**

Trans: We know that the writer of Hebrews has already mentioned Melchizedek three times. Now he begins to expand on the significance of this.

1. Melchizedek is superior to Abraham.

A. **Hebrews 7:1-3**

B. Historically, the first time we read about Melchizedek is in **Genesis 14:1-11.**

1. This is "the slaughter of the Kings" mentioned in **Hebrews 7:1.**
2. This battle occurred because Lot had been taken captive, and then rescued by Abram (Abraham) - **Genesis 14:12-17.**
3. As Abram returns from battle, he is met by Melchizedek - **Genesis 14:18**

C. The Hebrew writer explains that in this meeting we see the superiority of Melchizedek over Abram (Abraham).

1. He was "priest of the Most High God." (v.1)
2. Abraham "apportioned" a tenth part of the spoils of war to Melchizedek. (v.2)
3. Melchizedek is referred to in several ways which show his superiority.
 - a. The name "Melchizedek" means "king of righteousness."
 - b. He is "king of Salem" (later known as Jerusalem), "King of peace."

D. One other fascinating points made by the Hebrew writer is found in **Hebrews 7:3**.

- a. "without father, without mother, without genealogy"
- b. "having neither beginning of days nor end of life"
- c. "made like the Son of God"
- d. "remains a priest continually"

E. There is a lot of speculations as to what this refers too, but I believe the simplest interpretation is the best and correct one.

- a. There is no reason to believe that Melchizedek is anything other than a man.
- b. The fact that he is said to have no father or mother or genealogy, or having no beginning of days nor end, does not signify he was some mystical being.
- c. Rather the writer is simply stating that we have no other record of Melchizedek other than his meeting with Abram after the slaughter of the kings and the rescue of Lot.
 1. We don't know his history before this. (no beginning)
 2. We don't know his history after this. (no end)
 3. Because of this we see him as a High priest and king perpetually.

Application: As important as Abraham was, Melchizedek stands as one superior to him. Like Abraham Melchizedek was a man, but his work for God was of great importance.

The Scriptures do not support that Melchizedek was immortal, so the point is taken that this is mentioned to show his superiority over Abraham and his connection to Christ. We know of Abrams origins and his end. His service to God was not perpetual, it came to an end.

2. Melchizedek is superior to Levi

A. Hebrews 7:4-10

B. The Hebrew writer once again mentions the greatness of Melchizedek, being demonstrated by the spoils given to him by Abraham. (v.4)

C. The Hebrew writer now begins to expand on the superiority of Melchizedek by comparing him Levi and the tithes given to the Levitical priesthood.

1. Abraham paid a tenth to Melchizedek
2. The nation of Israel would later pay a tenth to the sons of Levi.
3. As great as Abraham was this act shows him Melchizedek superiority.

4. The fact that Melchizedek received tithes and blessed Abram shows him to be superior to Abram. "The inferior is blessed by the superior." (v.7)

D. This act then reaches into the future and impacts the Levitical priesthood. (v.8-10)

1. Under the Levitical priesthood, tithes were received by "mortal men."
(whose service ended at death)

2. But it is testified that Melchizedek "lives" (He remains a priest perpetually).

3. Again this is not mystical but metaphorical that illustrates he is a type of Christ.

4. Because he had no beginning or end it's as if his priesthood is perpetual.

5. Because Abram gave tithes to Melchizedek, Levi did the same though in the loins of Abram.

6. Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes "through Abraham, so to speak". In this way Melchizedek is greater than the Levitical priests.

Conclusion: The Hebrew writer has told us that Jesus is "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek". This is a fulfilment of Psalm 110:4

To drive home the importance of what that means the Hebrew writer shows that Melchizedek was superior to both Abram and Levi.

Understanding the superiority Melchizedek prepares us to appreciate the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood. Since Jesus is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, His priesthood is also superior to the Levitical priesthood.

The Implication of Christ's Priesthood Hebrews 7:11-22

I. If you were attempting to convince someone to not commit to a particular way of living, what arguments would you use?

II. Often times we tell people to make a list of the pros and cons so they can see clearly the differences between the choices.

III. The Hebrew writer has been doing that exact thing. He is attempting to keep Christians from abandoning Christ and going back to an old law that cannot save them. To keep them from doing this He is showing Why Christ is Superior to what they have left behind.

IV. In his latest argument he has been addressing the priesthood of Jesus. This is something he has slowly built up too, but is now examining more deeply.

1. **Heb. 2:17**
2. **Heb. 3:1**
3. **Heb. 4:14**
4. **Heb. 4:15**
5. **Heb. 5:5-6**

V. One of the issues that arises when bringing up Jesus' priesthood and Him being high priest, is the old law itself.

1. Jesus is not a priest in the order of Aaron
2. His priesthood is "according to the order of Melchizedek" – **Heb. 5:9-10**
 - a) Melchizedek was a priest "of God Most High" who met Abram. **Gen. 14:14-20**
 - b) God swore that the Messiah would be a priest like Melchizedek. **Psalms 110:4**

VI. Seeing that Jesus does not follow the current order of the Levitical Priesthood; a problem with the Law seems to exist. But the Hebrew writer explains the implications of the priesthood of Jesus in matters pertaining to the Levitical priesthood and the Law of Moses. **Hebrews 7:11-22**

VII. Since Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, we have the promise of a better covenant.

1. The Priesthood of Jesus implies there were issues with the Levitical priesthood.

A. **Hebrews 7:11**

B. The Levitical priesthood did not bring perfection.

1. Perfection means "completeness" and in this context it speaks of making men acceptable to God.
 - a. The Old Law with its priesthood could never fully reconcile man back to God

b. The animal sacrifices could not make one "perfect". **Heb. 10:1-4**

C. If the Levitical priesthood could make one perfect, there is no need for another priest to arise like Melchizedek. Jesus would have simply been born into the lineage of Levi and been a sacrifice under that priesthood.

Application: Brother Mark Copeland states, "Jesus coming as a priest after the order of Melchizedek implies that the Levitical priesthood, while having served the purpose for which it was intended (to foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ), was not able to provide man what he really needs.

2. The Priesthood of Jesus implies the law was no longer necessary and thus came to an end.

A. Hebrews 7:12-22

B. When the priesthood changes, by necessity the law changes.

1. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, not Levi.

a. **Heb. 7:13-14**

b. **Matt 1:1-2**

2. Moses had not authorized anyone from Judah to serve as priest; God specifically forbid anyone other than a descendant of Aaron. **Num. 16:40**

3. For Christ to serve as priest, then, a change must have occurred – **Heb. 7:14**

C. Jesus' priesthood did not take place through the flesh, being born into the tribe of Levi, but according to the power of an indestructible life (His resurrection). **Heb. 7:15-17**

1. The Levitical priests service ended upon death.

2. On the other hand Jesus is a priest "forever". His priesthood is unchangeable.

Heb. 7:24

D. The change of priesthood sets aside the Law.

1. The old Law is "declared as void".

2. The former commandment has been set aside. **Heb. 7:18-19**

E. That the Law being done away should not surprise these Christians.

1. God foretold this would happen. **Heb. 8:7-13**

2. Jesus implied that the Law would be done away once it was fulfilled.

Matt. 5:17-18

3. If the priesthood has changed, then it must have been fulfilled and done away!

4. The Apostle Paul described how Jesus abolished it in His death on the Cross.

Eph. 2:14-16

Col. 2:14-16

3. The Priesthood of Jesus implies we have a better hope based upon a better covenant.

A. Hebrews 7:19-22

B. Because of this new Covenant we can draw near to God.

1. The sacrifices of the Old Law could not make one "perfect" regarding sin.

Heb. 10:1-4

2. But now we have in Christ "a better hope"

a. Here we find the keyword of this epistle: "better"

b. Our hope in drawing near to God is now "better" than before, because we can actually accomplish this through the new Covenant.

c. Our High Priest has "passed through the heavens". **Heb. 4:14**

d. Our High Priest can "sympathize with our weaknesses". **Heb. 4:15**

e. Our High Priest makes it possible to "come boldly to the throne of grace" and "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need".

Heb. 4:16

Application: Because Jesus is "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek", our hope for drawing near to God is much better.

Melchizedek is superior to Abraham and Levi. Therefore, his priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood. This means Jesus' own priesthood is superior and the implications of what that means cannot be overlooked.

Since Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, we have the promise of a better covenant.

The Superior Priesthood of Christ Hebrews 7:20-28

- I. The basis for anything we do, is a key factor in its success.
 1. Going to college.
 2. Starting a business.
 3. Taking a vacation.

- II. If we determine that why we are doing what we are doing is not sufficient reason to be doing it, the outcome of what we are doing will be less than desirable.

- III. A good example is family traditions. In the past those traditions may have suited your family, but a time may come when the direction of your life deems those traditions undesirable and even burdensome. *There was a tradition of a woman cutting the end of a pot-roast off before she cooked it. Her mother did it, her grandmother did it, even her great grandmother did it. Turns out the tradition started because great grandmas pot was too small for the pot-roast.*

- IV. From the beginning of his epistle the Hebrew writer has been presenting evidences that Jesus is superior to what the Judaizers are offering these Christians. In fact, he has been demonstrating that the past things of the Old Law are no longer desirable because a New Covenant has come and our hope is found in it.

- V. Last week we were discussing the importance of Christ's Priesthood as compared to the Levitical Priesthood. It was noted that, "**Since Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, we have the promise of a better covenant.**" The Levitical priesthood was no longer in effect.

- VI. As the Hebrew writer continues to expand on the priesthood of Christ, he now shows that the implications of the changing of the priesthood supports the superiority of Christ priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

- VII. **Jesus, being a perpetual High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, has a superior priesthood.**
 1. **Jesus' priesthood is superior because He was divinely appointed with an oath.**
 - A. Hebrews 7:20-22

 - B. Levitical priests were appointed under the law, by a "command"...
 1. Aaron and his descendants served in the Levitical priesthood.
 2. They were appointed by divine command. **Exodus 28:1-4**

 - C. Jesus was appointed High Priest with an oath.
 1. Psalm 110:4
 2. God swore an oath concerning the Messiah and His priesthood.

3. A promise joined with an oath is "immutability." It shows the unchangeableness of God's direction. **Hebrews 6:17**
4. Because Jesus was appointed High Priest by an oath, He has become "a surety of a better covenant".
 - a. He is the guarantor of what God has promised.
 - b. Jesus guarantees the New Covenant is "better" than the old.

2. Jesus' priesthood is superior because it is everlasting.

A. Hebrews 7:23-25

B. The Levitical priests were limited in their service because they died. Because of this the High Priest existed in greater numbers.

C. On the other hand Jesus continues forever as High Priest.

1. This means He makes intercession for us permanently.
2. Jesus is High Priest "according to the power of an indestructible life". **Heb. 7:16**
3. His priesthood is unchangeable.
 - a. "He is able also to save [i]forever those who draw near to God through Him."
 1. He can do what the law could not do: make one "perfect" **Hebrews 7:19**
 - 2) He makes us "holy, and blameless". **Col. 1:21-22**
 - b. He can do this since He always lives to make intercession for them.

3. Jesus' priesthood is superior because His superior character.

A. Hebrews 7:26-27

B. The Levitical priests being appointed according to physical requirements were sinners like the rest of the people.

1. The High Priests had to offer up sacrifices first for His own sins. **(v.27)**

C. Jesus on the other hand was "a High Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners is "separate from sinners". **(v.26)**

1. He is preeminent in His position as High Priest. He was "exalted above the heavens". **(v.26)**
2. He does offer sacrifices for Himself
3. Thus, He is a High Priest "fitting" for us.
4. He was like us, but unlike us (in the flesh, yet without sin).

Hebrews 2:14,15

Hebrews 5:7-10

Hebrews 4:14-16

4. Jesus' priesthood is superior because His sacrifice is permanent.

A. Hebrews 7:27

B. The Levitical priests sacrificed daily.

1. Every day they offered sacrifices for their own sins and for those of the people.
2. The continually sacrifices offered implies a fundamental weakness in the efficacy of the sacrifices themselves.
3. **Hebrews 9:9**
4. **Hebrews 10:1-4**

C. On the other hand Jesus offered himself "once for all".

1. This implies the efficacy of His sacrifice
2. His sacrifice was superior.

Hebrews 9:11-15

Hebrews 10:11-14

Conclusion: Jesus, being a perpetual High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, has a superior priesthood.

1. Jesus' priesthood is superior because He was divinely appointed with an oath.
2. Jesus' priesthood is superior because it is everlasting.
3. Jesus' priesthood is superior because His superior character.
4. Jesus' priesthood is superior because His sacrifice is permanent.

Jesus, Our Superior High Priest
Hebrews 8:1-5

- I. Have you ever looked an old Farmer's Almanac or catalog from the 1800's?

- II. One of the things I like to do is look at the ad's for everyday products of the time.
 - 1. Anybody remember Bed warmer's?
 - 2. Back in the day bed warmers were useful.

- III. What I find most interesting is how many of those things, although practical and necessary for the time, are now outdated.
 - 1. We have things that have replaced them altogether.
 - 2. They have been replaced by similar items which function more efficiently.

- IV. As we have been considering the Hebrew epistle, over these past few weeks we have been focusing on the priesthood of Jesus.
 - 1. It is according to the order of Melchizedek, a Priesthood Superior to the Levitical Priesthood.
 - 2. The Priesthood of Jesus implied the Levitical Priesthood was inferior to His Priesthood.
 - 3. The Priesthood of Jesus is superior to the Levitical Priesthood.

- V. All these points were established by God through the Hebrew writer so as to keep the Jewish Christians from going back to faith that no longer existed. If they listen to the Judaizers they will find themselves separated from Christ, lost.

- VI. In chapter eight the Hebrew writer continues to support the Superiority of Jesus; priesthood. This time he focuses on Jesus being a superior High Priest.

- VII. Jesus as our Superior Heavenly High Priest provides all we need as a minister in the true tabernacle of God.**

1. Jesus' Position as High Priest is Superior.

A. Hebrews 8:1

B. Jesus has taken His place at the right hand of God.

- 1. He has entered into the heavenly realm, not behind the curtain of the holy of holies, a copy of the real thing.

- 2. He sits with "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens".
 - A. Majesty is a Jewish reference to God. **Hebrews 1:3**

- 3. This place Jesus has taken shows He is Superior to the Levitical High Priest.

4. The importance of where Jesus' now ministers must not be overlooked.
 - A. **Psalm 110:1** (David Prophesied)
 - B. **Mark 14: 60-62** (Jesus Promised)
 - C. **Mark 16:19; Heb. 12:2** (He sits in a place of authority)
 4. **Acts 2:33** (From this place He sent forth the Holy Spirit)
 5. **Acts 5:30-31** (This is the place of our prince and savior)
 6. **Romans. 8:34** (He intercedes for us from this place)
 7. **Heb. 10:12-13** (From this place His enemies will be made His footstool)
 8. **Psalm 110:1-2,5; 1Cor. 15:24-26** (He rules from this place)
 9. **Eph. 1:20-22; 1Pet. 3:22** (He is above all other authority)

Application: Where Jesus now sits, is a place honor and authority. Unlike any other High Priest.

2. Jesus' service in the true Tabernacle is Superior.

A. **Hebrews 8:2-5**

B. Jesus serves in the tabernacle erected by God, not man.

1. Here we have a distinction between two tabernacles.
 - a. The Levites served in the earthly sanctuary or tabernacle.
 1. It was ordained by God but built by men.
 2. **Hebrews 9:1-10**
 - b. Jesus serves in the tabernacle "which the Lord erected".
 1. It is a heavenly tabernacle
 2. The heavenly tabernacle is heaven itself!
- Hebrews 9:11-12; 23-24**

C. Jesus serves in the true tabernacle of God, not the copy.

1. Like the Levitical High Priest, it is necessary for Him to have something to Offer. **Hebrews 8:3**
 - a. Every high priest is appointed for this purpose - **Hebrews 5:1**
 - b. Jesus offered something far better. **Hebrews 9:12**
2. His service is in heaven, not on the earth. **Hebrews 8:4**
 - a. On earth He couldn't be a priest.
 - b. The Law required priests from the tribe of Levi. Jesus was from Judah.
3. The priests on the earth serve in the copy and shadow of the heavenly things
 - a. **Hebrews 8:5**
 - b. This tabernacle was according to pattern of the heavenly one, shown to him on the mountain. **Exodus 25:40**

Application: Jesus renders service in heaven itself, the true tabernacle of God. **Jesus as our Superior Heavenly High Priest provides all we need as a minister in the true tabernacle of God.**

1. Jesus' Position as High Priest is Superior.

2. Jesus' service in the true Tabernacle is Superior.

The Promise of a New and Better Covenant Hebrews 8:6-13

- I. I'm sure we have all gone into some store looking to buy something and expecting to pay a specific amount only to find it on sale.
- II. That is a wonderful feeling, especially if the savings is substantial. That's even a better deal.
- III. As we have been studying through the Hebrew epistle, we have noted that the writer is trying to show that what is offered under Christ is far superior than what is being offered by the Judaizers, namely the Old Law.
- IV. To show how appealing this deal is, the Hebrew writer now focuses on the New Covenant offered in Christ. **Hebrews 8:6-13**
- V. **The New Covenant offered in Christ is far superior to the Old Covenant of Moses, because it is enacted on better promises.**

Trans: In laying a foundation as to why the New Covenant in Christ is superior to the Old Covenant of Moses, the Hebrew writer explains that there was a problem with the first Covenant.

1. The problem with the first Covenant.

- A. The first Covenant was not faultless. **Hebrews 8:7**
 - 1. If there were no problem with it, then we have no need for a second.
 - 2. The Hebrew writer has already mentioned some of the issues.
 - a. The Levitical priesthood could not bring perfection. **Hebrews 7:11**
 - b. The Law made nothing perfect. It was set aside because of its weakness and uselessness - **Hebrews 7:18-19**
 - 3. We will discover that this also pertains to the sacrifices.
 - a. They could not make those who approach perfect. **Hebrews 10:1-3**
 - b. The blood of animals could not take away sins - **Hebrews 10:4,11**
- B. The people of the Old Covenant are also to blame. **Hebrews 8:8,9**
 - 1. The people did not continue in His covenant. **Jeremiah 11:7-10**
 - 2. Because of this He did not care for them. He allowed them to be taken away by their enemies. **Jeremiah 11:11-14**

Application: It wasn't that God made a mistake in making the first Covenant. God worked with what he had. Imperfect people and sacrifices that couldn't satisfy the guilt of their sin. But this was part of God's plan. He had set in place something far superior, which would actually provide what was needed even while the people remained imperfect.

The New Covenant offered in Christ is far superior to the Old Covenant of Moses, because it is enacted on better promises.

2. The promise and hope of a New Covenant.

A. Hebrews 8:10-13

B. In **Jeremiah 31:31-34** we see where God makes the promise of a New Covenant.

C. That New Covenant would be different from the old one in four key areas.

1. It will be an inward spiritual covenant. **Hebrews 8:10**

a. The first covenant had its laws written on tablets of stone. **2Cor. 3:1,2**

b. The new covenant is one that requires God's laws be written in our hearts.

c. His Word must be planted in our hearts. **James 1:21**

b. This implanting allows us to be born again. **1Peter 1:22-23**

2. God's people will have a different relationship with Him. **Hebrews 8:10**

a. God has always had a relationship with His people.

b. But that relationship changes based upon this New Covenant.

2Corinthians 6:16-18

1Peter 2:9-10

c. This even carries over into eternity. **Revelation 21:1-7**

3. God's people will know of their relationship with Him because they choose it.

Hebrews 8:11

a. Under the first covenant, people entered it at birth; as they grew up, they needed to be taught about the Lord. **Romans 7:7-12**

b. Under the New Covenant people will hear about the Lord and then come to Him.

c. In the new covenant, you must know the Lord before you can enter the covenant.

d. You must believe in Jesus before they can enter into a covenant relationship with their Lord through baptism. **Acts 8:34-38**

4. God's people will find forgiveness of sins. **Hebrews 8:12,13**

a. This is the better promises. We can have forgiveness of sins and truly be God's people, and He will be our God.

c. The New Covenant provides what the first covenant could not, forgiveness of sins. **Hebrews 10:1-4,11**

Conclusion: For the Jew that was considering leaving the New Covenant of Christ for the Old, it would be like them buying a TV today that was built in the 1960's which they could never pay off. They would die still in debt for something obsolete.

But in Christ they had everything they needed. They had accepted a superior covenant with its superior promises. They could actually be saved by God's grace through faith in Christ.

The New Covenant offered in Christ is far superior to the Old Covenant of Moses, because it is enacted on better promises.

The Importance and Limitations of The Earthly Sanctuary Hebrews 9:1-10

- I. One of the most important aspects of the Jewish faith was the Temple. Even today thousands of people flock to the Wailing Wall or Western Wall in Jerusalem.
 - A. The wall is believed to be part of Herod's Temple.
 - B. It is considered to be a sacred site.
 - C. People come to the wall and pray and place slips of paper with prayers into the cracks.

- II. Looking back to what the Hebrew writer has been speaking about concerning the Superiority of Christ, we find that the Temple being discussed.

- III. The Temple was considered to be a means of connecting with God. To let go of the Temple would be letting go of that connection.

- IV. The Hebrew writer is going to argue that although the earthly tabernacle had its purpose there is a better Tabernacle for the people of God. **Hebrews 9:1-10**

- V. **The Jews should not seek to go back under an old law with an inferior Sanctuary when a Superior Heavenly Sanctuary is found in Christ.**

Transition: This morning we are going to consider the earthly tabernacle and God's purpose for it.

1. Describing the Earthly Sanctuary

A. **Hebrews 9:1-5**

B. There is the Holy place

1. In this first part the priests entered daily.
2. It contained objects used in worship
 - a. The lampstand - **Exo 25:31-40; 26:35**
 - 1) Placed next to the south wall of the tabernacle
 - 2) Made of gold and had seven lamps for burning olive oil
 - 3) It was never allowed to go out
 - b. The table and the showbread - **Exo 25:23-30; 26:35; Lev 24:5-9**
 - 1) A table overlaid with gold
 - 2) On which were kept twelve loaves of bread, in two rows of six
 - 3) Fresh loaves were brought in each Sabbath, and the old were eaten by the priests - **1Sa 21:3-6; Mt 12:3,4**

C. There is the Holies of Holy. **Hebrews 9:3-5**

1. This was the part of the tabernacle behind the veil, also called "The Most Holy" - **Exo 26:31-33**

2. This innermost room also contained objects used in worship

a. The golden altar of incense.

1) The golden altar of incense was actually in the Holy Place, just on the other side of the veil separating the two rooms - **Exo 30:1-10**

a) On this altar sweet spices were continually burned with fire taken from the brazen altar (which was outside the tabernacle)

b) The morning and evening services were begun by the high priest offering incense on this altar

c) Once a year, the High Priest would take a censer of burning coals from this altar along with incense into the The Most Holy Place - **Lev 16:12**

2) It is appropriate to say the The Most Holy Place "had" the golden altar...

a) For the smoke of the daily incense would permeate through the veil, and as such be "a perpetual incense before the LORD" - **Exo 30:8**

b) The annual ceremony on the Day of Atonement connected in a tangible way the altar of incense with The Most Holy Place - **Lev 16:12**

b. The ark of the covenant

1) A chest made of acacia wood, about four feet long by two and half feet high and wide - **Exo 25:10-16**

2) Covered with gold, it was the most sacred thing in the tabernacle

3) In it contained...

a) The golden pot that had the manna - **Exo 16:32-34**

b) Aaron's rod that budded - **Num 17:1-11**

c) The tablets of the covenant - **Deut 10:1-5**

4) Covering the ark was the mercy seat - **Exo 25:17-22**

a) This lid, covered with gold, was topped with two cherubim (with wings stretched upward, and their faces "toward each other and toward the mercy seat.")

b) The Lord was said to appear in a cloud above the mercy seat - **Lev 16:2; Num 7:89; 2Ki 19:5**

2. The Rituals of the Earthly Sanctuary

A. **Hebrews 9:6-7**

B. The Holy Place. **Hebrews 9:6**

1. Every morning and evening, the priests would go into The Holy Place "performing the services"...
 - a. They would trim the lamps on the lampstand - **Exo 27:20-21**
 - b. They would offer incense on the altar of incense - **Exo 30:7-8**
2. On the Sabbath, the priests would replace the Showbread – **Lev 25:4-9**

C. The Most Holy Place. **Hebrews 9:7**

1. Once a year, only the high priest entered The Most Holy Place. **Lev 16:2**
 - a. On the Day of Atonement
 - b. The tenth day of the seventh month - **Lev 16:29**
2. The high priest would do three things:
 - a. Offer the incense to cloud the mercy seat - **Lev 16:12-13**
 - b. Sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood of a bull, as a sin offering for himself and his family - **Lev 16:11,14**
 - c. Sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood of a goat, as a sin offering for the people - **Lev 16:15**
3. In this way he offered blood for his own sins and those of the people committed in ignorance - **Heb 9:7**

3. The Limitations of the Earthly Sanctuary

A. **Hebrews 9:8-10**

B. The sanctuary was symbolic.

1. As already stated, the tabernacle and its service was "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things"

Heb. 8:4-5

Heb. 10:1a

Col 2:16-17

2. Thus it was "symbolic for the present time" – **Heb. 9:9**
 - a. It symbolized what eventually would occur when Christ came.
 - b. It symbolized what Christ has now done in reality when He entered heaven.

Heb. 9:11-12,24-26

3. The Holy Spirit was thus indicating that "the way into heaven itself was not yet made manifest". **Heb. 9:8**

C. The sanctuary had its limitations.

1. The gifts and sacrifices could not make one perfect in regard to the conscience
 - Heb. 9:9**
 - Heb. 9:14**
 - Heb. 10:1-4**
2. The ceremonies involved "fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation". **Heb. 9:10**
 - a. Just as the sanctuary was "earthly", the ordinances were "fleshly"

- 1) In contrast to that which is heavenly, spiritual
- 2) Indeed, all of the ritual was designed to impact the physical side of man
 - a) I.e., his senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
 - b) E.g., the burning of incense, the blowing of trumpets, the garments
- b. Such ordinances were designed to be temporary
 - 1) Until "the time of reformation", when changes in worship would be made.
 - 2) Indeed, now God expects "spiritual" worship. **John 4:21-24**
 - a) Worship that is more in keeping with God's true nature (Spirit)
 - b) Worship that focuses on the inner man.
 - 1) E.g., singing, where the emphasis is on melody made in the heart - **Eph 5:19; Col 3:16**
 - 2) Even in the Lord's Supper, which has physical elements, the emphasis is on the communion we share in the body of and blood of Jesus as we commemorate His death - **1Cor 11:23-26; 10:16-17**

Conclusion: It's understandable that the Jews would not want to let go of temple worship. It gave them a connection to God, although primarily physical in nature.

And the earthly sanctuary and its fleshly ordinances served God's purpose well. It revealed the terrible nature and high price of sin. It revealed the need for the shedding of blood to provide the remission of sin. It prepared people for the coming of the ultimate sacrifice and complete redemption

But as useful as it was, it was temporary and symbolic. It was a copy and shadow of what was to come. It was designed to vanish away when what it represented came to pass.

The Jews should not seek to go back under an old law with an inferior Sanctuary when a Superior Heavenly Sanctuary is found in Christ.

The Ministry of the Superior Sanctuary Hebrews 9:11-23

I. Have you ever seen the model that was made for Mount Rushmore? It really is something to behold.

II. But what is more fascinating than the model is the actual Monument itself. Here you see the work of Gutzon Borglum.

III. One thing that should be noted is that the model of Mt. Rushmore and the actual Monument are different. The model is not an exact representation of the monument, but it is very close. And as interesting as the model is it pales in glory in comparison to the actual monument.

IV. As the Hebrew writer has been building his argument of faithfulness to Christ over living under the old law of Moses, he has been focusing on the tabernacle and the services that took place there.

1. Last week it was noted that the earthly tabernacle was only a copy and shadow of the heavenly one. This makes it inferior to what Jesus offers.
2. Jesus offers entrance into the heavenly tabernacle in heaven itself.

V. Although the earthly tabernacle was divinely ordered, it was only a temporary structure. It was never meant to be permanent. God had something far better in mind, an eternal heavenly sanctuary.

VI. In our lesson today, the Hebrew writer turns our attention to the services of this heavenly sanctuary as compared to the earthly tabernacle.

VII. The services of the heavenly sanctuary are far superior to the earthly one because they actually provide the forgiveness man needs through the High Priest who offers them.

1. The service deals effectively with sin.

A. Hebrews 9:11-23

B. The service rendered in the heavenly tabernacle provides eternal redemption.

1. Christ entered the "Most Holy Place" (heaven) like the high priest entered the Most Holy Place in the earthly sanctuary

2. The Hebrew writer provides six major differences between what Jesus did and the service offered in the earthly tabernacle.

- a. Jesus took His own blood, not the blood of goats and calves.
- b. Jesus entered "once for all", not once a year.
- c. He "obtained eternal redemption"

1. He does not need to offer His blood every year. **Heb. 10:10-12**

- d. The conscience is cleansed. **Heb. 9:13-14**
 - a. The blood of animals was able to purify the flesh of an unclean person.
 - Heb. 9:9-10**
 - Heb. 10:1-2**
 - b. The daily and annual sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin.
 - Heb. 10:3**
 - c. But the blood of Christ is able to purge the conscience from dead works (sin) to serve the living God.
 - 1. Christ not only removes the "legal" guilt of sin, but also the "inward" (or emotional) guilt of sin! (Mark Copeland)
- e. This service covers those under the first covenant as well. **Hebrews 9:15**
 - 1. As a Mediator Jesus our High priest serves those under the New Covenant as well as the Old. (No need to go back to the Old)
 - 2. His death can cover all sinners since His death and those under who lived under the first covenant, who were called to receive the promise of eternal inheritance!
- f. The service requires a greater, more costly sacrifice.
 - 1. **Hebrews 9:16-17**
 - a. A testament, or will, requires the death of the one who makes it.
 - b. It does not become of force until the testator dies
 - c. The New Covenant with its heavenly sanctuary requires Jesus' death for it to become of force.
 - 2. Through His sacrifice the New Covenant was inaugurated
 - Heb. 9:18-23**
 - a. The first covenant was dedicated with the blood of calves and goats.
 - b. Its tabernacle and furniture were purified with the sprinkling of such blood
 - d. The New Covenant required something greater.
 - 1. The first covenant was only a "copy of the things in the heavens"
 - 2. The heavenly things required purification by "better sacrifices" (Jesus' own blood)

Illustration: B. W. Johnson comments: "By the heavenly things are meant all of which the tabernacle was typical. The holy place was a type of the church, which is cleansed with the blood of Christ. Perhaps, too, there is a reference to the redeemed church above, in the heavens, which eternally praises him who cleansed it with his blood." (The People's New Testament)

Conclusion: In his service in the true tabernacle of God, Jesus provides atonement for those before and after His death.

This clearly shows that He "obtained eternal redemption". This redemption is offered to all who will accept Him and what He did, and what He is doing.

The "better sacrifices", Jesus' blood, initiated the new covenant and made the heavenly sanctuary superior to the earthly one.

The services of the heavenly sanctuary are far superior to the earthly one because they actually provide the forgiveness man needs through the High Priest who offers them.

It Is Finished
Hebrews 9:23-28

I. Although living in a major city has many benefits, one of the most frustrating aspects is the seemingly never-ending road construction that takes place.

II. Although I can appreciate what the construction will bring about, the inconveniences it creates while it is taking place can create all sorts of problems.

III. Because we know the finished product will be beneficial, we are frustratingly patient while the work is taking place. When we see the finished product, we are delighted with what it provides.

IV. As we consider the Hebrew epistle, it is apparent that what the Hebrew people had under the old law was not God's intended finished product.

1. There was a new eternal High Priest to come.
2. There was a new priesthood to come.
3. There was a Heavenly tabernacle for the people of God, not an earthly one.
4. There was a better and more costly sacrifice than bulls and goats.
5. There was a far better covenant, grace was realized.
6. The old law was the copy and shadow; the New Covenant was the completed product of God's work for humanity.

V. The road may have been rocking under the old covenant because of the sins of the people, but where they were headed was of the greatest value.

VI. The finished work of God was a New Covenant which provided salvation for mankind; established and sealed in the blood of Christ.

VII. In last week's lesson we noted two important facts concerning the Heavenly sanctuary that is part of this New Covenant.

1. The service in the Heavenly sanctuary effectively dealt with sin.
2. The price for the service to effectively deal with sin was far more costly than in the earthly tabernacle.

1. The ministry in the Heavenly tabernacle is fully complete.

A. Hebrews 9:23-28

B. Because of His sacrifice Christ has opened to us what our souls have longed for, access to God, the Father. **(v.24)**

1. No longer is a high priest serving in a tabernacle "made with hands".
2. Service no longer takes place in what was only a "mere copy".
3. Christ is now in the presence of God for us.
4. In God's presence, Jesus is ministering as High Priest in what is the "true" holy place!

C. His sacrifice is all sufficient. **(vs. 25,26)**

1. He only needed to offer Himself once. The high priests of old entered the Most Holy Place each and every year.
2. If it was all sufficient, He would have needed to "suffer often from the foundation of the world"
 - a. **Hebrews 9:15**
 - b. It not only covers sin completely it covers all the faithful of God.
 - c. His sacrifice flows all the way back to the Garden. It is all sufficient.
What covers Adam and Eve?
What covers Noah?
What covers Abraham?
2. At the "consummation of the ages", He was manifested to put away sin once for all, through His sacrifice!
 - a. The "consummation of the ages" is the "last days" – **Heb. 1:2**
 - b. This is the final period of the humanities history, on earth, with God.
1Cor 10:11
1Pet 1:20

D. Like our physical death because of sin, which is a one-time event, Jesus needed to be offered as a sacrifice only once for sin. **(vs. 27,28)**

1. His first coming was to be the "sin-bearer"
 - a. He came "to bear the sins of many"
 - b. He did this by dying on the cross for our sins - **1Pet. 2:21-24**
2. His second coming will not be about sin; in fact, it will be "without *reference to sin*". He has become a sacrifice once for all, for all time. **1John 1:7-2:1,2**
3. Jesus' second appearance will be about salvation for those who eagerly await Him.
 - a. **1Thess. 1:9-10**
 - b. **2Thess. 1:6-10**
4. He will bring salvation from God's wrath.
 - a. **Romans 5:9**
 - b. **Matthew 25:31-32, 41-46**

Conclusion: That old law was a rough road in that the people were required to do so much and even when they did it, they still lacked what was so desperately needed, forgiveness of sins.

But God had a plan, a finished product in Christ. It is a Heavenly sanctuary, with a merciful and faithful High Priest, who offered Himself one time, for all time, for all humanity so we might be freed from our sin and be with God eternally.

Indeed; **The finished work of God was a New Covenant which provided salvation for mankind; established and sealed in the blood of Christ.**

Christ Is the Superior Sacrifice Hebrews 10:1-18

I. Whenever we are comparing similar products to determine which to purchase it is always wise to consider the advantages one has over the other.

II. For example, if you are considering buying a bed and money is not an issue. Which one do you choose?

1. We know that beds are not all the same.

A. There are different kinds of material.

Sleep Number, Memory Foam, Purple

B. There are different styles.

Pillow top, Feather top, Traditional

2. In determining which one to buy, you first eliminate those that don't meet your particular needs.

3. You will eventually narrow your choice down to several similar beds. Ultimately your decision will be based upon which one you consider to be superior to the other.

4. The advantages one bed has over another is vital when it comes to which one you choose.

III. As we have been studying through the Hebrew epistle, we have seen that the writer wants us to see the advantages of Christ and the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. The goal is to keep Christians from falling after a covenant that does not provide what is truly needed, forgiveness of sins.

IV. In previous lessons it has been demonstrated why Christ and His ministry are superior in every aspect over the Old Law.

1. Superior Priesthood. **Heb. 7:1-28**

2. Superior High Priest. **Heb. 8:1-5**

3. Superior Covenant and promise. **Heb. 8:6-13**

4. Superior service in the Sanctuary. **Heb. 9:11-23**

5. Superior Heavenly Tabernacle. **Heb. 9:24-28**

V. One other aspect of the Superior work of Christ, which is associated with the old covenant and the tabernacle, is the sacrifice which He offered.

VI. Christ, fulfilling the will of the Father, sacrificed Himself to sanctify a people for Himself, once for all.

VII. In his epistle, the Hebrew writer gives us the reason why the sacrifice of Jesus was superior to that the Old Law.

1. Jesus' sacrifice was superior because it did what neither the Old Covenant nor the people could do.

Transition: One of the primary arguments the Hebrew writer has been making is that the Old Law was limited in its purpose and affect, but that in Christ all that was lacking or inadequate is fulfilled.

1. Jesus' sacrifice was superior because it did what neither the Old Covenant nor the people could do.

A. Hebrews 10:1-18

- B. The animal sacrifices offered under the Old Law did not provide true remission of sin.
1. The Law was only "a shadow of the good things to come."
 2. These sacrifices were a "copy and shadow" of the heavenly things. **Heb. 8:4-5**
 3. They were "not the very form" (literally image), of the good things to come.
 4. They stood as a representation of what Jesus would do. **Heb. 9:11-12,24**
 5. The animal sacrifices did not make the worshippers "perfect". **Heb. 10:1b-2**
 - a. This is complete or even blameless.
 - b. This is regarding the conscience. **Heb. 9:9**
 - c. This is seen in repetitive nature of the sacrifices. **Heb. 10:11**
 6. The animal sacrifices were a reminder of sin. **Heb. 10:3**
 - a. In addition to the daily and monthly sacrifices, there were the yearly sacrifices on the Day of Atonement.
 - b. These constant sacrifices reminded them of their sin and need for cleansing.
 - c. In part, the reminder existed because it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. **Heb. 10:4**
 - d. The animal sacrifices impressed upon the people their need for forgiveness and acted as a harbinger of what would be accomplished in Christ.
 7. The people were also an issue. They couldn't follow God's will.
Heb. 8:5-9
Heb. 10:8

C. On the other hand Christ' sacrifice provided all that we needed.

1. Jesus did the will of the Father where we couldn't.
Heb. 10:9
Heb. 4:14
2. Jesus sacrificed Himself without blemish, while we were sinners.
3. Jesus' sacrifice provided what the animal sacrifices couldn't.
 - A. It provides forgiveness of sins, **Heb. 10:10-12.**
 - B. It makes perfect, complete, those who are sanctified, **Heb. 10:14.**
 - C. The sins of the people are remembered no more.
 - 1). **Heb. 10:17.**
 - 2). This is confirmed being a one-time sacrifice. **Heb. 10:12,18**
4. This is further supported by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. **Heb. 10:15**

Conclusion: The Old Law had its purpose, but that purpose was not to provide forgiveness of sins. It was not the failure of the Law but of the people.

Forgiveness only came through the sacrifice of Jesus. He was God in the flesh. Only God can provide forgiveness for what separates us from Him.

Jesus fulfilled the will of the Father. He not only lived a sinless life, but he also offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for us.

Thus, sacrifice of Jesus is superior to the animal sacrifices of the Old Law.

Christ, fulfilling the will of the Father, sacrificed Himself to sanctify a people for Himself, once for all.

Hold Fast
Hebrews 10:19-25

- I. At the end of a trial lawyers give what is called a closing argument.
- II. A closing argument is the final argument by an attorney on behalf of his/her client after all evidence has been produced for both sides.
- III. In Hebrews 10 we see what is similar to a closing argument. Although this is not the end of the epistle, the writer is wrapping up his testimony on some key parts of his epistle.
 1. The superiority of God's Son. **Heb. 1:1-8:6**
 2. The superiority of the New Covenant. **Heb. 8:7-10:18**
- IV. Having established the legitimacy of these two topics the writer now encourages the readers to live in such a way as to promote these truths in their own lives. **Heb. 10:23**
- V. **Because the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant have been firmly established, Christians can confidently live out the path they have taken.**
- VI. **The Hebrew writers exhorts us to live out our faith in three ways.**
 1. **Let us draw near to God.**
 2. **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.**
 3. **Let us consider how to encourage other.**

Transition: Christ has provided us access to the Father. We must take advantage of that.

1. Let us draw near to God.

A. Hebrews 10:19-21

B. Because of the work of Jesus and our faith in Him we can come before God.

1. Jesus has consecrated "a new and living way, through the veil"
 - a. There is now a new way to approach God in heaven, through One who lives.
 - b. This is made possible by "the blood of Jesus...His flesh"
 - c. Jesus now serves as "a High Priest over the house of God"
 - 1) Who is able to come to our aid - **Heb 2:17-18**
 - 2) Who sympathizes with our weakness - **Heb 4:14-16**
 - 3) Who ever lives to intercede in our behalf - **Heb 7:24-25**

2. We are able to "enter" God's presence because we have had "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"

- a. This is an allusion to the Old Testament practice of taking blood from the altar and consecrating the priests by sprinkling them with it - **Exo 29:21**
- b. We have had "our bodies washed with pure water".

1) Another allusion to the manner in which priests were consecrated - **Exo 29:4**

2) The author likely has reference to baptism...

Acts 22:16

Eph 5:26

c. The blood of Christ that is truly effective in purging our conscience of sin.

Heb 9:14

1Peter 3:21

C. Our entrance is characterized in a powerful way.

a. "having boldness" (with great confidence). **Heb. 10:19**

b. "with a true heart" (with all sincerity). **Heb. 10:22**

c. "in full assurance of faith" (without doubt). **Heb. 10:22**

D. We do not have to stand outside while a priest enters for us once a year.

1. We can enter the heavenly place where Christ has entered. **Heb. 9:11-12**

2. We enter into the presence of God Himself. **Heb 9:24**

Application: We draw near to God because Jesus has provided the access we need. We do so boldly, not on our own merit but the work of Jesus on the cross and our faith in that work.

Because the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant have been firmly established, Christians can confidently live out the path they have taken.

2. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.

A. Hebrews 10:23

B. In Christ we have a much better hope than in the past.

Heb. 6:19

Heb. 7:19

C. But we know the danger of apostasy is real. **Heb. 2:1-4**

D. Because of this must "hold fast" the hope which we confess

Heb. 3:6,14

Heb. 4:14

E. We have confidence to do this because of the character of God.

1. God is faithful

2. God will not fail us. **Heb. 13:5**

Application: We put our faith in God because He is faithful. Our hope is sure.

Because the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant have been firmly established, Christians can confidently live out the path they have taken.

3. Let us consider how to encourage other.

A. Hebrews 10:24,25

B. We know others walk the same path we do. We must remember they fight the same battles and we must be there to help.

1. We must consider how others are doing in this fight.
2. We must exhort them to faithfulness. **Heb. 3:12-14**

C. We can accomplish this through our assembling as the body of Christ.

1. Here we stir up love and good works in each other.
2. We edify and exhort one another.

D. We must not become guilty of "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"

1. The word "forsake" means "to abandon, desert".
2. This is stop assembling with the saints altogether.

E. Exhorting one another through assembling is even more imperative, as you see the Day approaching. There are various beliefs as to what this day is.

- a. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
- b. The Judgment Day at the Second Coming
- c. Some see it as our weekly assembly.
- d. The main point is to appreciate the value and necessity of our assemblies, and that forsaking them is indicative of apostasy!
- e. We can and must encourage each other as we assemble.

Application: Because apostasy is a real possibility, the faithful must work to not only stay faithful but encourage others to do the same. Assembling is one way we accomplish that.

Forsaking the assembly will lead to apostasy.

Because the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant have been firmly established, Christians can confidently live out the path they have taken.

Willful Sinning Hebrews 10:26-39

I. From our study of the Hebrew epistle it is clear that Apostasy, falling away from the faith, is possible.

A. In Hebrews we have seen several warnings concerning this.

1. A warning against drifting – **Heb. 2:1-4**
2. A warning against departing – **Heb. 3:12-14**
3. A warning against disobedience – **Heb. 4:11**
4. A warning against dullness, leading to apostasy – **Heb. 5:11-6:6**

II. Not only are we told that one can fall away from God's grace, we are also given a warning can happen if we do turn away. **Hebrews 10:26-39**

III. **If we turn away from Christ and go back to a life of sin, we forfeit what Jesus offered us in His sacrifice.**

1. Turning from Christ leads to willful sinning

A. Hebrews 10:26

B. We know we all sin as Christians yet are not lost.

John 2:1,2

John 1:9

C. So, what is the willful sinning the Hebrew writer is speaking about?

1. The sense of the Greek language is one of repeated action.
 1. Not an "act" of sin, but a "state" of sin.
 2. It is not "inadvertent" sin, but "deliberate" sin that is under consideration
 3. This is a "state" in which one...
 - a. Knows the truth. Heb 10:26b
 - b. Yet chooses to deliberately and continuously persist in sin!

D. This state of sin can be entered by a Christian.

1. The author includes himself in the discussion, "we" **Heb. 10:26a**
2. He is writing to those who have been sanctified by "the blood of the covenant". **Heb. 10:29**

Application: When a Christian persists in living in sin they are in grave danger. That danger is something that should cause the Christian to reconsider what they are doing before it is too late.

2. The penalty for willful sinning.

A. **Hebrews 10:26,27**

B. That which is most needed is lost. The sacrifice of Christ no longer remains. This implies that the blood of Christ is no longer available for one who is in a state of "willful sin"!

C. A terrifying expectation of judgement replaces the peace that comes through the sacrifice of Jesus.

a. Judgment that is certain.

Heb. 9:27,28

Acts 17:30-31

b. This state of willful sinning leaves us in fear of the coming judgment.

2Cor. 5:10-11

Heb. 10:30-31

c. There is a "fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries". **Heb. 10:27b**

Application: God has offered us a way out of our sin problem, His Son. It was the greatest sacrifice ever offered. We should not think that willfully turning from that will go unchecked. In fact, God is justified in doing this.

3. God's justification for punishing those who willfully sin.

A. Hebrews 10:28-31

B. The Hebrew writer once again turns to the Old law as a shadow of the New Covenant.

1. Under the Old Law there was no mercy of willfully ignoring God's Law if that sin was proven to be true.

2. **Heb. 10:28**

3. While there was mercy for sins of weakness or ignorance, there was none for open and deliberate sin under the Old Covenant!

C. The New Covenant doesn't allow us to escape punishment for willful sinning.

1. **Heb. 10:29**

2. When a Christian "lives in a state sin, continually sinning willfully" he/she does several things.

a. "trampled the Son of God underfoot"

1). It "denotes contempt of the most flagrant kind" (MOFFAT)

2) Such a person treats Jesus who died for him like dirt!

b. "counted as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified"

1) The blood of Jesus is what sanctifies us. **Heb. 9:14**

2) To willfully live in sin is to consider Jesus' blood a common thing. As if it didn't do what it did.

c. The Spirit of Grace has been insulted.

1) Possible reference to the Holy Spirit through whom the message of salvation was given. **John 16:13-14**

- 2) Its possible he is referring to the spirit (disposition) of God's unmerited favor.
- 3). Openly and deliberately sinning "insults" God's grace!

Application: Here the Hebrew writer is teaching two things. A Christian can so sin as to reach this point of open rebellion against Jesus! Punishment is justifiably reserved for Christians who choose this path.

4. How to avoid a state of willful sinning.

A. Hebrews 10:32-29

B. Don't lose sight of your past enlightenment.

1. In the days of Justin (ca. 167 A.D.), this term was a synonym for baptism.
2. The day they left behind the Old Law and their sin.

C. Don't lose sight of the days in which you endured great sufferings because of your faith in Christ.

1. You were made a public spectacle.
2. You shared in the sufferings of others.
3. You showed sympathy to prisoners of like faith.
4. You accepted joyfully the seizure of your property.
5. Why? "...knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one", in heaven!

D. Don't throw away your confidence. This is the opposite of hold fast. **Heb. 3:6,14**

E. Christians must endure. **Hebrews 10:36**

1. The Lord is coming. **Heb. 10:37**
2. Christians must continue to live by faith. **Heb. 10:38**
3. Christians cannot shrink back to a place of destruction.
4. We need to maintain our faith until the end so our souls will be preserved.

Conclusion: This is a great warning for all Christians. It is a massive motivating factor in staying faithful.

If we turn away from Christ and go back to a life of sin, we forfeit what Jesus offered us in His sacrifice.

Pleasing God by Remaining Faithful Hebrews 11:1-7

I. Having demonstrated that Jesus is superior to all aspects of the Old Law, which the Judaizers are attempting to get the Christians to go back to, the Hebrew writer now reminds them of the necessity of faithfulness to God the Father.

II. They have been warned of the danger of developing "a heart of unbelief." **Heb. 3:12**

III. They have been advised to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."
Heb. 10:22

IV. They have been given a warning to have that faith which endures to the end.
Heb. 10:35-39

V. In **Hebrews 11**, the writer provides examples of those who demonstrated a faith that was pleasing to God. Here he gives a clear definition of faith, so they will know that they are living as faithful Christians who are pleasing to God.

VI. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Transition: Before we can begin to understand the examples of faith, we must know what faith is.

1. Defining Faith

A. Hebrews 11:1-3

B. Faith is described as assurance and conviction.

1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for..." (NKJV)
 - a. The Greek word translated "substance" is hypostasis literally means "to stand under," i.e., to be a foundation
 - b. In **Heb. 3:14**, it is a "confidence"; a firm trust, assurance.
2. "...the evidence of things not seen." (NKJV)
 - a. The Greek word translated "evidence" means "conviction."

C. Our faith relates to something specific, "things hoped for," "things not seen."

1. Faith is having confidence in the hope of things.
 - a. The coming of our Lord. **Titus 2:13**
 - b. The resurrection of the dead. **Acts 24:15**
2. This kind of faith was the confidence possessed by the OT saints that pleased God. **Heb. 11:2**
3. Faith is also a conviction about things we have not seen. **Heb. 11:3**
 - a. God's existence: **1Tim. 6:16**
 - b. The framing of the world. **Heb. 11:3**

4. Faith is that firm conviction that such matters are real.

Transition: Having given a simple and clear definition of faith, our attention is now turned to those who gained approval through their faith. The first three mentioned were "antediluvians" living before the flood.

2. Examples of faith.

A. Hebrews 11:4-5,7

B. The faith of Abel - (A faith worshipper). **Heb. 11:4**

1. Abel is an example of faithful worship.
 - a. He "offered God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."
 - b. **Gen 4:3-5**
 - 1) Cain's offering was "of the fruit of the ground."
 - 2) Abel's offering was "of the firstborn of his flock and their fat."
 - 3) The Lord "regarded" Abel's offering, but not Cain's.
 - c. Various reasons have been given as to why Abel's offering was regarded, and Cain's wasn't. Regardless, the focus is that Abel offered his with "faith" while Cain did not.
2. Through his faith, Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous." **Heb. 11:4**
3. His example of faith continues to warn us in regards to worshipping God by faith. **Rom. 10:17**

B. The faith of Enoch - (A faith walker). **Heb. 11:5**

1. Enoch is an example of one who walked by faith.
 - a. Because of his faith, Enoch "was taken up so that he did not see death". **Gen 5:21-24**
2. His faith was such that "he pleased God."
 - a. Enoch was pleasing to God because he "walked with God."
Gen 5:21,24
 - b. Enoch is an example of walking with God throughout life, never giving up.

C. The faith of Noah – (A faith worker). **Heb 11:7**

1. By faith Noah. "in reverence prepared an ark." **Gen 6:1-22**
2. God warned Noah about "things not seen".
 - a. **Heb. 11:1**
 - b. The coming flood never seen before.
3. Noah's confidence (faith) in what God said would happen prompted him to act with reverence toward God.
4. His faith moved him to "prepared an ark for the salvation of his household"
Heb. 11:7

5. His faith moved him to do "according to all that God commanded him" -
Gen 6:22; 7:5
6. Through a working faith working, Noah "condemned the world."
 - a. His example of faith stood in stark contrast to those who perished in the flood.
 - b. He amplified the lack of obedience of those who died in the flood.
7. Noah "became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."
Noah's faith includes belief and works. **James 2:14-26**

Application: Here is the faith Christian's need to have.

- Faithful in worship
- Faithful in Walking with God
- Faithful in doing the works of God.

This faith is necessary to please God.

3. The Result of faith.

- A. **Heb. 11:6**
- B. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.
- C. Abel, Enoch, and Noah "obtained a good testimony" by their faith.
- D. The faith which pleases God.
 1. Conviction "that believes that God is."
 - a. We must believe there is a God, and He is the God of the Bible.
 - b. Though we do not see Him, we have conviction in "things not seen". **Heb. 11:1b**
 2. Confidence "that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."
 - a. We must believe that God acts on the part of those seek after Him.
 - b. Regarding such "things hoped for", that we must have confidence.
Heb. 11:1a

Conclusion: How do we develop a faith which saves? Faith is the Result of evidence provided in creation. **Rom. 1:20**

The faith that saves comes from hearing the word of God and living out that word. Rom. 10:17

Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Faith in God's Promises
Hebrews 11:8-22

I. I am sure we have all had someone promise us something and then not deliver on that promise.

II. Sometimes the fulfillment of that promise became impossible because of extenuating circumstances, (cancelation of an event, closer of a place etc...).

III. But what if the person making the promise did so time and again only to not deliver? Would we have any faith in that persons promises? No.

IV. One of the most difficult things people struggle with regarding God is putting faith in someone they cannot see. With that they also have difficulty trusting in His promises.

V. But as the Hebrew writer has stated, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."
Hebrews 11:6

VI. We all recognize that people we know have at times, and sometimes repeatedly, allowed promises to go unfulfilled. But this is not the way of God. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" **Hebrews 10:23**

VII. If we are to have a faith pleasing to God, we must not only believe in Him, but have faith in His promises.

VIII. As the Hebrew writer continues to move Christians along to faithfulness, he turns our attention to those of the past whose faith in God was demonstrated by their faith in His promises.
Hebrews 11:8-22

Trans: In last week's lesson it was noted that the three individuals mentioned were the faithful of God pre-flood. In this second demonstration of faith we now consider the Patriarchs.

1. The faithful patriarchs

A. Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-22

B. In these passages the word promise(d,s) is used five times.

C. Abraham is mentioned first as one who had faith in the promise of God. **Heb. 11:8**

1. By faith he obeyed when God called him to leave his country.

a. He obeyed the voice of the Lord. He went out even though he did not know where he was going.

b. He had the conviction of "things not seen". **Heb. 11:1**

2. "By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise". - Heb 11:9-10
 - a. The "land of promise", would not be possessed for four hundred years
Gen 13:14-17; 15:13-21
 - b. But, he was also looking for something far greater. He "was looking for the city whose architect and builder is God." He had hope in God's heavenly promise.

3. "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac". **Heb. 11:17-19**
 - a. His faith required him to offer that which was most valuable to him.
 - b. This is certainly a test of whether he had faith in God's promises.
Gen. 22:1-19
 - 1) It was through him the promises were to be fulfilled.
 - 2) He showed his faith in God's promises assuming that God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His promises.
 - 3) Abraham had confidence "in things hoped for". **Heb. 11:1**

D. Abrahams wife Sarah is mentioned second. **Hebrews 11:11,12**

1. By faith she received ability (power) to conceive.
 - a. She was beyond the proper time of childbearing. **Gen. 18:1-3; 21:1-7**
 - b. She laughed when she first heard of God's promise, but later since "she considered Him faithful who had promised."
 - c. The promises of a great nation was fulfilled in part because of her faith.

E. The next Patriarchs mentioned are a grouping of sorts.

1. Isaac - **Hebrews 11:20**
 - a. He blessed Jacob and Esau *regarding things to come*. (promises)
Gen. 27:1-40
 - b. Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau demonstrated his faith in the promises.

2. Jacob - **Hebrews 11:21**
 - a. He blessed the sons of Joseph when he was dying. **Gen. 48:14-20**
 - b. Jacobs blessings involved the promises of God thus he demonstrated his faith in those promises.

3. Joseph - **Hebrews 11: 22**
 - a. When he was dying, he made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel.
 - b. He gave instructions concerning his bones. **Gen. 50:24-26**
 - c. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God.

Application: Each of the individuals mentioned possessed the kind of faith which is pleasing to God. They not only believed in God but believed in His promises. This belief led them to respond to God's call in the way they did. They all acted upon their faith.

Their faith was the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. They were pleasing to God, not only because they believed in Him, but because they had faith that He would reward them by fulfilling His promises.

Conclusion: In Hebrews 13-16 we are given the outcome of the faith of the Patriarchs. This too is our outcome if we possess a like faith.

They did not receive the promises right away. In fact, some of the promises they did not receive in their lifetime, but they welcomed them from a distance. For example, Abraham did not receive the land promise, it was for future generations, but he did receive a son who would bring that about.

Because they were faithful, even though not receiving that ultimate heavenly promise, God is not ashamed to be called their God as demonstrated in the city He has prepared for them.

This is the same place, by faith, that we look for. **Hebrews 13:12-14**

If we are to have a faith pleasing to God, we must not only believe in Him, but have faith in His promises.

A Faith That Overcomes **Hebrews 11:23-40**

I. We have all faced tasks that seemed overwhelming. Imagine what it must have been like for Noah as he set out to build the ark.

II. Every day we face the task of rising above the world and the sin it presents to us. This can be overwhelming considering as Christians we will be doing this the rest of our lives.

III. The Christians the Hebrew writer is speaking to are facing this. There is pressure by those outside of Christ to abandon Him. How do they overcome and not succumb to this pressure?

IV. In Hebrews 11 we have a list of individuals who were able to overcome great obstacles because of their faith. This is the kind of faith we need to have if we are to overcome the world.

V. A faith that overcomes, is a faith that saves.

Transition: We have many examples of the kind of faith that overcomes the world the people of Israel.

1. A saving faith seen in the Exodus.

A. Hebrews 11:23-29

B. Moses' parents had a saving faith. Heb. 11:23

1. They hid Moses for three months. **Exo 2:1-3;**
 - a. The word "beautiful" can mean ("not ordinary") child
 - b. They did not fear of Pharaoh's edict. **Exo 1:22**
2. Their faith saved Moses because it overcame the pressures of the world, Pharaoh and Egypt.

C. Moses demonstrated a saving faith. Hebrews 11:24-28

1. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. **Hebrews 11:24,25**
 - a. He chose a life of suffering affliction with God's people over the temporary pleasures of sin.
 - b. The reproaches of Christ were more valuable than the treasures of Egypt
 - c. "He looked to the reward" (*confidence in "things hoped for"*)
2. Moses left Egypt. **Hebrews 11:26,27**
 - a. The wrath of the king was no cause of fear.
 - b. He had faith in the God he could not see as if he could see Him.
 - c. Through faith "he endured" (*conviction in "things unseen"*)
3. He kept the Passover and sprinkling of blood. **Hebrews 11:28**
 - a. He had faith in God's warning regarding the death of the firstborn.

Exodus 12:1-30

b. Moses obeyed God's command and had Israel sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the lintels and door posts.

4. Moses demonstrated a faith that saved him from the Egyptian world. He overcame the sin that could have kept him there. He faced the wrath of Egypt because of his willingness to follow God. But his faith is one that overcame and saved him.

2. The saving faith of Israel.

A. Hebrews 11:29,30

B. The people of Israel demonstrated a saving faith.

1. They passed through the Red Sea while their enemies pursued them. **Heb 11:29**

2. They destroyed the city of Jericho. **Heb. 11:30**

a. They did all that God required in a demonstration of a saving faith,
Joshua 6:1-20

3. The saving faith of Rahab.

A. Hebrews 11:31

B. Rahab knew about the God of Israel. She was willing to commit herself to their God and so she protected the two spies from Israel. Josh 2:1-24

C. Her willingness to protect the spies was a demonstration of a saving faith. She did not perish with the disobedient. **Josh 6:22-25**

Transition: The Hebrew writer then turns our attention to a list of individuals that possessed a faith that saves, because it was a faith that overcame.

4. A summary of the Heroes of saving faith.

A. Hebrews 11:32-38

B. He first lists a few of these individuals.

Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,
Woman.

C. Secondly, he lists their accomplishments of those faithful to God.

1. They conquered kingdoms. Josh. 12:7-24

2. Performed acts of righteousness. 2Sam. 8:15

3. Obtained promises. Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14

4. Shut the mouths of lion. Dan. 6:21-22

5. Quenched the power of fire. Dan. 3:23-25

6. Escaped the edge of the sword. 1Sam. 23:19-29

7. Became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight. 1Sam. 17:50

8. Women received back their dead by resurrection. 1Kings 17:17-24

D. The faith of these individuals was not without trials. His third list demonstrates the obstacles those of faith had to overcome.

1. They experienced mockings and scourgings, chains and imprisonment.
2. They were stoned, they were sawn in two.
3. They were tempted.
4. They were put to death with the sword.
5. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated.
6. They wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

Conclusion: What is the outcome of this kind of faith? “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.” **Hebrews 11:39,40**

Through faith, all those mentioned overcame the things of this world. Their ultimate victory is the reward that comes from dying in faith. **Heb. 11:13-16**

Their reward is our reward, our reward is their reward.

A faith that overcomes, is a faith that saves.

The Clear Verdict - Remain Faithful to Christ
Hebrews 12:1-3

- I. At the end of every trial that involves a jury there are closing arguments.
- II. Once the closing arguments have been made the jury must carefully deliberate to determine what their verdict will be.
- III. In essence, what the Hebrew writer has been doing is laying out the case for why the Jewish Christians should not abandon Christ and return to the old law.
- IV. In Hebrews 11 we were provided a list of individuals who demonstrated their faith in God by being obedient to His calling. This is the kind of faith all Christians are to possess.
- V. In Chapter 12 the Hebrew writer now turns to the deliberation portion of this case for remaining faithful to Christ. **Hebrews 12:1-3**
- VI. **Because the testimony for Christ is true, we must remain steadfast in our faithfulness to Him.**
- VII. To help us remain faithful the Hebrew writer tells us three things we must do.
 - 1. **Get rid of things that hinder faithfulness.**
 - 2. **Remain persistent in our faith.**
 - 3. **Stay focused to the One who saved you.**

Transition: The one thing that can trip us up in our faith is sin. We must move away from whatever hinders us.

1. Get rid of things that hinder faithfulness.

A. Hebrews 12:1

B. The writer begins with the word “therefore”.

- 1. The information presented is true. It is true based upon a great cloud of witnesses.
- 2. Since this is the case there is something we must do.
 - a. “let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us.”
 - 1. These are things that hinder our faithfulness. **Col. 3:5-9**
 - 2. All sin should be laid aside.
 - a). **Heb. 3:12,13**
 - b). The sin of unbelief.

Application: **Because the testimony for Christ is true, we must remain steadfast in our faithfulness to Him.** We must let go of what hinders us.

2. Remain persistent in our faith.

A. Hebrews 12:1

B. "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

1. This race we are in is a marathon. It will last our entire lives.
 - a. Faithful living is compared to one who runs a race.
 - b. Not only are we to remove the things that slow us down and we must not give up on the course set before us.
 - c. **James 1:2-4**
 - d. Without endurance there is no reward. **Hebrews 10:35-39**
2. It is not enough for us to have been faithful at one time. **Mark 4:3-8,13-20**
3. Endurance is a necessary quality of faithfulness. **Heb. 6:11-15**

Application: Because the testimony for Christ is true, we must remain steadfast in our faithfulness to Him. We must remain persistent in our faith.

3. Stay focused to the One who saved you.

A. Hebrews 12:2,3

B. The Hebrew writer tells us that we are to be "fixing our eyes on Jesus".

1. To run this race with endurance our focus must be upon the Lord.
2. The great cloud of witnesses are certainly an example, but our attention must constantly be on the One who has saved us.
 - a. The word "fixing" is a present active verb. It is an ongoing action with no mentioned time of completion.
 - b. It is a word that implies a steadfast unmoving gaze.
 - 1) To direct one's attention (BDAG)
 - 2) To look away from all else (NASB dictionary)
 - 3) To keeping thinking about, without having one's attention distracted. (Louw-Nida)
 - c. As suggested by this "Formula for Spiritual Success": (M. Copeland)
 - 1) If you want to be distressed -- look within
 - 2) If you want to be defeated -- look back
 - 3) If you want to be distracted -- look around
 - 4) If you want to be dismayed -- look ahead
 - 5) If you want to be delivered -- look up! **Col 3:1-2**

3. Jesus is "the author and finisher of our faith". He is the one we must constantly look to. **Heb 2:10**

- a. Jesus set the course for us having run it Himself. **Hebrew 4:14-16**

- b. As the forerunner He has entered the heavenly sanctuary
Heb. 6:19-20
- c. He has opened for us a "new and living way" **Heb. 10:20**
- d. He now helps us to finish the course. **Heb. 7:25**

- 4. He was able to do this because of "the joy set before Him" **Psalm 16:9-11**
 - a. With this joy He was able to "endure the cross" (the physical pain)
 - b. With this joy He "despised the shame" (the emotional and spiritual agony)

Conclusion: Now comes the conclusion of deliberation. The evidence has been given. The witnesses have testified. There is only one conclusion.

"For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." **Heb. 11:3**

As we consider what our Lord and Savior went through this should prevent us from growing "weary and losing heart."

As we consider the Lord and His example, we shall not grow weary nor faint. **Isaiah 40:31**

Because the testimony for Christ is true, we must remain steadfast in our faithfulness to Him.

Embracing the Chastening of the Lord Hebrews 12:4-11

I. Hebrews 12:4-11

II. One of the most difficult characteristics of the Christian walk is the struggle we encounter because of those outside the body.

III. The Christians the Hebrew writer is speaking to are facing enormous pressure to turn away from Christ. **Hebrews 2:1-4.**

IV. In fact Hebrews 12:4 demonstrates that the level of pressure can rise to a point of shedding blood (death).

V. To help the Hebrew Christians “run with endurance the race set before them” (Heb. 12:1), they are being encouraged to embrace the discipline that comes upon them through their struggle.

VI. If Christians are to remain faithful children of God, we must possess an attitude of receptivity when it comes to our Father’s discipline through trials.

1. Discipline is a vital part of the Christian life.

A. Some might think that a loving father would not allow His children to undergo such extreme difficulties.

B. Yet, in the case of God as Father, those difficulties are allowed because of His love for us. **Hebrews 11:5,6**

C. To be clear, God is not the one causing the struggles, He allows them for His purpose.

1. The persecution they face is because of their faith in God. **Hebrews 12:7**

2. They are not turning back to Judaism, to sin. **Hebrews 10:32-39**

D. By choosing to follow God as their Father, Christians open themselves up to God’s discipline which is facilitated through persecution by those who despise His children.

Hebrews 12:8

E. The actions of those who seek to harm God’s children through persecution are used in the development of their faith.

1Peter 1:6-9

1Peter 4:12-14

Application: As the Son of God Jesus is our example of one who suffered because of His relationship with God and His battle against sin. Jesus resisted to the point of shedding blood.

The life of Jesus shows us that persecutions is part of our walk, but that the benefit of this is the discipline of God that arises from it. **Hebrews 5:7,8**

2. The purpose of God's Discipline.

A. Why is it that God allows His children to undergo His discipline through the worlds persecution?

1. It demonstrates that we are His children. **Hebrews 12:7,8**
2. It train us to be His children. **Hebrews 12:11**

B. I think we all understand why it is we discipline our children.

1. **Hebrews 12:9-10**
2. Fathers discipline their children so they might live in a safe and productive way in the society in which they live.

C. God disciplines us for a greater purpose. His discipline is so we can share in His holiness.

D. As we walk as God's children, we face persecution because of that. We recognize that this persecution is coming because of our faith, but we don't allow it to push us away, we draw closer to God by resisting the temptation to go back to sin.

Hebrews 12:11
James 1:2-4

E. Persecution and the disciple of the Lord that arises from it provides the means for us to rid ourselves of those things that might stand in the way of our faith. That's the fire of the trial in 1Peter.

Application: We all know that discipline is not a pleasant thing, yet if we allow it to take place it produces a pleasant thing.

Discipline tries us out; persecution reveals whether we shall be true to God, and when it does this it reveals that we are righteous, and that our soul may rest in peace.¹

Conclusion: Discipline is a vital part of the Christian life because it brings about a sharing in God's holiness.

If Christians are to remain faithful children of God, we must possess an attitude of receptivity when it comes to our Father's discipline through trials.

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [*The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James*](#) (p. 441). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.

Prepare Yourselves for the Race
Hebrews 12:12-17

- I. I have watched a lot of different sporting events over the years and the most disappointing are those that demonstrate that an individual or team did not prepare for victory.
- II. Sometimes one side will believe they already have an upper hand over their opponent and doesn't see the need to put in the time to be sure of victory, they believe it is already theirs.
- III. I believe the same can be said about our Christian walk or race. In fact, I am sure this is the case with our faith, because we are warned to make sure we are always preparing ourselves for what is ahead of us. **Colossians 3:1**
- IV. In our last lesson from the Hebrew epistle we saw that God is helping us run the race set before us through disciplining us. He is providing the training we need to succeed. That discipline will lead to victory. **Hebrews 12:11**
- V. Knowing this they must embrace his discipline and do what's necessary to succeed in this race.
- VI. The Judaizers are still working at pulling these Christians away from their faith in Christ. Today there are those who seek to pull Christians away from their faith.
- VII. If we are to succeed in our Christian walk, we must prepare ourselves for the race.**

1. A Call to Preparedness

A. Hebrews 12:12-13

B. First, we need strength training.

1. Victory only comes to those who are willing to examine themselves for weaknesses and then work to strengthen those areas.
2. The Hebrew writers refers to weak hands and feeble knees.
3. These are common figures of speech calling us to shake off all weariness we may have, and to become firm and strong in our faith.

Job 4:3-4

Isa 35:3

C. Secondly, we are to "make straight paths" for our feet.

1. There is no need for us to lay obstacles before ourselves. **Heb. 12:1**
2. We must remove all that will hinder our progress so that our path doesn't slow our progress. **Philippians 2:12,13**
3. Whatever enters the mind and turns it away from God must be removed. The Judaizers must not be given an audience for their teaching.
4. The lame parts can be either your weakness or other members of the body. **Hebrews 10:23-25**

Application: This call to preparedness is an action we must be being called to carry out. God will provide the training, but we must put forth the effort. We work on ourselves while also helping others as well.

Christians must be prepared for the race. We must put into action God's plan in our lives.

If we are to succeed in our Christian walk, we must prepare ourselves for the race.

2. Run as a Team

A. Hebrews 12:14-17

B. We must work together as a team. The peace being spoken of here is not a peace with the world in general or with the Judaizers.

1. He has spoken of encouraging each other in Hebrews 10:25
2. He has spoken of healing what is lame, either self or others.
3. The peace we are to pursue involves not turning on each other in this race.

Hebrews 12:15 (many be defiled)

Romans 14:19

C. It is not only peace we are to pursue but also sanctification.

1. This pursuit of peace is a part of the wider obligation of the whole membership with reference to its individuals, namely all that is comprised in "the sanctification, without which no one shall get to see the Lord"¹
2. We are a team set apart and meant to run together. We will not succeed if we turn on each other. **Ephesians 4:11-16**

D. When a Christian determines to ignore God's training and call to preparedness, calamity will befall them. The Hebrew writer has warned us of this on multiple occasions. **Hebrews 12:15**

1. The warning not to neglect our great salvation. **Heb. 2:1-3**
2. The warning not to be hardened by sin. **Heb. 3:12-14**
3. The warning to be diligent. **Heb. 4:1,11**
4. The warning against willful sin. **Heb. 10:26-31**

Illustration: The example of this is Esau. **Hebrews 12:16,17**

Ultimately, he gave up so much for so little. He allowed his weak flesh to bring him down. He lost his birth right because he was not prepared

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [*The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James*](#) (p. 443). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.

Conclusion: 1Corinthians 9:24-27

As we run the race of faith, we must prepare ourselves for victory. We do this but embracing God's discipline, removing whatever weakness we may have,

All doubts must be removed, we cannot allow the false teacher into our head and thus sway us away from God. We must run this race as a team, helping others succeed.

If we are to succeed in our Christian walk, we must prepare ourselves for the race.

Recognizing where we have come to.
Hebrews 12:18-24

- I. One of the most exciting things about a family vacation is the destination.
- II. Sometimes the preparation and trip can be difficult and unpleasant. But once we get to our destination things change.
- III. For the Christians of the Hebrew epistle things have become unpleasant. Their journey in Christ is being weighed down by the work of the Judaizers. The Judaizers are creating obstacles that hinder the race the Christians are in.
- IV. To keep these Christians faithful to Christ the Hebrews writer reminds them of where they stand. In recognizing their current location, they should disregard the words of the false teachers.
- V. **If we are to remain faithful to God, we must remind ourselves of where we stand in relation to Him**

1. Understand where faith in Christ has brought you.

A. Hebrews 12:18-24

B. Christians have not come to Mount Sinai (Hebrews 12:18-21)

- 1. Mount Sinai was the place Israel came too following their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Exo 19:12-19
- 2. This was a terrifying place.
 - a. The people It frightened the people – **Deut. 5:22-26; 18:16**
 - b. Moses was afraid – **Deut. 9:19**
- 3. This mountain was one viewed from a distance.

C. Christians have come to Mount Zion. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

- 1. This is the mountain we can draw near to.
- 2. Zion was originally the stronghold of the Jebusites in Jerusalem that became the "city of David"

2Sam. 5:6-10;

1Chron. 11:4-9

- 3. The term "Zion" came to be used to refer to:
 - a. The city of Jerusalem - **Psalm 48:2**
 - b. The heavenly Jerusalem, Gods dwelling place.

Psalm 2:6

Revelation 14:1

- D. Coming to Mount Zion They have come to a place of hope.
1. They have come to, "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"
 - a. **Heb. 11:10,13-16**
 - b. **Heb. 13:14**
 - c. "This heavenly city is where our Lord dwells and is our eternal home. In coming to Christ, we have come into the covenant which gives us the right to a place in that city." (B. W. Johnson, People's New Testament)
 2. They have come to "an innumerable company of angels", who minister to those who will inherit salvation. **Heb. 1:14**
 3. They have come to "the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven"
 - a. This is the church in the universal sense, made up of all who are saved. **Acts 2:47**
 - b. They are the "firstborn ones" and enjoy special privileges of their birthright.
 - c. Their names are in "the Book of Life" – **Phil. 4:3**
 4. They have come to the "God the Judge of all"
 - a. The Judge of all the earth. **Gen 18:25**
 5. They have come to "the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect"
 - a. **Heb. 11:39-40**
 - b. They too have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. **Heb 9:15**
 6. They have come to "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant"
 - a. **Heb. 8:6**
 - b. **Heb. 9:15**
 7. They have come to "the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."
 - a. Abel still speaks through the example of his faith. **Heb. 11:4**
 - b. The blood of Jesus speaks salvation for those who live by faith.
Heb. 10:11-14

Application: In coming to Christ, being redeemed by the blood of the New Covenant, we have drawn near to this wonderful "mountain"! It is a place that offers many wonderful blessings, both now and with promise for the future.

If we are to remain faithful to God, we must remind ourselves of where we stand in relation to Him

Do Not Refuse Him Who is Speaking
Hebrews 12:25-29

- I. Have you ever experienced a situation when child was unwilling to listen to their parent?
- II. At times, children will even argue with their parents about what they are being asked to do.
- III. When a parent is attempting to help a child learn an important lesson, refusing to listen can result in great harm.
- IV. We know from the Hebrew epistle that Judaizers are attempting to lead Hebrew Christians away from Christ.
- V. In general, the epistle is a warning telling them not to listen to the false teachings of the Judaizers.
- VI. The reason these Christians should listen to what is being said is because the call to remain faithful to Christ is coming from their Father. They must not ignore what He is telling them.
- VII. With this in mind, once again the Hebrew writer calls for these Christians to listen their Fathers call. In fact, He is warning them “not to refuse Him who is speaking.” (Heb. 12:25).
- VIII. If we want to be sure of our eternal salvation, we must not refuse to hear what God is saying.**

Transition: What kind of motivation do we need to listen to our Heavenly Father?

1. Refusal to listen leads to our downfall.

A. Hebrews 12:25-29

B. In verse 25, the Hebrew writer gives us an example of this. Those at Mt. Sinai did not escape when they refused to listen.

1. *“For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth”*

2. **Hebrews 2:2**

3. **Hebrews 3:17**

4. **Hebrews 10: 28**

C. He then argues that Christians ignoring God’s heavenly call is far worse.

1. *“much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.”*

2. **Hebrews 2:3**

3. **Hebrews 10:26-31**

4. Christians enjoy so much more than those under the Old Law. If we refuse to heed Him who speaks from Mount Zion (i.e., heaven itself), what will our outcome be?

D. The warning not to refuse to listen God is tied to what is to come.

1. **Hebrews 1:1,2** (We are in the last days)

2. On Mt Sinai God's voice shook the earth, but a time is coming when He will shake earth and heaven. **Hebrews 12:26-27**

a. When God spoke at Mount Sinai, the earth trembled. **Ex. 19:18**

b. The day is coming when both heaven and earth will be shaken.

c. *"Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things."*

d. **2Pet. 3:10-12**

E. Yet, if we will listen to God, we will find a message of hope.

1. **Hebrews 12:27b-29**

2. Once all presently created things are destroyed what remains is what can't be shaken.

3. *"We receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken."* (**Hebrews 12:28**)

a. Receive is a present tense verb, (lit. "are receiving")

b. We are in the process of receiving this "kingdom"

c. Everything made will one day perish, but the kingdom we "are receiving" cannot be shaken!

4. The kingdom we are receiving is both present and future.

a. In one sense, we are now "in" the kingdom. **Col 1:13**

b. Still, we have yet to enter the kingdom in Heaven, when all is done.

2Peter 1:10-11

1Cor. 15:23-26

Conclusion: Receiving such a kingdom we should show gratitude to God our Father.

God has spoken from Mount Zion, that heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. He has spoken through His Son. Our faith in Him and His message has brought us to the Father.

His promise is fellowship with myriads of angels, the redeemed in heaven and on earth, and of Jesus and God Himself in His heavenly kingdom, Mt Zion

If we want to be sure of our eternal salvation, we must not refuse to hear what God is saying.

**An Exhortation to Love Brotherly
Hebrews 13:1-3**

I. Yesterday was the funeral for Bill McGrew. Bill and his wife Marilyn had been important parts of this congregation for years.

II. One of the encouraging things that took place yesterday was seeing the number of Christians from this congregation who came to support and show their love for the family.

III. The love we share as Christian brethren is vitally important. This is especially true in times of struggle.

IV. As we come to the close of the Hebrew epistle we are reminded of how important it is for the brethren to continue to love one another as the Judaizers pressure them to abandon Christ.

V. Christians are commanded to continually demonstrate their love for one another so that they might encourage one another.

VI. In our text we find three different groups that Christian brethren must continue to love.

1. **Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in general.**
2. **Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren who are strangers.**
3. **Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in prison.**

Transition: The Hebrew writer begins with the Christian in general. This is foundational in loving brethren in specific situations.

1. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in general.

A. **Hebrews 13:1**

B. The word for love here is “philadelphia” and refers to a brotherly love. This is having an affection for a blood brother/sister but now also applies to a Christian brother/sister.

C. He says “let love continue”. This love is something they have been demonstrating.

1. The word continue is present active imperative.
2. It is an ongoing love that they/we are commanded to keep practicing.
3. **Hebrews 6:10**
4. **Hebrews 10:32-35**

E. The need for brotherly love never diminishes.

1. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10**
2. **Philippians 1:9**
3. **2Peter 1:7**

F. Why is brotherly so important?

1. It is a mark of true discipleship. **John 13:35**
2. It is an indication of true spiritual life. **1John 3:14**

Illustration: I mentioned Bill McGrew's memorial and how brotherly love was demonstrated there, but there has been another recent example. I remember when Teresa and I first announced our engagement and how welcoming and excited our brethren were for us. In some places an interracial relationship would be frowned upon. Some brethren would treat you unkindly. But our brethren here encouraged us with their brotherly love. You demonstrated brotherly love by being so accepting and sharing in our joy.

Application: No matter how much we may have manifested love towards one another as brethren in the past, it is imperative that such love continues and more so as we face trials.

Christians are commanded to continually demonstrate their love for one another so that they might encourage each another.

Transition: There is a second group which we must continually demonstrate brotherly love towards. This is our second point.

2. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren who are strangers.

A. Hebrews 13:2

B. The demonstration of brotherly love is carried out through being hospitable.

1. The Greek word literally means "a love of strangers."
2. It involved receiving a stranger (sojourner) into one's home as an honored guest and to provide the guest with food, shelter, and protection (Holman BD).
3. Hospitality was a common practice of the church.
 - a. **1Tim. 3:2**
 - b. **Titus 1:8**
 - c. **1Tim. 5:9-10**
 - d. **Rom. 12:13**

C. The goal of showing hospitality was to help your Christian brethren.

1. "for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."
2. Some will say the word angel refers to supernatural beings, but this is not always the case.
 - a. **Heb. 2:5,9**
 - b. **Gen. 48:15,16**
 - c. **James 2:25**
3. Christians were often displaced by persecution; public inns were scarce, costly, and sometimes dangerous. Traveling evangelists were to be supported through Hospitality. **3John 5-8**

D. Because the Hebrew writer had already spoken of the superiority of Jesus over the angels, it seems more likely that the messengers he now speaks of are Christian brethren, which also follows the context of demonstrating brotherly love towards the brethren.

1. The writer commands them not to neglect this. The word neglect means "to not concern yourself with." They must actively pursue showing hospitality to strangers. Some will be Christian brethren.

Application: The strengthening of spiritual ties through hospitable acts is vitally important. Therefore, we need to "be hospitable to one another without grumbling" (1Pet. 4:9).

Christians are commanded to continually demonstrate their love for one another so that they might encourage one another.

Transition: There is one other group we are instructed to manifestation our love towards. This is our final point.

3. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in prison.

A. Hebrews 13:3

B. I believe this passage shows the kind of difficulties these Christians faced because of their faith and unwillingness to reject Christ. (Hebrews 10:32-35)

C. We know Christians were often persecuted and imprisoned for their faith.

1. **Acts 8:3; 26:9-11**

2. **Col. 4:18**

D. This act of remembering Christian prisoners was more than acknowledging them being in prison. They were to remind themselves of their brethren's suffering through uniting themselves with them spiritually. Suffer with them and fulfill their needs.

1. The provisions for the prisoners would be a "sweet-smelling sacrifice", well-pleasing to God. **Phil. 4:18**

2. They could also remember them in their prayers.

a. **Acts 12:5**

b. **Ephesians 6:18-20**

E. The Lord intended this kind of connection between the members of His Body ("if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it"). **1Corinthians 12:26**

Conclusion: It is true that Jesus made possible a close relationship between man and God. **Hebrews 10:19-22**

But the purity we experience through obeying God allows us also to have fellowship with each other in sincerity and love. **1Pet. 1:22-23**

Christians are commanded to continually demonstrate their love for one another so that they might encourage one another.

- 1. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in general.**
- 2. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren who are strangers.**
- 3. Demonstrate brotherly love toward Christian brethren in prison.**

Practical Living Exhortations
Hebrews 13:4-6

- I. We all know how changes in our life can affect our conduct.
- II. We can see this when people are under pressure to accomplish or change something and they become angry, even mean. Some will even allow their moral views to be altered by doing unethical things.
- III. As the Hebrew Christians are facing the pressures of the Judaizers they are exhorted to maintain a character which aligns with their Saviors example.
- IV. Christians must continue to maintain a character which reflects the Holiness of their Lord, even in times of great persecution.**
- V. The Hebrew writer provides two areas in danger of being contaminated by inappropriate behavior.
 - A. Honor the marriage bed.**
 - B. Be content financially.**
- VI. Both of these issues deal with covetousness and this may be the issue. Under the pressure of persecution, it would be easy to start coveting things that might ease the pain.

Transition: One area which seems to be affected by the Judaizers is marriage.

1. Honor the marriage bed.

A. Hebrews 13:4

B. This exhortation affects how Christians conduct themselves before and after marriage and enlightens us on God's design for the sexual relationship.

- 1. Fornicators
 - a. It is a general word for unlawful and immoral sexual relationships (Barclay).
 - b. It includes any kind sex outside of marriage: pre-marital, extra-marital (adultery), homosexual, etc.
- 2. Adulterers are those who have unlawful intercourse with another's wife or husband (Thayer).
- 3. A person is guilty of adultery either:
 - a. By having relations with another's spouse
 - b. By marrying and having relations with someone who is unmarried.

C. These two actions defile the marriage bed by living contrary to Gods Divine design for marriage.

- 1. **Genesis. 2:20-24**
- 2. Those who enter into a sexual relation prior to marriage take what God has not given them.
- 3. Those who would enter into a sexual relation with another person after marrying are also taking something God has not given them. **Deuteronomy 5:18,21** (7&10)

D. Both of the situations cause damage to both parties involved.

- 1. They will be judged by God for violating His commands for sexual relations if they do not repent. (The world may accept it, but God doesn't)

2. They harm others involved.
 - a. Sexual immorality is a major cause of divorce, which God hates. **Mal 2:16**
 - b. Those involved in fornication contribute to others sin. **1Corinthians 6:18**

Application: It is difficult to determine why God included adultery and fornication here. It is possible that God is addressing the false beliefs of the Judaizers, adultery and fornication were not always discouraged in this time period. It could be the Christians might get caught up in seeking sexual pleasures to ease their suffering.

Whatever the reason, the Hebrew writer lays out the Godly principles for the sexual relationship. This is the path Christians must follow.

Christians must continue to maintain a character which reflects the Holiness of their Lord, even in times of great persecution.

Transition: The second category directly addresses something these Christians have already faced and could affect their walk with God if not controlled.

2. Be content financially.

A. Hebrews 13:5,6

B. These Christians have had to deal with the loss of their possessions already. **Hebrews 10:34**

C. What would it be like to see someone in possession of what was once yours?

D. It is imperative that Christians don't develop a "lust of the eye" character as they lose their possessions.

E. God tells them to be content in all situations.

1. The English word "content" means "desiring no more than what one has"
2. In the Greek word means "to be satisfied"
3. To be content is to be satisfied with what you have. There is no desire for more.
4. **1Timothy 6:6-10**

F. The means to being content is found in God's care.

1. "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," (v.5)
2. "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" (V.6)
3. **Philippians 4:10-13**

G. As these Christians lost their possessions, they gained something greater, contentment.

1. Possession don't fulfill our true need. **Ecclesiastes 5:10-12**
2. Possessions do not satisfy us. **Isaiah 55:1ff**

H. What God gives is much greater. He gives us His eternal care. He takes care of our needs here and provides an abundance for the future that is to come. **1Peter 1:3-5**

Application: Imagine having worked so hard to own a house only to have someone come in and just take it from you. These Christians were experiencing their possessions being taken. They cannot so desire their possessions that they lose sight of what God offers in Christ.

Christians must continue to maintain a character which reflects the Holiness of their Lord, even in times of great persecution.

Encouragement to Remain Steadfast
Hebrews 13:7,8

I. Why is it when someone is going through some illness, they will be reminded by others of another person who had a similar issue and they overcame it?

II. I believe what people are trying to do is provide some kind of encouragement. They are using an example of a success story so the one now facing this same issue won't give up. It is intended to be a message of hope.

III. Throughout the Hebrew epistle, the author has continually exhorted his readers to remain steadfastness.

A. Exhorted not to drift away. **Hebrews 2:1**

B. Exhorted to be diligent. **Hebrews 4:11; 6:11-12**

IV. As we come to the close of Hebrews, we once again see this exhortation. **Hebrews 13:7,8**

V. The goal of the Hebrew writer is to remind these Christians of those who have been faithful and to remember their victory in Christ.

VI. To remain steadfast, we must never forget the victory all Christians have in Christ.

VII. The Hebrew writer is going to give his readers us two points as a means of encouraging them to remain faithful.

1. Reflect on those who came before you.

2. Remember that your reward in Christ is sure.

Transition: If we are to keep ourselves from being carried away by various and strange doctrines, then reflecting on faithful brethren of the past is imperative.

1. Reflect on those who came before you.

A. **Hebrews 13:7**

B. The idea of considering those who have come before us is something the Hebrews writer is done before. **Hebrews 11:1ff**

C. In the context of Hebrews 13, the writer narrows the scope of reflection to those who were their leaders, "who spoke the word of God to you".

1. **Acts 7**

2. **1John 1:1-4**

D. Whoever these leaders were, they had a close relation to the audience of the Hebrew epistle.

E. In remembering their leaders, the Hebrew writer brings up two things.

1. *“Consider the result of their conduct.”*

2. *“Imitate their faith.”*

3. **2 Tim 4:6-8**

4. **Philippians 3:17**

Application: Having some past victorious example to look to can be a big encouragement when you are facing a similar situation. This is often used when people are struggling with a disease that can turn terminal.

Regarding our faith, those who stayed faithful to Christ during their life, especially while facing persecution are our examples. And as relevant as those of the past are those who we know today.

To remain steadfast, we must never forget the victory all Christians have in Christ.

2. Remember that your reward in Christ is sure.

A. Hebrews 13:8

B. If we are to remain faithful, we must know that the one we have placed our trust in will see us through whatever trials we face. **Hebrews 13:5,6**

C. The outcome of trials faced by their leaders is victory in Christ. His promises remain the same. **1Peter 1:6-9**

D. The Hebrew writer encourages his audience to faithfulness by reminding them that Jesus Christ is changeless. He’s promises are immutable.

1. He is the One who was preached “yesterday” by the apostles.

2. He is the One who “today” sits at God’s right hand as our great High Priest as He did yesterday and so he does to all eternity.

a. **Hebrews 1:1-3**

b. **Hebrews 4:14**

3. Lenski states; “Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of the Word of God that was spoken to the readers by those departed leaders, he upon whom alone they rested their faith, which the readers are ever to imitate...Jesus Christ cannot be anything but “the same” in regard to all that this letter has said of him. The only question is whether the faith of the readers will also remain the same.”

Application: The law has changed. What the Judaizers are attempting to do in leading these Christians away from Christ will result in a total loss of their salvation if they follow.

What remains sure is the One they chose to follow, Jesus. He will never forsake or desert them.

To remain steadfast, we must never forget the victory all Christians have in Christ.

Conclusion: Do we wish to remain steadfast in your faith?

Then remember those worthy of imitation and consider the outcome of their conduct.

Remember that Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What we have learned about Him doesn't change.

To remain steadfast, we must never forget the victory all Christians have in Christ.

Withdrawing from Judaism Through Jesus' Sacrifice Hebrews 13:9-14

I. I believe for most people divorce is a very difficult thing. This is especially true the longer you are married.

II. If you were going to break off a marriage relationship, I imagine the reason to do so would be very compelling. (*The person you will be divorcing is the one you proclaimed your undying love to at one time*).

III. What would it take to get you to leave a religion you have been part of your entire life? A religion which your family has dedicated their lives to. For some, they have done this for generations.

IV. In the Hebrew epistle we find that Judaizers are seeking to draw Christians back under the Old Law of Moses. But these Christians have been reminded that their reasons for leaving Judaism in the first place was compelling. This Jesus they have chosen to follow is superior to what was offered under Judaism.

1. Jesus was superior to the Angels (Hebrews 1:4-2:18)
2. Jesus is superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1-19)
3. Jesus's rest is Superior to Joshua's rest (Hebrews 4:1-13)
4. Jesus is a superior High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-6:20)
5. Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aarons priesthood. (Hebrews 7:1-8:5)
6. Jesus' Covenant is superior to the covenant of Moses. (Hebrews 8:6-9:28)
7. Jesus' sacrifice was superior to the sacrifices of the Old Law (Hebrews 10:1-31)

V. In his closing arguments the Hebrew writer once again focuses on the superior sacrifice of Jesus as a compelling reason not to return to Judaism. **Hebrews 13:9-14**

VI. To receive the forgiveness of sins found in Christ, we must go outside the camp of Judaism.

Transition: Here we find the proverbial nail in the coffin. To live under Judaism renders you unable to live under Christ. You have no right to His sacrifice while holding to the Law of Moses.

1. Going out to Jesus outside the camp.

A. The Hebrew writer first argues that if we are "go out to Him outside the camp" to receive the benefit of His sacrifice we must abandon, as a means of justification, the teachings of Judaism.

1. Hebrews 13:9

2. The reference here to "*varied and strange teachings*" and "*foods*" likely refers to the clean and unclean meats as well as the dietary restrictions found under the Old Covenant.

3. The Hebrew writer states that those who partook were not benefited like those who are strengthened by grace (Christ).

- a). **1Corinthians 8:8**
- b). **Romans 14:14-17**
- c). **Colossians 2:20-23**

B. The writer now turns our attention to what really matters; the sacrifice of Jesus.

1. **Hebrews 13:11-14**

2. The writer first argues that those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat from the altar offered to those who would follow Jesus.

- a) To understand this, we must consider the sin offering under the Old Law of Moses. **Leviticus 6:24-30**
- b) Sin offerings could be eaten, but the sin offering used on the Day of Atonement offered by the High Priest in the tent of meeting could not be eaten. It was burned outside the camp. (**Lev. 16:27**)
- c). This is the point made in **Hebrews 13:11**

3. The writer now connects Jesus to that type of sacrifice. (**Hebrews 13:12**)

- a). Jesus as an atoning sacrifice suffered (was sacrificed) outside the camp.
- b) His death outside the gates of Jerusalem showed Him to be that atoning sacrifice, *“that He might sanctify the people”*.
- c) Jesus is the atoning sacrifice set up on the altar at Calvary.
- d) The altar of Hebrews 13:10 is referencing the entirety of what Jesus did, not any physical altar. Thus, the altar is the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Mt. Calvary, outside of Jerusalem.

4. The third point made is the need humanity has to go out to Him, “outside the camp” to receive God’s grace.

- a) Humanity must go to the cross of Calvary, to Jesus our atoning sacrifice, to receive forgiveness.
- b) In other words, we must go outside of Judaism if we are to receive forgiveness and serve Christ.
- c). Those who hold to the Old Law have no place at the altar of Christ. **Galatians 5:4**

5. The fourth and final point reminds us of the Holy place we are looking for as followers of God, because we went outside the camp. It’s not the city of David, Jerusalem, outside of which Jesus was crucified. We are seeking the Holy city to come. **Hebrews 11:13-16**

Conclusion: To abandon Jesus for the Old Law of Moses is to stay in the camp of Moses. By doing this the atoning sacrifice made by Jesus is forever inaccessible to the people. You cannot partake of the sacrifice of Christ, “eat of the atoning sacrifice”, while remaining under the Old Law, where you could not eat of the atoning sacrifice.

To receive the forgiveness of sins found in Christ, we must go outside the camp of Judaism.

The Christians Sacrifice Service
Hebrews 13:15-19

I. Most people recognize that the Christian life is one of service.

II. We have programs centered around serving others.

- Food banks
- Clothing rooms
- Disaster relief

III. This life of service stems from the foundational sacrifice that our faith is built upon.
Philippians 2:5-8

IV. The Christian's life of service is understood to be more than just acts of good deeds. It is a life of sacrifice through Christ.

V. This point is illustrated in the Hebrew epistle. **Hebrews 13:15-19**

VI. The Hebrew writer instructs Christians to serve sacrificially.

- 1. Continually offer up a sacrifice. (v.15)**
- 2. Sacrifices of the Christian. (v.15b-19)**

Transition: The Judaizers understood what sacrifices were. Sacrifices were part of their faith. What they failed to see was that only through Christ could Christians offer themselves as living sacrifices.

1. Continually offer up a sacrifice.

A. **Hebrews 13:15b**

B. The word sacrifice is used 19 x's in the Hebrew epistle.

1. It is an act of offering.
2. That which is offered as a sacrifice.

C. This sacrifice the Christian offers is to be ongoing, continually, the sense being "without interruption." **Romans 12:1,2**

D. We are only able to do this through Christ, *not by Him*, as with an animal sacrifice. Because of what He has done in His sacrifice we can offer ourselves as a continual sacrifice to God through Him.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Hebrews 10:19-25

E. We may not "serve the tabernacle" of the Old Covenant, but we do have "sacrifices" to offer. **1Peter 2:4,5**

Transition: The sacrifice of an animal was a one-time act; you couldn't sacrifice the same animal again. By comparison Christians live sacrificially.

2. Sacrifices of the Christian.

A. Hebrews 15b-19

B. Sacrificial living is accomplished through sacrificial acts.

1. The sacrifice of Praise, the fruit of the lips. **(v.15b)**

a) This can include singing and prayer. **Hebrews 13:18**

b) More specifically it is our constant acknowledgement of gratitude for what He has done for us. **Psalm 54:4-7**

2. The sacrifice of not neglecting doing good and sharing. **(v.16)**

a) Not neglecting implies a continual practice.

b) The doing of good is a rendering of service wherever needed.

Hebrews 10:34

Philippians 4:18

c) The word sharing is the word for fellowship and may imply a sharing together in the fellowship of God. **Hebrews 10:25**

3. Obey your leaders. **(v.17)**

a) Most likely these are the "elders" (also known as "bishops", "pastors") **Ephesians 4:11-16**

b) They were given the oversight of the local congregation, with the souls of the congregation "entrusted" to them.

Acts 20:17,28

1Peter 5:1-3

c) They watch over the flock, as those who must one day give an account.

1) Christians are called to "obey" and "submit" that their work will be one of joy, not grief.

2) If we grieve them in their work, it will not be profitable for us!

Conclusion: The altar that we partake of, as mentioned in Hebrews 13:10, is the sacrifice of Christ and all that it entails. As Christians we then are to continually offer up through His sacrifice our life as a sacrifice to Him.

We offer up those sacrifice in praise, doing good, sharing, and through obedience to our leaders.

The Christian's life of service is understood to be more than just acts of good deeds. It is a life of sacrifice through Christ.